

Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 100

The Manichaean Church in Kellis

*Social Networks and Religious Identity
in Late Antique Egypt*

Håkon Fiane Teigen

BRILL

The Manichaean Church in Kellis

Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

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The Manichaean Church in Kellis

By

Håkon Fiane Teigen



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For Astrid



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Acknowledgments

This book concerns the role of ‘religion’ in daily life in late antiquity. It springs out of an engagement with documents found in a small town in Roman Egypt, and their relationship to a lost religious tradition, ‘Manichaeism’, that once spread across the Eurasian continent. In order to approach this issue, I have drawn on a range of different fields: papyrology, Coptology, microhistory, prosopography, network theory, cultural sociology, Manichaean studies, early Christian studies, and the study of ancient associations. The aim has been to shed light on the dynamics between what we may roughly term ‘ideological’ and ‘social’ forces in the history of late antique religion.

In its present form, the book is a substantially rewritten version of my doctoral thesis, ‘The Limbs of the Light Mind: The Social World of a Manichaean Community in Fourth-Century Egypt’, which was defended at the University of Bergen in the Fall of 2018. The changes from thesis to book are many, however – too many to enumerate here. The most conspicuous one is the shedding of detailed discussion of the Kellis community’s economy, which has been replaced by a more focused engagement with religious identity. Several of the chapters from the thesis treating economic activity have been removed, while those chapters discussing religious life have been reorganised and greatly expanded.

The person to whom this work owes its greatest debt is undoubtedly my former supervisor, Eivind H. Seland. His unfailing support during my PhD made my ideas into a realisable project, and his continued advice, friendship, and invitations for walks have been a great source of strength and fresh air in the subsequent period – especially appreciated under the COVID19 pandemic, still-ongoing as I write this. I am, furthermore, most grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, Jacques van der Vliet, Arietta Papaconstantinou, and J. Christian Meyer, who pointed out important deficiencies and areas for improvement of the thesis, while also giving me the confidence to plan for a publication. I would, moreover, like to send my sincere thanks to the scholars who read and commented on the manuscript while still a thesis-in-waiting, especially Giovanni Ruffini, René Falkenberg, and Ingvild Gilhus.

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Håkon Fiane Teigen

Bergen, March 2021

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Abbreviations for Frequently Cited Sources

Publications of Papyri from Kellis

<i>P.Kellis I</i>	<i>Greek Papyri from Kellis</i> (ed. Worp 1995)
<i>P.Kellis II</i>	<i>Kellis Literary Texts</i> , vol. 1 (ed. Gardner 1996)
<i>P.Kellis III</i>	<i>The Kellis Isocrates Codex</i> (ed. Worp and Rijksbaron 1997)
<i>P.Kellis IV / KAB</i>	<i>The Kellis Agricultural Account Book</i> (ed. Bagnall 1997)
<i>P.Kellis V</i>	<i>Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis</i> , vol. 1 (ed. Gardner, Alcock & Funk 1999)
<i>P.Kellis VI</i>	<i>Kellis Literary Texts</i> , vol. 2 (ed. Gardner 2007)
<i>P.Kellis VII</i>	<i>Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis</i> , vol. 2 (ed. Gardner, Alcock & Funk 2014)
<i>O.Kellis I</i>	<i>Ostraka from Kellis</i> (ed. Worp 2004)

Manichaean Texts

1 Ke	<i>Kephalaia</i> vol. 1: The Chapters of the Teacher (ed. Polotsky and Böhlig 1940 / Böhlig 1966 / Funk 1999, 2000, 2018)
2 Ke	<i>Kephalaia</i> vol. 2: The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani (Part III) (ed. Gardner, Beduhn, and Dilley 2018)
2 Ps	<i>Psalm-book</i> , part 2 (ed. Allberry 1938 / Wurst 1996 / Richter 1998)
CMC	<i>Cologne Mani Codex</i> (ed. Koenen and Römer 1988)
Hom	<i>Homilies</i> (ed. Pedersen 2006)
Keph	Kephalaion (chapter numbers in the <i>Kephalaia</i> volumes)
SGW	<i>The Sermon on the Great War</i> (Hom. 7.8–42.8)
SNC	<i>Section on the Narrative of the Crucifixion</i> (Hom. 42.9–85.34)

Writings of Augustine

<i>C. Faust.</i>	<i>Contra Faustum Manichaeum</i>
<i>C. Fort.</i>	<i>Contra Fortunatum Manichaeum disputatio</i>
<i>De haer.</i>	<i>De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum</i>
<i>De mor.</i>	<i>De moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum</i>

Other Abbreviations

Crum	Crum, Walter E. 1939 (ed. 2000). <i>A Coptic Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press)
MP	Middle Persian language
Pa	Parthian language

A Note on Citations and Translations

All English translations of Kellis papyri used in this study, both Coptic and Greek, are those published in the first editions, unless otherwise stated. For Coptic documentary texts, this means the two volumes of Iain Gardner, Anthony Alcock, and Wolf-Peter Funk (*P.Kellis V*, *P.Kellis VII*), and for the Greek documentary texts, the publications of Klaas A. Worp (*P.Kellis I*) and of Roger S. Bagnall (*P.Kellis IV*). Coptic names occurring in these texts are generally given in their Greek forms (e.g. Psais, rather than Pshai). For literary texts from Kellis, both in Coptic and Greek, it means the two volumes of Gardner (*P.Kellis II*, *P.Kellis VI*). Translations of the Berlin *Kephalaia* are taken from the translation of Gardner (1995) and the editions of Funk (1999, 2000), unless otherwise stated. Translations of other Medinet Madi texts are drawn from Allberry (for the *Psalm-book*) and Pedersen (for the *Homilies*).

Furthermore, when citing individual documents from Kellis, this study follows the papyrological standard of using the name of the series (*P.Kellis*) in conjunction with volume number (in Roman numerals) and papyrus number, but also includes an abbreviation of the language of the document (Gr., Copt., Syr.). Thus, papyrus number 16 in Worp's *Greek Papyri from Kellis* (*P.Kellis I*) is cited as *P.Kellis I Gr. 16*. The exception is the Kellis Agriculture Account Book, whose passages are cited with the abbreviation $\kappa\alpha\beta$ [line number]. When citing the introduction or commentary of the editor(s), the name and volume number put in italics is used, e.g. *P.Kellis I*, 32.

Prelude

To my brother, my master; the loved one of my soul and my spirit. The child of righteousness, the good limb of the Light Mind. The name which is sweet in my mouth, my beloved brother Hor. It is I, Horion; in the Lord God, – greetings. There is no measuring the joy that came to me when I received your letter; all the more, for I learned about your health.... Greet warmly for me they who give you rest, the elect and the catechumens, each one by name.¹

These lines constitute the beginning and end of a letter, written on papyrus in a dialect of the Coptic Egyptian language and dating to the middle of the fourth century CE.² The letter would not have been known today had it not been discovered by excavators at Ismant el-Kharab, now a sand-covered ruin in an oasis west in Egypt, once a prosperous village named Kellis. The two men, Horion and Horos, were until recently unknown individuals. The rest of the letter content is not particularly striking at a first glance, but concerns a purchase of wheat and oil. Yet these greetings make us pause. What does the author, Horion, mean by phrases such as ‘limb of the Light Mind’ and ‘child of righteousness’? What does the division between *elect* and *catechumen* entail? How did he come to employ such terms?

These seemingly innocent questions are the subject of the present book. They go to the heart of our understanding of a now lost religion known as ‘Manichaeism’. Horion’s letter was found alongside literature belonging to this movement and echoes some of its vocabulary, and so it would seem that we could answer our questions simply by saying that Horion and Horos were adherents of this religion: that is, they were ‘Manichaeans’. Yet such an answer does not close the issue – quite the contrary. What it meant to be a ‘Manichaean’, in terms of everyday practice, is a issue and has become the subject of some debate. Scholarly opinion differs as to how organised adherents were, what beliefs they held, what rituals they performed, and how or indeed whether those whom we today label ‘Manichaean’ actually had a distinct identity as such in the Roman era. Our initial questions therefore have to be framed

¹ P.Kellis v Copt. 15, ll.1–30 (abridged), trans. Iain Gardner, Anthony Alcock, and Wolf-Peter Funk, eds., *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis vol. 1 (P.Kellis V Copt. 10–52, O.Kellis Copt. 1–2)* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999).

² Unless otherwise specified, all dates in this study are CE.

as part of a larger question: what was 'Manichaeism' to Horion, Horos, and other 'children of righteousness'?

The current study approaches this issue through the lens of the papyri from Kellis. It does so in two steps: by exploring the social networks in which Horos and Horion were embedded, drawing on network theory, and by analysing the evidence for religious practice within the network, drawing on concepts from the field of symbolic interactionism. In turn, this approach builds on to two key assumptions. First, that we should not see the religious activity of the people of Kellis in isolation from other social activities. The site where Horion's letter was found, a building complex known as House 1-3, yielded a wide array of documents: Manichaean psalms and prayers, but also declarations and petitions to the Roman government, and accounts, contracts, and private letters like those of Horion. The villagers to whom they belonged were not only 'Manichaeans'. They were children and spouses, weavers and traders, patrons and clients, Romans, Egyptians, and/or 'Kellites'. Although the object of investigation is Manichaeism, this material allows us to consider it from the ground-up perspective of these villagers. Only by properly situating religious practices within the nexus of their everyday concerns, their *social world*, can we begin to apprehend Manichaeism as a social phenomenon in the village.

Secondly, we cannot see religious practice in the village in isolation from wider historical developments. Manichaeism did not first appear in fourth-century Kellis. It was brought there by the caravans and other travellers who frequented the roads between the Oasis and the Nile Valley, having ultimately emerged in Mesopotamia in the mid-third century CE. When the movement arrived in Egypt, in the late third century, it was at a time of heightened religious competition. Temples of the Egyptian gods faced the growing influence of Christian groups, one of which won the backing of a Roman emperor in 314. The emergence of these religious movements heralded a shift in the very notion of 'religion', which took place in the ancient Mediterranean in the course of this and subsequent centuries – the period known as late antiquity. The community at Kellis must be seen in light of this wider transformation. At the same time, their papyri provide a lens through which we can glimpse the consequences of this shift on the ground.

This book, then, examines a specific community of Manichaeans, at a specific time and place, and its relationship to the larger phenomenon of 'Manichaeism'. Chapter 1 introduces the debate surrounding Manichaean social organisation, and conceptual problems connected to the term 'Manichaeism' itself, as well as the theoretical perspectives and sources this study builds on. For those readers who are most interested in microhistory, the daily life in a fourth-century

Egyptian Oasis, the chief point of interest of this study will be Part 1. It treats the socio-economic world of the people of House 1–3: their familial relationships, livelihood, and social networks. Chapter 2 introduces the Oasis, its geographical and social landscape, as well as the village of Kellis, its layout and socio-economic character. Chapter 3 presents the social circles and prominent actors of the papyri from the richest find spot, House 3, and the familial and economic activities that bound these circles together. Chapter 4 situates the House 3 circles in relation to other villagers: neighbours, colleagues, and social superiors. It concludes Part 1 with a social network analysis of the papyri from the village.

The main focus of the study, however, is Part 2, which deals with the role of religious identity and practice within this network, and their implications for our understanding of 'Manichaeism'. Chapter 5 analyses the religious language in a selection of private letters from House 3, and explores their Manichaean background. Chapter 6 builds on the prosopographic work from Part 1, discussing the extent of Manichaean presence in the village and the networks through which Manichaean affiliation spread. Chapter 7 examines the literary texts from the site, both their content and their usage within the network. Chapter 8 examines how practices played out in the documentary papyri; in particular, the reciprocal relationships between laity and Elect. Chapter 9 discusses the nature of the organisation of the Elect that the previous chapters have uncovered. Finally, the concluding chapter situates the Manichaean community of Kellis in a broader context, discussing the implications for the issue of Manichaean identity, for our understanding of lived religion in late antiquity, and for how we conceptualise the wider shift in 'religion'.

Introduction: Mani's Church and Social Life

Zarades was sent to Persia, to Hystaspes the king. He revealed the truly-founded law in all of Persia. Again, Bouddas the blessed, he came to the land of India and Kushan. He also revealed the truly-founded law in all of India and Kushan. After him again, Aurentes came with Kebellos to the east. They also revealed the truly-founded law in the east. Elchasai (?) came to Parthia. He revealed the law of truth in all of Parthia. Jesus the Christ came to the west. He also revealed the truth in all of the west.... I came; I revealed this place (*i.e. the Land of Light*) in this world. I preached the word of God. And I [...] of God in the world from the west to [the east.]¹

The above words are ascribed to Mani, eponymous founder of Manichaeism, and contained in a papyrus codex discovered at Medinet Madi in Middle Egypt. Other text, from this and related codices, describe a fantastically detailed system of divine and demonic forces. They reveal the scope of this tradition as it was envisioned by some of his Egyptian adherents: one that covered the whole known world, embraced and surpassed all previous traditions, and explained all things in heaven and earth. It is difficult to find a religion seemingly more at odds with the local, lived, or material aspects of religion on which recent scholarly trends have focused, and it is perhaps not surprising that everyday social practice has largely received little attention within the study of Manichaeism. The recent discoveries at Ismant el-Kharab have provided a unique opportunity to change this: to re-evaluate scholarly assumptions about the movement, and to explore the relationship between ideal and practice, between the 'great tradition' and daily life. The present work aims to contribute to this endeavour.

1 Mani's Church

Before we move on to consider the sources, methodology, and scholarly debates on which this study builds, a presentation of Mani, his revelations and his movement, is in order. While our knowledge is still far from complete, its

¹ 2 Ke. 423.3–424.14 (abridged), trans. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley, eds., *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

history, rituals, and tenets are much better understood today than a century or even a few decades ago, due to a growing body of scholarly works on which the present study builds.²

Mani (c.216–277) was a Syriac-speaking subject of the Sasanian Empire, who grew up in a Jewish-Christian ‘baptist’ community in Mesopotamia, linked to a shadowy prophet named Elchasai.³ His life is generally told in terms of his revelations. In his 13th year, Mani received the first in a series of revelations brought by his divine, heavenly Twin. In his 25th year, around 240 CE, another revelation caused him to leave the baptists, after heated conflict within the community. The next 35 years saw him travelling extensively, preaching his revelations and administering to a growing number of followers in the Sasanian Empire and beyond, while presenting himself as the Apostle of Jesus Christ. Christianity played a key part in his mission, but he also drew on others traditions, a point to which we return below. At some point, he secured approval from the Sasanian king, Shapur I (reign c.240–271).⁴ But in 277, the then-reigning king Bahram II had him chained. According to his followers, Mani died after 26 days of imprisonment and torture.⁵ His death was accompanied by persecutions, but by then adherents of his movement had spread far and wide – Egypt being one of their earliest centres in the Roman Empire.

The revelations had presented him with a dualistic vision of the cosmos: here raged a war between two opposing ‘natures’ or ‘realms’, Light (Spirit) and

2 For such overviews, see Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Michel Tardieu, *Manichaeism*, trans. M. B. Devoise (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), both originally published in the 1980s. A more recent introduction is found in Nicholas J. Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism: An Ancient Faith Rediscovered* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2011). For the life of Mani, see most recently Iain Gardner, *The Founder of Manichaeism: Rethinking the Life of Mani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). For a survey of work in the field, already somewhat dated, see Andrew Wearing, ‘Manichaeism in the 21st Century’, in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on the Sacred*, ed. Frances di Lauro (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2006).

3 For a dissenting view, maintaining a distinction between these ‘baptists’ and Elchasai, cf. Gerard P. Luttikhuisen, ‘The Baptists of Mani’s Youth and the Elchasaites’, in *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

4 The date of the meeting and the extent of Shapur I’s approval is unknown. See Paul C. Dilley, ‘Mani’s Wisdom at the Court of the Persian Kings’, in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, ed. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 39–41.

5 Scholarly debate has surrounded the year of his death. It has to be calculated from the date solemnised by the Manichaean Church, which claimed to preserve the exact time of death: the eleventh hour, Monday, fourth of the month Adar. If this tradition was correct, a dating of this event to 277 CE, Monday 26th February, by our calendar, seems now to be supported by the Dublin *Kephalaia*; see Iain Gardner, ‘Mani’s Last Days’, in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, ed. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 203–5.

Darkness (Matter). Manichaean discourse presented this war in a tripartite mythic scheme known as ‘the three times’.⁶ Time begun when the demons of Darkness attacked the Light, disturbing the primeval equilibrium. The highest God, the Father of Lights, emanated divinities to defend his realm, but in the ensuing battle the combatants became mixed. Next, a new series of divinities shaped demonic Matter into a vehicle for separating the two, creating the world. Surviving demons retaliated, however; the trapped Light became further divided, bound in the material bodies of humans, animals, plants, and soil. The war continues as divinities seek to free these Light Souls.⁷ Third, the Light will, in the future, achieve its victory: a final separation of the two substances, where all souls are reunited with the Light and all creatures of Darkness are bound and imprisoned.

In the course of his life, Mani presented his evolving body of teachings in books, traditionally numbered seven, with accounts of his experiences, myths, parables, theological arguments, letters, hymns, prayers, and even paintings.⁸ Not least, he formed a community, in western sources referred to as an *ekklesia* (Gr. ἐκκλησία), i.e. a ‘Church’, to preserve the teachings and promote the salvation of souls. It is here that we find the blue print for Manichaean social organisation. It was envisioned in terms of a basic twofold structure, divided into an ascetic elite, ‘the righteous’ or ‘the chosen ones’ (Elect), and lay-followers, ‘catechumens’ or ‘hearers’ (Auditors).⁹ The Elect performed ‘the work of the religion’, committing to rituals and ascetic discipline.¹⁰ They were to abstain from eating meat, drinking alcohol, owning property, or consuming more food than necessary for their daily needs. They should not harm living beings

6 See Iris Colditz, ‘The Abstract of a Religion or: What Is Manichaeism?’, in *Mani in Dublin: Selected Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the International Association of Manichaean Studies in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 8–12 September 2009*, ed. S. G. Richter, C. Horton, and K. Ohlhafer (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

7 It should be emphasised that his notion of ‘Light Souls’ does not correspond to the mainstream Christian (or Neoplatonist) one of the soul. Light Souls are a visible, physical substance, seen for instance in the divine ‘light-givers’, the sun and moon.

8 None have been preserved in their entirety. For scholarship on the ‘canon’ of Mani, see Gregor Wurst, ‘L’état de la recherche sur le canon manichéen’, in *Le canon du Nouveau Testament: regards nouveaux sur l’histoire de sa formation*, ed. Gabriella Aragione, Eric Junod, and Enrico Norelli (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2005).

9 I here largely follow Jason D. BeDuhn’s usage of the terms ‘Auditor’ and ‘Elect’; see furthermore Jason D. BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body: In Discipline and Ritual* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 25–30.

10 See Nicholas Sims-Williams, ‘The Manichaean Commandments: A Survey of the Sources’, in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, ed. A. D. H. Bivar (Leiden: Brill, 1985); BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 33–53; Andrea Piras, ‘Sealing the Body: Theory and Practices of Manichaean Asceticism’, *Religion in the Roman Empire* 4 (2018).

(including by tilling soil or picking fruit), indulge in harmful passions, such as sexual intercourse, or speak blasphemies. Instead, they were to fast, preach, sing hymns, offer weekly confessions, read and copy scripture, and travel continuously, living a life of 'blessed poverty'. In this way, their souls tamed their material bodies, and made them capable of releasing Light. Once a day they consumed a vegetarian meal through which they purified Light, freeing it from the cycle of rebirths that kept it imprisoned in Matter.¹¹ A hierarchy of 12 Teachers, 72 bishops, and presbyters, all presided over by a single leader called the *archegos* (ἀρχηγός), Mani's 'heir', were to manage community affairs. The majority of adherents, the Auditors, took on duties in accordance with their abilities. Their most important task was to assist the Elect with all their needs: clothes, recruits, shelter, and their daily, ritual meal. As a consequence, the Auditors themselves got to take part in the liberation of Light, bringing them closer to their future salvation.

This is what may be termed the 'canonical' depiction of the Manichaean community, reconstructed by scholars on the basis of a variety of sources. But was this the entity that most lay Manichaeans knew? Did they identify as part of a far-flung movement, represented by an Elect hierarchy, rooted in the revelations of Mani and originating in distant Mesopotamia? How distinct did they consider their religious practice to be from that of their non-Manichaean neighbours? We return to the scholarly debate concerning these questions, but first we need to briefly survey the sources that have laid the premises for this debate: the Manichaean material from Egypt and the recent discoveries at Kellis, in particular.

2 The Sources

2.1 *Egyptian Manichaean Texts*

Most of the information available to early scholars was derived from fourth-century patristic writers such as Epiphanius of Salamis, pseudo-Hegemonius, and especially Augustine (354–430), bishop of Hippo Regius in today's Algeria. Augustine was an erstwhile adherent of Mani, having become so as a young student in Carthage in 373, but he gradually lost faith in the movement and in 386 made his famous 'conversion' to Christianity.¹² As a bishop

11 See in particular BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 163–87.

12 For a recent take on Augustine's 'de-conversion', see Jason D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma. Vol. I: Conversion and Apostasy, 373–388 C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). For other recent work on Augustine and

of the ‘Catholic’ Church, he became a merciless critic of Manichaeism and practices. Polemical writings against the movement make up a respectable part of his preserved writings. More detached, although from a later period, are the works of Muslim scholars touching on the tradition, which came to scholarly attention in the second half of the 19th century – foremost among them, Abu al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Ishāḥaq al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist*.¹³

Manichaean ‘insider’ texts with which to compare these sources only appeared in the 20th century. The first discoveries were made by European and Japanese expeditions to the Turfan Basin (in today’s western China) in the early 1900s, bringing to light a large Manichaean literature written in Iranian, Chinese, and Turkic languages. In the west, a Manichaean treatise in Latin was first found in a cave outside Tebessa (Algeria) in 1918. To date, however, the most important western Manichaean texts are those that were found at Medinet Madi, a site in the Fayyum in Middle Egypt known as Narmouthis in the Roman era. This find consisted of seven (or so) codices, found by local workers around 1929, acquired by European and American buyers in Cairo in 1930–31, and announced to the scholarly world in 1933 by Carl Schmidt and Hans J. Polotsky. Some landed in London (later Dublin), others Berlin.¹⁴ All were written in a dialect of Coptic linked to Upper Egypt, and date c.400, although the texts within are mostly translations of earlier works. They include:

- One collection of Mani’s *Epistles* (the *Epistle* codex)
- One collection of Church historical narratives (the *Acts* codex)
- One collection of excerpts from Mani’s *Living Gospel* (the *Synaxeis* codex)
- One collection of homilies (the *Homilies* codex)
- One large collection of psalms (the *Psalm-book*, split in two: 1 and 2 Ps)

Manichaeism, see the studies in Johannes van Oort, *Mani and Augustine: Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

13 By Gustav Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Manichäismus* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1862), published posthumously. The passages on Manichaeism is translated in Bayard Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadim: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture. Vol. II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). See also John C. Reeves, *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2011).

14 Hans J. Polotsky, Carl Schmidt, and Hugo Ibscher, ‘Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten: Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler’, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1933). Schmidt mentioned eight codices, but it has been assumed that the Psalm codex was split in two for sale. See James M. Robinson, *The Manichaean Codices of Medinet Madi* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013), 4; Iain Gardner, ‘An Introduction to the Chester Beatty Kephalaia Codex’, in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, ed. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 2 n.2.

- Two codices of theological ‘chapters’ (*kephalaia*), respectively entitled:
 - *The Chapters of the Teacher* (1 Ke, or the Berlin *Kephalaia*)
 - *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani* (2 Ke, the Dublin *Kephalaia*)

A few were published before the Second World War.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the *Epistles* and the *Acts* were not among them; they were stored in Berlin and disappeared in the chaos after the war. The remaining codices were in a poor condition. While the last few decades have seen the publication and re-publication of several texts, much remains unpublished even today.¹⁶ Another Egyptian find of paramount importance is a miniature codex containing traditions, purportedly by Mani’s disciples, concerning his life and missionary journeys in Greek.¹⁷

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- 15 Hans Jakob Polotsky and Hugo Ibscher, *Manichäische Homilien* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934); Hans Jakob Polotsky and Alexander Böhlig, *Kephalaia (I). Erste Hälfte. Lieferung 1–10* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1940); Charles R. C. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book. Part II* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1938).
- 16 Another fascicle of 1 Ke, based on work by Polotsky mostly completed by 1943, was published by Alexander Böhlig, *Kephalaia (I). Zweite Hälfte. Lieferung 11/12*. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1966). Remaining parts have been only recently published, by Wolf-Peter Funk, ed. *Kephalaia I. Zweite Hälfte, Lieferung 13/14* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1999); id., *Kephalaia I. Zweite Hälfte. Lieferung 15/16* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2000); id., *Kephalaia I. Zweite Hälfte. Lieferung 17/18* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2018). Facsimile editions of 2 Ke were published by Søren Giversen in the 1980s; see Wolf-Peter Funk, ‘Zur Faksimileausgabe der koptischen Manichaica in der Chester-Beatty-Sammlung’, *Orientalia* 59, no. 4 (1990). Its contents were treated by Michel Tardieu, ‘La diffusion de bouddhisme dans l’empire Kouchan, l’Iran et la Chine, d’après un kephalaion manichéen inédit’, *Studia Iranica* 17 (1988). Work on a critical edition is ongoing, and a first volume has been published; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley, eds., *The Chapters of the Wisdom*. Remaining leafs of Mani’s *Epistles* are being edited by Gardner and Funk. For work on the *Psalm-book*, see Gregor Wurst, *Liber Psalmorum. Pars II. Fasc. 1. Die Bêma-Psalmen* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996); Siegfried G. Richter, *Liber Psalmorum. Pars II. Fasc. 2. Die Herakleides-Psalmen* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); id., ‘Arbeiten am koptisch-manichäischen Psalmenbuch I’, in *Il Manicheismo. Nuove prospettive della ricerca* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005). For the *Homilies*; Nils A. Pedersen, *The Manichaean Homilies: With a Number of Hitherto Unpublished Fragments* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). For the *Synaxeis* Codex; Wolf-Peter Funk, ‘Mani’s Account of Other Religions According to the Coptic Synaxeis Codex’, in *New Light on Manichaeism*, ed. Jason D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
- 17 Albert Henrichs and Ludwig Koenen, ‘Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 5 (1970); Ludwig Koenen, ‘Zur Herkunft des Kölner Mani-Codex’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (1973); Albert Henrichs, ‘The Cologne Mani Codex Reconsidered’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 83 (1979). A critical edition was published in Ludwig Koenen and Cornelia Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes. Kritische Edition* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988); with some additional remarks and readings in Cornelia Römer, *Manis frühe Missionsreisen nach der Kölner Manibibliographie: Textkritischer Kommentar und Erläuterungen zu p.121–p.192 des Kölner Mani-Kodex* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).

It came to light in Cologne, and is therefore referred to as the Cologne Mani Codex (CMC). Details surrounding its discovery are hazy, apart from the fact that it was found in (Upper) Egypt, but the publication of its discovery in 1970 provided new impetus for work on western Manichaeism.

2.2 *The Discoveries at Ismant el-Kharab*

The 1970s, furthermore, saw the beginning of archaeological research in the Dakhleh Oasis. Until then, this remote region had received little attention compared to the well-known sites of the Nile Valley. European explorers first came to the Oasis in 1819, reporting on ruins and rock carvings in the area, and the American Herbert E. Winlock, who visited in 1908, provided a comprehensive account of Dakhleh.¹⁸ The ruins of Ismant el-Kharab were located and described at this time. Interest in the Oasis was renewed in the mid-20th century by Ahmed Fakhry, one of the first Egyptian-educated archaeologists, and his work prompted Canadian archaeologists to launch the Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP) and the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO) to initiate surveys in 1977. Excavations continue until the present, and reports and conferences on Oasis archaeology have been published in the Dakhleh Oasis Project-series, and, more recently, in the Oasis Papers-series.

Excavations at Ismant el-Kharab ('Ismant the ruined') started in 1986/7. Already one of the first excavated sites, the domestic complex House 1–3, held rich deposits of papyri. The Roman-era name of the site was still unknown at this point, but these papyri showed Ismant to be the site of Kellis, a village previously known from a few, scattered papyri from the Nile Valley. Their publication has been ongoing since the mid-90s. The first volume of documentary material, *P.Kellis I*, was published by Klaas A. Worp in 1995. It contained 90 remains of papyrus texts in Greek, all from the House 1–3 complex. Genres include letters, memos, astrological calendars, contracts, and petitions. Two years later, Roger S. Bagnall published the Kellis Agricultural Account Book, a codex from House 2 of great importance for understanding the local economy.¹⁹ Coptic documentary material were edited by Iain Gardner, Anthony Alcock and Wolf-Peter Funk, and published in two instalments, *P.Kellis V* (1999) and *P.Kellis VII* (2014). These two volumes contain 118 texts and fragments, mostly of private letters. All but ten stem from the House 1–3 complex. Texts written on ostraka from House 1–3 were included in Worp's publication

18 Anna L. Boozer, 'Archaeology on Egypt's Edge: Archaeological Research in the Dakhleh Oasis, 1819–1977', *Ancient West & East* 12 (2013).

19 Roger S. Bagnall, ed., *The Kellis Agricultural Account Book (P.Kellis IV Gr. 96)* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1997).

O.Kellis I (2004). Additional material, mostly from other parts of Kellis, has appeared in various articles.²⁰ Finally, the literary material from House 1–3 consists of a range of texts in Coptic, Greek, as well as fragments in Syriac. In 1991, it was realised that these included Manichaean literary remains. They were edited by Iain Gardner, with the assistance of several other scholars, and published in *P.Kellis II* (1996) and *P.Kellis VI* (2007).²¹ These volumes contain a total of 31 pieces. They include Biblical texts and magical texts, but also remains of Mani's *Epistles*, prayers of Manichaean extraction, as well as psalms that can be identified with counterparts in the Medinet Madi *Psalm-book*.

3 Manichaean Social Organisation

The amount of material relating to Manichaeism from the Roman Empire is today relatively substantial.²² Yet before the discoveries at Kellis, sources for

20 Klaas A. Worp, *Greek Ostraka from Kellis. Vol. 1 (O.Kellis I, nos. 1–293)* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2004); John F. Oates, 'Sale of a Donkey (P.Duke inv. G9)', *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 25 (1988); John F. Oates and Peter van Minnen, 'Three Duke University Papyri from Kellis', in *Papyri in Memory of P.J. Sijpesteijn (P.Sijp.)*, ed. Klaas A. Worp and Adriaan J. B. Sirks (Oakville: The American Society of Papyrologists, 2007); T. de Jong and Klaas A. Worp, 'A Greek Horoscope from 373 AD', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 106 (1995); T. de Jong and Klaas A. Worp, 'More Greek Horoscopes from Kellis (Dakhleh Oasis)', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 137 (2001); Roger S. Bagnall and Klaas A. Worp, 'Two 4th Century Accounts from Kellis', in *Papyri in honorem Johannis Bingen octogenarii (P.Bingen)*, ed. Henri Melaerts, Rudolf de Smet, and Cecilia Saerens (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); Colin A. Hope and Klaas A. Worp, 'A Greek Account on a Clay Tablet from the Dakhleh Oasis', in *ibid.*; Klaas A. Worp, 'A New Wooden Board from the Temple at Kellis (with plate XXVI)', in *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Berlin, 13.–19.8 1995*, ed. Bärbel Kramer, et al. (Stuttgart; Leipzig B. G. Teubner, 1997); Klaas A. Worp, 'Short Texts from the Main Temple', in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons*, ed. Colin A. Hope; Gillian E. Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2002); Colin A. Hope and Klaas A. Worp, 'Dedication inscription from the Main Temple', in *ibid.*; Roger S. Bagnall, Colin A. Hope, and Klaas A. Worp, 'Family Papers from Second-Century A.D. Kellis', *Chronique d'Égypte* 86, no. 171–172 (2011); Klaas A. Worp, 'Miscellaneous New Greek Papyri from Kellis (P.Gascou 67–88)', in *Mélanges Jean Gascou: Textes et études papyrologiques (P.Gascou)*, ed. Jean-Luc Fournet and Arietta Papaconstantinou (Paris: Collège de France, 2016).

21 There was also a codex of speeches by the classical Athenian rhetor Isocrates, published in Klaas A. Worp and Albert Rijksbaron, eds., *The Kellis Isocrates Codex (P.Kellis III Gr. 95)* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1997).

22 For an extensive selection, see Iain Gardner and Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

apprehending life and practice among the laity did not come from lay insiders themselves. Early scholars were dependent on the polemically shaped writings of Augustine and other anti-Manichaean texts, while the materials from Medinet Madi and Turfan seem largely to have been the product of Manichaean authorities. Much scholarship has, moreover, been preoccupied with editing the latter texts, most of which were badly damaged. When engaged with historical analysis, more attention has been paid to Mani and his role within the ‘history of religions’, i.e. his formative influences or his mythological system, than with the social practices of his later adherents. One feature that early scholars did stress, however, was the institutional ‘primitiveness’ of the movement. The Elect discipline, entailing an itinerant and ascetic life, was seen as ruling out features such as temples, altars, images, and organised ritual.²³ Moreover, for most of the 20th century, it was primarily seen as a type of ‘Gnosticism’, i.e. a spiritual faith focused on salvation through revealed knowledge. Manichaeism was therefore assumed to put little emphasis on or even rejected ritual practice, making institutional organisation less important.²⁴ At the same time, this had to be reconciled with its many institutionalised features, such as its hierarchy of officials. With the discovery of Manichaean remains in the Turfan Basin, scholars were faced with evidence for a state-supported, Manichaean organisation in possession of ‘monasteries’, ritual proscriptions, strict regulations, and steady income.²⁵

These two dimensions have continued to exist side-by-side in the scholarly literature. The concept of Gnosticism has been problematised, and its relevance for understanding Manichaeism has lessened, but the view that Roman Manichaeism was characterised by weak institutions remains influential.²⁶ Most scholars agree that western Manichaeism followed a very different trajectory from that of the east, being nearer to the charismatic mode of life of the early movement than of the later organised Church in Turfan – even leading to the claim that ‘the Manichaeans [of the west] did not share

23 See Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre*, 324–25; Ferdinand C. Baur, *Das manichäische Religions-system nach den Quellen neu untersucht und entwickelt* (Tübingen: S. F. Osiander, 1831), 351.

24 For a review and criticism of this approach, see BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 211–22.

25 For the Manichaean Central Asian texts, see Jes P. Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature* (New York: Scholars' Facsimilies & Reprints, 1975); Werner Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1981); Tardieu, *Manichaeism*, 57–74; Claudia Leurini, *The Manichaean Church: An Essay Mainly Based on the Texts from Central Asia* (Rome: Scienze e lettere, 2013).

26 See Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

the view with the Christians that the church should be an institution.²⁷ It has received support among scholars of Augustine and Latin North African Manichaeism, who, following the work of François Decret, have come to focus on local diversity within the movement. Decret argued that the Manichaean Church was rather distant to most adherents in North Africa, and indeed that Manichaeans in the Latin west largely rejected the type of clerical authority that Augustine later came to embrace as a Catholic. Instead, adherents exercised much local autonomy in organising the faith.²⁸ Decret's views led to a spirited exchange with another prominent French scholar, Michel Tardieu, but several scholars have since taken its localised character as a starting point for investigating North African Manichaeism.²⁹ Among the strongest proponents of this view is Richard Lim. In an article from 1989, he criticised the way scholars have uncritically reproduced 'a consistent and coherent social entity called "Manichaeism", together with its attendant system of ideas'.³⁰ He argued that the Elect disciplinary regime was non-conducive to an effective church institution, so that any such institution must have played little role in North Africa. The Elect are better conceived of along the lines of Gerd Theissen's 'wandering charismatics'; that is, itinerant religious *virtuosi*, whose authority was based on their individual qualities rather than on institutional affiliation. Instead of focusing on the Manichaean church organisation, scholars should pay attention to how Manichaean ideas and texts were appropriated by Christians.³¹ In a more recent article, he has similarly criticised scholars for taking a distinct 'Manichaean' group identity for granted, arguing that this identity was mainly adopted by elite Christians with an interest in philosophy.

27 Samuel N. C. Lieu, 'A Lapsed Manichaean's Correspondence with a Confucian Official in the Sung Dynasty (1264)', in *Manichaeism in Central Asia and Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 104.

28 François Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne: IV^e-V^e siècles. Étude historique et doctrinale* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1978), 267-68; id., 'Le manichéisme présentait-il en Afrique et à Rome des particularismes régionaux distinctifs?', *Augustinianum* 34, no. 1 (1994): 12ff.

29 Michel Tardieu, 'Vues nouvelles sur le manichéisme africain?', *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 25, no. 3-4 (1979); François Decret, 'Encore le manichéisme', *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 26, no. 3-4 (1980). For studies following Decret, see Daniel McBride, 'Egyptian Manichaeism', *Journal for the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 18 (1988), J. Kevin Coyle, 'Characteristics of Manichaeism in Roman Africa', in *New Light on Manichaeism*, ed. Jason D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

30 Richard Lim, 'Unity and Diversity among Western Manichaeans: A Reconsideration of Mani's *sancta ecclesia*', *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 35, no. 2 (1989): 232.

31 *Ibid.*, 239-46.

The arguments of Lim and other scholars who warn against taking the ‘canonical’ depiction for granted have brought a much-needed call for historical sensitivity to the field, in line with deconstructions of other heresiological categories and of a monolithic early Christian ‘Church’ or ‘original community’.³² But in spite of concerns for the Manichaean point of view, Lim’s argument is primarily based on the writings of Augustine and other polemical sources. Nils A. Pedersen has recently objected that the Manichaean texts themselves give us little reason to think that western Manichaeans were primarily Christian intellectuals: preserved Manichaean texts are not philosophical treatises, but communal and ritual in character.³³ Jason D. BeDuhn’s reconstruction of the Elect meal, based on Manichaean sources, has shown a high degree of unity between eastern and western texts, in terms of norms and discourses that governed ritual practice.³⁴ Still, these texts chiefly provide evidence for the discourse of Manichaean authorities. Lay adherents, such as Horos and Horion, may not have considered themselves to be participating in a distinct ‘Manichaeism’, despite attempts by authorities (‘Manichaean’ as well as ‘Christian’) to frame them in this light.

3.1 *‘Manichaeism’ and its Discontents*

In this context, the controversy surrounding the labels ‘Manichaeism’ and ‘Manichaean’, and their implications for Manichaean self-identity (or lack thereof), needs to be reviewed. As Nicholas Baker-Brian has put it, ‘arguably the most problematic label in Manichaean studies continues to be the term “Manichaean” itself.’³⁵ In one sense, discussion of how to label Manichaeism, and the consequences of labels for how the movement is to be understood, can be traced back to debates such as those between Augustine and the Manichaeans themselves. For Augustine and contemporary Christian leaders, Manichaeism originated as a *hairesis* of their own tradition, a dangerous and novel deviation from the true teachings of the Church, particularly abhorrent

32 E.g. Alain le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e–III^e siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985). Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*; Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin, ‘Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies’, in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. E. Iricinschi and H. M. Zellentin (Tübeck: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Stanley Stowers, ‘The Concept of “Community” and the History of Early Christianity’, *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 23 (2011).

33 Nils A. Pedersen, ‘Manichaean Self-Designations in the Western Tradition’, in *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity*, ed. Johannes van Oort (Leiden: Brill), 177–98.

34 BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*.

35 Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism*, 23.

for its dualism.³⁶ Medieval Christian authorities perpetuated this view, employing the term ‘Manichaeism’ to vilify dualists and other ‘heretics’ of their time.

Modern scholarly usage of the term is rooted in the religious polemics of early modern Europe. The Huguenot Isaac de Beausobre (1659–1738) is often regarded as the first modern scholar of Manichaeism.³⁷ In his view, Manichaeans and their presumed successors, the Cathars and the Valdenses, were ‘heretical’ in a more positive sense: they could in some ways be considered proto-Protestants; groups representing an early strand of Christianity that had been in opposition to – and in turn been vilified by – the Catholic Church, much like the French Huguenots themselves.³⁸ With the expansion of the study of religion, more attention was bestowed upon other formative influences. Ferdinand C. Baur argued that Iranian and Indian traditions were particularly important for Mani.³⁹ The translation of works by Muslim scholars touching on Manichaeism brought the Mesopotamian background to the fore, drawn attention to by Konrad Kessler.⁴⁰ The early 20th-century discovery of Iranian, Chinese, and Turkic Manichaean texts in Turfan strengthened the quest for origins outside the Christian sphere. Richard Reitzenstein saw the Iranian Manichaean texts as a ‘missing link’, evidence for a Mazdayasnian origins of Hellenistic mystery religions, Christianity, as well as Gnosticism – including Manichaeism.⁴¹ This understanding came to dominate the study of Manichaeism for much of the 20th century. When Coptic Manichaean texts

36 For Roman anti-Manichaean discourse, see Samuel N. C. Lieu, ‘Some Themes in Later Roman Anti-Manichaean Polemics: I’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 68, no. 2 (1986); id., ‘Some Themes in Later Roman Anti-Manichaean Polemics: II’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 69, no. 1 (1986); Sarah Stroumsa and Guy G. Stroumsa, ‘Aspects of Anti-Manichaean Polemics in Late Antiquity and under Early Islam’, *Harvard Theological Review* 81, no. 01 (1988); Neil Adkin, ‘Heretics and Manichees’, *Orpheus* 14 (1993). For later anti-Manichaean polemics by Jews and Muslims, see John C. Reeves, ‘A Manichaean “Blood Libel”’, *ARAM* 16 (2004).

37 Johannes van Oort ‘Würdigung Isaac de Beausobres (1659–1738)’, in *Studia Manichaica IV. Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Manichaean Studies, Berlin, 14.–18. Juli 1997*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann and Peter Zieme (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2000); Guy G. Stroumsa, ‘Isaac de Beausobre Revisited: The Birth of Manichaean Studies’, in *ibid.*; and also id., *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 113–23.

38 Stroumsa, ‘Isaac de Beausobre’, 604–11.

39 Baur, *Das manichäische Religionssystem*, 416ff; Stroumsa, *A New Science*, 123.

40 Konrad Kessler, *Mani. Forschungen über die manichäische Religion* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1976).

41 See Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 84–90; Iain Gardner and Samuel N. C. Lieu, ‘From Narmouthis (Medinet Madi) to Kellis (Ismant el-Kharab): Manichaean Documents from Roman Egypt’, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 86 (1996): 147–48.

found at Medinet Madi in Egypt were published in the 1930s, they furnished evidence which, amongst others, led scholars to examine the connection between Manichaeism and Mandaeism more closely.⁴²

Still, the Christian connection was never neglected. Francis C. Burkitt used another newly-recovered source, the anti-Manichaean writings of the fourth-century Christian leader Ephrem of Edessa, to argue for a Christian background.⁴³ Ephrem quoted Manichaean writings in Mani's own language, Syriac, making his testimony particularly valuable. Reitzenstein was also criticised by one of his own students, Hans Schaeder, who drew on a treatise by the late-third century philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis to argue the essentially Hellenistic-Christian nature of the movement. The importance of Christianity to Mani's formative years and the movement at large, in line with Burkitt's approach, is generally accepted today. The discovery of Christian gnostic texts in Nag Hammadi in 1945 brought insight into the diversity of early Christian traditions, and the Cologne Mani Codex that appeared in 1969 shed new light on Mani's self-conception and life, attesting to his youth among the 'Elchasaite' Jewish-Christian baptists. This has led to valuable studies of, for instance, Manichaean Bible exegesis and the writings of Christian heresiologists.⁴⁴ It has also led to increased scrutiny of the term 'Manichaeism'. In preserved literary sources, 'Manichaean' is only rarely found as a label of self-identity. While Ephrem claimed that Mani had bestowed his name on the movement, this is often rejected by scholars.⁴⁵ Following up on his analysis of Manichaean organisation, Lim has been one of the most forceful critics of the usage of this term. In an article from 2008, he has argued that it obscures our understanding of the movement. As his starting point, he takes one of the few attested instances of 'Manichaean' used as an autonym, found in a letter to Augustine

42 Geo Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism* (Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhandeln, 1946); Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, *Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book: Prosody and Mandaean Parallels* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1949).

43 Francis C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925); Gardner and Lieu, 'From Narmouthis', 147–48; for Ephrem's sources, John C. Reeves, 'Manichaean Citations from the *Prose Refutations* of Ephrem', in *Emerging from Darkness*, ed. Paul Mirecki and Jason D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

44 Nils A. Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God: A Study of Titus of Bostra's Contra Manichaeos* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Jason D. BeDuhn and Paul A. Mirecki, eds., *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Jacob A. van den Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichaean Missionary Practice: The Case of Adimantus and Augustine* (Boston: Brill, 2009); Alexander Böhlig, Peter Nagel, and Siegfried Richter, *Die Bibel bei den Manichäern und verwandte Studien* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

45 So, for instance J. Kevin Coyle, 'Foreign and Insane: Labelling Manichaeism in the Roman Empire', *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* 33, no. 2 (2004): 218.

by a certain Secundinus. In Lim's view, Secundinus should not be seen as a Manichaean, *per se*, but is better understood as 'a philosophically inclined Christian who has chosen to follow the superior teachings of Mani'.⁴⁶ By using 'Manichaeism', scholars have been reproducing a label created by mainstream Christian authorities: 'we owe the sense of a distinctive Manichaean identity to the works of catholic/orthodox Christian writers who ... sought to invent the image of an alien Other so as to be able to condemn more efficaciously the specific practices, beliefs and persons.'⁴⁷ Thus, scholars wrongly construe Manichaeism as a separate religion, obscuring the fact that for most believers it was just 'another – indeed more rigorist – way to follow Christ's teachings.'⁴⁸ Others have made similar assessments. Baker-Brian has argued that the term obscures the formative influences on Mani (i.e. his Judaeo-Christian background) and perpetuates the 'assumption that Mani's teachings appeared fully formed, systematised and institutionally-implemented from the very earliest days.'⁴⁹ This critique of 'Manichaeism' has led to attempts to discard the term. It is now frequently argued that it is better simply to subsume Manichaeism under the more general category 'Christianity'.⁵⁰ Baker-Brian, while deciding to retain the term in his book, ends his survey of the debate by stating that 'Manichaeism' might be better conceived of as a form of ancient Mesopotamian Christianity.⁵¹ Alexander Khosroyev has suggested that a description such as 'the high-mythologised syncretistic dualistic Christianity of Mani' might make more sense than 'Manichaeism'.⁵²

46 Richard Lim, 'The *nomen manichaeorum* and its Uses in Late Antiquity', in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 160.

47 *Ibid.*, 147.

48 *Ibid.*, 164.

49 Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism*, 23.

50 See Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof*, 8; Peter van Minnen, review of *Documentary Letters from the Middle East*, by Eva Mira Grob and Andreas Kaplony, eds., *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 46 (2009); 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 Garry W. Trompf*, ed. Carole Cusack and Christopher Hartney (Boston: Brill, 2010).

51 Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism*, 24.

52 'Also kann man diese religiöse Bewegung als "das hochmythologisiert-synkretistische dualistische Christentum des Mani" bezeichnen. In solcher Definition scheint mehr Sinn zu sein als im Terminus "Manichäismus". Alexander Khosroyev, 'Manichäismus: eine Art persisches Christentum?', in *Inkulturation des Christentums im Sasanidenreich*, ed. Arafa Mustafa, Jürgen Tubach, and G. Sophia Vashalomidze (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2007), 51.

However, there are to my mind good reasons to keep the label ‘Manichaeism’, and to maintain a distinction between it and ‘Christianity’. Certainly, scholars should not uncritically adopt heresiological labels or reify phenomena that their research subjects would not have recognised.⁵³ On the other hand, the history of the term ‘Manichaean’ is not as clear-cut as it has been made out to be. Heresiologists certainly preferred this label, perhaps to emphasise the foreignness of the movement,⁵⁴ and it is not frequently found in our sources – but it *is* found: the corpus includes two instances of ‘Manichaean’ used as a self-designation,⁵⁵ and its usage was promoted by the authors of the Berlin *Kephalaia*, who (in agreement with Ephrem) attributed it to Mani.⁵⁶ It may be that the term was reserved for specific contexts, perhaps for particular instances of outside identification, as argued by Pedersen.⁵⁷ Conversely, the term ‘Christian’ is not widely used among Manichaeans as a self-designation either. While some of Augustine’s interlocutors employ it, claiming for themselves ‘true’ Christianity, it is not found in the letters of Kellis, as Baker-Brian and Pedersen have both pointed out.⁵⁸

More importantly, I am not convinced that scholarly usage of the term ‘Manichaeism’ as an etic label causes unreasonable distortion. For one, other suggested labels do not seem suitable either. Labels such as ‘Mesopotamian

53 See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); Boulluc, *La notion d'hérésie*; Iricinschi and Zellentin, ‘Making Selves’.

54 See for instance Coyle, ‘Foreign and Insane’, 218; Lim, ‘nomen manichaeorum’, 149.

55 By Secundinus, and on the gravestone of a certain Bassa, ‘Manichaean’, found near Salona. For the latter, see Madeleine Scopello, *Femme, gnose et manichéisme: de l'espace mythique au territoire du réel* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 293–315. The term can likely be restored in keph. 115 (1 Ke. 271.15), albeit see the cautionary note (based on the few other occurrences) of Iain Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 278 n.146.

56 In keph. 105, Mani is made to explain why (or in which instances) certain people use the name of ‘Christ’ to label themselves. Subsequently, he asserts: ‘by my good and useful teachings that I have revealed; see, people who love me are called by my name!’ (1 Ke. 259.13). A conceptual distinction between ‘Christian’ and ‘Manichaean’, and a promotion of a label based on Mani’s name, is implied, as noted by Alexander Böhlig, ‘Christliche Wurzeln in Manichäismus’, in *Mysterion und Wahrheit: Gesammelte Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 204–5. Pedersen has cautioned against generalising based on a single passage, but also suggested (in line with recent arguments by Gardner) that the *Kephalaia* ‘represents an attempt to dissociate Manichaeism from Christianity’. Pedersen, ‘Manichaean Self-Designations’, 191. If so, this development was likely taking place already towards the end of the third century, in the Syro-Mesopotamian sphere; see Chapter 9, Section 4, n.115.

57 Pedersen, ‘Manichaean Self-Designations’.

58 Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism*, 17; Pedersen, ‘Manichaean Self-Designations’, 188–89.

Christianity' do not capture the distinctiveness of the beliefs, practices, or self-understanding of the movement. 'Manichaean Christianity' has been suggested as another replacement. However, the category of 'Christianity' itself should not be taken for granted, and is problematic in this context. It entails a modern typology that subsumes 'Manichaeism' under 'Christianity', in turn contrasting it to 'Buddhism' or 'Mazdayasna'. This would have been foreign to Mani, who considered his Church just as much heir to the 'Churches' of Buddha and Zarathustra as to that of Paul or Christ, and equally opposed to their later incarnations.

Secondly, the term 'Manichaeism' does not in itself obscure the formative Christian influences on Mani, at least no more or less than the term 'Christian' obscures the Jewish context of early Christianity.⁵⁹ Conversely, exchanging 'Manichaean' for 'Christian' obscures other, central influences and historical developments that contributed to the movement's characteristics. Mani may have started out as an enthusiastic ('Elchasaite') Christian, and the narratives of Jesus and his disciples, the epistles of Paul, Biblical exegesis, and Christian symbols all remained important to his followers. However, by the end of his 35 years of activity, the movement had integrated ideas such as the salvific role of the Elect, the suffering world soul, reincarnation, the periodic incarnation of 'Apostles of Light' (including Zarathustra and Buddha), and divine roles for the sun and the moon, as well as practices such as daily ritual meals and weekly confession; features consciously adapted from Iranian (Mazdayasnian), Indian (Buddhist, Jain), or other traditions, or internal developments.⁶⁰ I do

59 This has admittedly led scholars to discard the term 'Christianity' for the earliest groups, preferring terms such as 'Jesus movement' or 'Christ groups'. However, as we shall see in the course of the present study, the 'Church' of Mani emerged in a very different context, and with a very different starting point, from that of the early Jesus movement.

60 For the Indian (particularly Jain) background of Manichaean teachings on 'reincarnation' (μεταγγισμός), see Albert Henrichs, "'Thou Shalt Not Kill a Tree": Greek, Manichean and Indian Tales', *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 16, no. 1–2 (1979): 106; also Iain Gardner, 'Some Comments on Mani and Indian Religions: According to the Coptic Kephalaia', in *Il Manicheismo. Nuove prospettive della ricerca*, ed. A. van Tongerloo and L. Cirillo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); and Max Deeg and Iain Gardner, 'Indian Influence on Mani Reconsidered: The Case of Jainism', *International Journal of Jaina Studies* 5, no. 2 (2009). For the Indian roots of the confession ritual, see Jason D. BeDuhn, 'The Near Eastern Connections of Manichaean Confessionary Practice', *ARAM* 16 (2004); id., 'The Manichaean Weekly Confession Ritual', in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and other ancient literature*, ed. April D. DeConick, Gregory Shaw, and John D. Turner (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 274–75; and for the Mazdayasnan affinities of the ritual meal, id., 'Eucharist or Yasna? Antecedents of Manichaean Food Ritual', in *Studia Manichaica: Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Manichaean Studies, Berlin 1997*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, and

not think that these were external trappings, as is sometimes argued;⁶¹ rather, they were part and parcel of its core ideas and practices – elements which, as P. Oktor Skjærvø has put it, were ‘melted into an alloy in which the constituent elements are no longer separately identifiable.’⁶² Mani’s religious authority was an important ingredient in this alloy, and therefore became a contentious issue. Manichaeans in the west had to convince potential Christian converts that their scriptures should be read through the lens of Mani’s tradition. It is no wonder that the virtues of Mani, the authenticity of his revelations, and the validity of his scriptural exegesis played a major role in Christian polemics.⁶³

This brings us to the question of whether it makes sense to think of Manichaeism as a separate ‘religion’ – a term that has itself received much scholarly scrutiny.⁶⁴ Yet, even its critics have tended to apply it to Manichaeism. Wilfred C. Smith, who famously initiated the deconstruction of ‘religion’ as an essentialist concept, still located something approximating it in Islam, and noted Manichaeism as a forerunner.⁶⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith, in his criticism of the category ‘world religion’, pointed out as a fault that ‘no typology includes Manichaeism, perhaps the first, self-conscious “world” religion.’⁶⁶ Recent takes have been less certain. As we saw, Lim rejected ‘Manichaeism’ as a ‘Catholic’ construct. A study by Brent Nongbri of the term ‘religion’ has also rejected the case for classifying Manichaeism as such. In line with Lim, he argues that since Mani and his disciples operated with a self-understanding as Christian,

Peter Zieme (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000). For shared texts and myths, see Dilley, ‘Also schrieb Zarathustra? Mani as Interpreter of the “Law of Zarades”’; and Jason D. BeDuhn, ‘Iranian Epic in the Chester Beatty Kephalaia’, in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, ed. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

- 61 E.g. Burkitt, *Religion of the Manichees*, 14, 41–42, 73–79. Similarly, Lieu has maintained that ‘the Zoroastrian and Buddhist elements were acquired in the course of mission and were not fundamental to Manichaeism’. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 53–54. See also Gardner, ‘Mani’s Religious Development’, 156.
- 62 Skjærvø (1995), cited in Timothy Pettipiece, ‘A Church to Surpass All Churches: Manichaeism as a Test Case for the Theory of Reception’, *La théorie de la réception* 61, no. 2 (2015): 254.
- 63 On the role of Mani’s authority in Augustine’s debates, see Eduard Iricinschi, ‘Tam pretiosi codices uestri: Hebrew Scriptures versus Persian Books in Augustine’s Anti-Manichaean Writings’, in *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity*, ed. Philippa Townsend and Moulie Vidas (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 168ff.
- 64 E.g. Jonathan Z. Smith, ‘Religion, Religions, Religious’, in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
- 65 Wilfred C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 98–105.
- 66 Jonathan Z. Smith, ‘Taxonomies of Religion’, *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 4 (1996): 396.

the movement is better understood in terms of the (Christian) dynamics between ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heresy’. Later Manichaeans, too, lacked a distinctive religious identity, inferred from the ease with which they adapted to new cultural contexts.⁶⁷

Yet, while certain aspects were accommodated to local languages and conceptual frameworks, recent finds increasingly point to cross-temporal coherence, as we shall see. Furthermore, rather than reducing Manichaeism to a product of Christian heresiology, there are good reasons to see it as the result of the Manichaeans’ own conceptual work – not least since Mani’s usage of the term *ekklesia*, ‘church’, in many ways approximates the modern notion of religion. Indeed, Hans-Jakob Polotsky translated it as ‘religion’ in certain chapters of the Berlin *Kephalaia*, a move criticised by Pedersen due to the term’s modern connotations.⁶⁸ Yet, it can equally be objected that the Manichaean concept of ‘church’ does not correspond to the modern one, either. ‘Church’, today, implies a subset of the genus ‘Christianity’, a family of groups that in turn is contrasted to ‘Islam’ or ‘Buddhism’. As pointed out above, this is not how Mani or his disciples used this term: they included ‘Churches’ of Zarathustra, Buddha, and other sages alongside that of Jesus, all part of the same family of groups. This point has recently been made by BeDuhn.⁶⁹ He points out that Mani saw his Church as involving a social community, beliefs, and practices. By contrasting it with (i.e. construing) other ‘Churches’ on the same model, he created a categorisational scheme very much like that implicit in the modern category ‘religion’.⁷⁰ In fact, it may well constitute the first – known and coherent – attempt at delineating such a scheme. There is, then, no contradiction between

67 Nongbri, *Before Religion*, 66–73.

68 Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof*, 8 n.13.

69 Jason D. BeDuhn, ‘Mani and the Crystallization of the Concept of “Religion” in Third-Century Iran’, in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, ed. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

70 Nongbri maintains that Manichaean usage of *ekklesia* denoted ‘social groups, not disembodied “religious” systems’ (*Before Religion*, 70), citing an important chapter of the Berlin *Kephalaia*, keph. 151. However, this ignores both the social aspect of the modern term, and the abstract ‘ideological’ component of Mani’s usage. The latter is evident in keph. 151 itself, where faith, practice, and group are mixed. So, for instance, one passage reads: ‘Blessed is the person who will trust in it (i.e. *the Church*) and agree with it and remain in it; and he will profit and live in its life and [...] in its primacy. And he will go up and be at rest in the aeon of light’ (1 Ke. 375.2–6, trans. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 267). See also Reinhold Gleib and Stefan Reichmuth, ‘Religion between Last Judgement, Law and Faith: Koranic *din* and Its Rendering in Latin Translations of the Koran’, *Religion* 42, no. 2 (2012): 257–60; and David Frankfurter, review of *Before Religion* by Brent Nongbri, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23, no. 4 (2015): 634.

taking Manichaeans to be strongly Christian, on the one hand, and at the same time belonging to a separate entity from that of 'Christianity', i.e. 'Manichaeism', on the other.

3.2 *Laity and Lived Religion*

Yet, even if Manichaeism was seen as a distinct 'religion' by Mani and other Elect leaders, the way it was conceived of among the Auditors, on the level of everyday religious practice and identity, needs closer scrutiny. As we saw above, scholars of Manichaeism in Latin North Africa have argued that Manichaean church authorities only played a minor role in this region. Lim, moreover, suggested that most Manichaeans so-called did not possess a distinctly Manichaean self-identity. A similar, if less strong, claim has been made by scholars for the laity at Kellis. The papyri from House 1–3 have been taken to show that most lay believers did not consider themselves part of a community with practices or beliefs very different from those of other Christians. As Iain Gardner wrote in the first publication of literary texts from Kellis, contrasting the Auditors to the Elect, '[t]he concerns of the mass of believers were necessarily more matter-of-fact, for whom Manichaeism would have been a kind of higher and more effective Christianity.'⁷¹ While the Elect interpreted a specialised literature composed by Mani and his disciples, lay adherents at Kellis may have been unfamiliar with the distinct ideas and practices of the movement. Either the Elect withheld parts of Mani's teachings from the laity, or the laity had little interest in such teachings. Approaches current in the 'lived religion' turn can be used to support this view. Instead of cohesive groups or shared identities, they focus on individual lay identities, which are argued to be situationally dependent and often at odds with religious authorities.⁷² Boundaries between different groups were largely the constructs of religious elites, and had few social ramifications beyond for those authorities that promoted them. Religious identity may, in general, have had little salience among lay people, as argued by Eric Rebillard for North African Christianity, and for the Kellis community by Mattias Brand.⁷³

71 *P.Kellis II*, ix–x.

72 This perspective emerged from cultural and ethnographic studies, primarily those concerned with popular religion; see David D. Hall, ed., *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Meredith McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

73 See Eric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Mattias Brand, 'The Manichaeans of Kellis: Religion, Community, and Everyday Life' (Ph.D., University of Leiden, 2019).

3.3 *The Study's Aim*

The present contribution argues, however, that the papyri from Kellis evince a more organised and self-conscious Manichaean community than previous scholarship has allowed for. It does so by engaging with the breadth of textual materials from Kellis, combining a study of the papyri with one of Manichaean social institutions. The last few years have seen the publication of important bodies of texts that have added substantially to our knowledge of both social and religious life in Kellis. These finds have increasingly begun to receive attention from scholars of Manichaeism.⁷⁴ Yet none have grappled systematically with the relationship between the documentary and the literary papyri, the social life as well as the religious practice of the Manichaean families at Kellis. Only a few years ago, it could still be maintained that:

Despite recent attempts (in particular BeDuhn 2000) to reconstruct the practices that identified the Manichaeans, for the historian Manichaeism remains mainly a body of doctrines, and our sources provide no evidence about the individuals who recognised themselves as members of this sect.⁷⁵

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- 74 Studies include Nikolaos Gonis and Cecilia Römer, 'Ein Lobgesang an den Vater der Grösse in P. Kellis II 94', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 120 (1998); Jean-Daniel Dubois, 'Une lettre manichéenne de Kellis (P. Kell. Copt. 18)', in *Early Christian Voices: In Texts, Traditions, and Symbols*, ed. David H. Warren, et al. (Boston: Brill, 2003); Jason D. BeDuhn, 'The Domestic Setting of Manichaean Cultic Associations in Roman Late Antiquity', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 10 (2008); Iain Gardner, 'Manichaean Ritual Practice at Ancient Kellis: A New Understanding of the Meaning and Function of the So-Called *Prayer of the Emanations*', in *In Search of Truth: Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*, ed. Jacob A. van den Berg, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Majella Franzmann, 'Augustine's View of Manichaean Almsgiving and Almsgiving by the Manichaean Community at Kellis', 69, no. 1 (2013); Mattias Brand, 'Speech Patterns as Indicators of Religious Identities: The Manichaean Community in Late Antique Egypt', in *Sinews of Empire: Networks in the Roman Near East and Beyond*, ed. Eivind H. Seland and Håkon F. Teigen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017); Nicholas J. Baker-Brian, 'Mass and Elite in Late Antique Religion: The Case of Manichaeism', in *Mass and Elite in the Greek and Roman Worlds: From Sparta to Late Antiquity*, ed. Richard Evans (London: Routledge, 2017); and Håkon Fiane Teigen, 'Limbs of the Light Mind: The Social World of a Manichaean Community' (Ph.D., University of Bergen, 2018).
- 75 Eric Rebillard, 'Late Antique Limits of Christianness: North Africa in the Age of Augustine', in *Group Identity and Religious Individuality in Late Antiquity*, ed. Eric Rebillard and Jörg Rüpke (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 63–64.

As we shall see, the Kellis papyri provide abundant evidence for Manichaean individuals and the lives they led. In order for these individuals to speak to us, however, we need to get to know them. The papyri are not only important for understanding Manichaeism: they provide a wealth of information concerning mundane life in a fourth-century Oasis village. The people who owned them could take this setting for granted, but we cannot, and without a proper appraisal of the context we run the risk of misinterpreting them. One aim of this study is therefore to investigate the owners of the papyri and their social environments. Using prosopography and network analysis, it seeks to identify central actors of the papyri, as well as their friends, neighbours, and business associates, and the familial, political, and economic relationships in which they were embedded. The extent and character of this network has important ramifications for how we understand the community at Kellis.

Our chief purpose, however, is to engage with the practices evinced by both the documentary and the literary material, and their implications for the organisation of Manichaean communities and the reproduction of Manichaean identity. We examine the social composition of the community, religious expressions used by the laity in their letters, practices linked to text, and patterns of interaction between laity and Elect and among the Elect themselves. While the Kellis material remains at the centre of attention, its Manichaean affinities (or lack thereof) have to be considered in light of other evidence, in particular the near-contemporary writings of Augustine and the codices from Medinet Madi. It is argued that we find a laity who consciously appropriated Manichaean traditions, Elect who actively engaged with the community, and institutionalised patterns of Elect – lay interaction. Finally, the contribution aims to show how our understanding of Manichaeism at Kellis in its turn has consequences for how we view the shift in ‘religion’ from antiquity to late antiquity.⁷⁶ It is argued that the practices of lay adherents at Kellis show that this transition was not confined to the level of religious elites; rather, it involved widespread appropriation of new practices and modes of self-identification.

76 For some modern takes on this shift, see John North, ‘The Development of Religious Pluralism’, in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians*, ed. John North, Judith Lieu, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 174–93; Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press); Guy G. Stroumsa, *The End of Sacrifice: Religious Transformations in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

4 Theoretical Framework

4.1 *Social Networks*

In order to accomplish these aims, we need theoretical tools that help us approach everyday religious practice. Specific concepts are introduced more thoroughly in the chapters where they occur; the present discussion provides an overview over the frameworks on which the present study draws. One is the broad tradition of symbolic interactionism, which furnishes us with concepts for apprehending how practice shapes and communicates religious identity. We return to it below. The other is that of social network theory. It provides concepts for apprehending the relationships between people – the social structures – that framed religious practices. Social structure is a malleable concept, however, encompassing various ways of approaching human interaction. Several intellectual strands of the late 20th century employed the concept of *social networks* in order to escape what was seen as overly rigid concepts of earlier structuralists.⁷⁷ Modern sociology have followed this trend, emphasising the dynamical ways in which power is asserted, information spread, and identities are constituted through webs of interpersonal relations.

One important sub-field is that of social network analysis (SNA).⁷⁸ It provides tools for mapping large quantities of data in terms of networks of interpersonal relations, and for analysing individual authority and positions within these networks. Briefly stated, SNA defines networks as consisting of *nodes* (e.g. people) and *ties* (e.g. friendship), the total number of which forms a network structure.⁷⁹ How resources or information spread ('flow') is analysed in terms of this structure, i.e. the number, directionality, and strength of ties, using concepts such as *density*, *degree*, and *betweenness centrality*. A rough division has emerged between formal and heuristic analysis.⁸⁰ Formal analysis consists in the application of statistical tools to quantify concepts such as density and centrality, useful for evaluating the centrality of a given actor within a network

77 See e.g. the philosophical polemic of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Prominent network-oriented theories are the actor-network theory (ANT) of Bruno Latour, and the works of Manuel Castell and of Michael Mann.

78 This field brought together various intellectual strands, including graph theory, sociometry, anthropology, and micro-sociology. Stephen P. Borgatti, et al., 'Network analysis in the Social Sciences', *Science* 323, no. 5916 (2009).

79 For basic definitions of these and other concepts, see Stanely Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 17–21.

80 See Håkon F. Teigen and Eivind H. Seland, 'Introduction', in *Sinews of Empire: Networks in the Roman Near East and Beyond*, ed. Håkon F. Teigen and Eivind H. Seland (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017).

and the structures of different networks. Several studies have applied statistical analysis to historical material.⁸¹ For the ancient world, Elizabeth A. Clark applied concepts of network density and distance to the literary sources relating to the late-fourth century Origenist controversy, arguing that the social networks of the participants were more important for the outcome than were theological niceties.⁸² While Clark examined literary letters, Giovanni Ruffini has applied the method to papyrological material, in his study on village and city elites in the papyri from late antique Aphrodito and Oxyrhynchus.⁸³

Although useful for mapping social relations, the formal approach is limited by its dependence on quantitative material. But network theory also provides flexible heuristic models for interpreting social formations. The sociology of ancient religious movements has grown vast since the important contributions of Gerd Theissen and Wayne A. Meeks on early Christianity in the 1970s and 80s,⁸⁴ and networks have become a standard part of the repertoire. Researchers often draw on concepts such as Mark Granovetter's 'the strength of weak ties' in order to explain patterns in the sources.⁸⁵ The sociologist Rodney Stark argued that the primary vehicle for the dissemination of Christianity were ties of friends and family, 'conversion' primarily involving conforming one's beliefs to those of one's social peers and intimates.⁸⁶ More recently, scholars such as Irad Malkin and Anna Collar have drawn on complexity theory, using concepts such as *preferential attachment* and *information cascades* to explain cultural dissemination within ancient social networks.⁸⁷

81 See in particular the study of the political strategy of the Medicis, by Christopher K. Ansell and John Padgett, 'Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434', *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (1993).

82 Elizabeth A. Clark, 'Elite Networks and Heresy Accusations: Towards a Social Description of the Origenist Controversy', *Semeia* 56 (1992).

83 Giovanni Ruffini, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

84 Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

85 An argument for the importance of peripheral ('weak') contacts. Mark Granovetter, 'The strength of weak ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973); id., 'The strength of weak ties: a network theory revisited', *Sociological Theory* 1 (1983). For surveys of such approaches, see Greg Woolf, 'Only Connect? Network Analysis and Religious Change in the Roman World', *Hélide* 2, no. 2 (2016); and Ruffini, *Social Networks*, 14–19.

86 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

87 Irad Malkin, *A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Anna Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

At the same time, there is a risk of overestimating the explanatory force of network theoretical concepts. While social networks facilitate and affect the spread of religious ideas and practices, the latter cannot simply be reduced to 'content' that flows effortlessly through networks. As Greg Woolf has pointed out, in tracing the spread of religion we need to take account of how it, in turn, affects social relations through 'socialisation into new groups, apprenticeships in worship, the observance of new rules of behaviour, the acquisition of new habits.'⁸⁸ Cultural notions actively influence patterns of behaviour, in turn affecting the way networks develop.⁸⁹

4.2 *Institution and Identity*

This brings us to the other theoretical tradition that this study draws on, namely the broad field of symbolic interactionism. It provides a range of concepts that can be used in order to analyse the relationship between culture and practice. Practice has long been stressed in social and communication theories, as well as in theories of religion and ritual.⁹⁰ Reproduction of practice is commonly conceptualised in terms of institutions, broadly defined as 'patterns of interaction that govern and constrain the relationships of individuals.'⁹¹ Institutions are thought to do this through the roles that

88 Woolf, 'Only Connect?', 54.

89 For a strong critique of this aspect of network theory, see Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, 'Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency', *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 6 (1994). Interaction does, for instance, not only lead to dissemination or homogenisation, but can reinforce or even solidify group boundaries. See Fredrik Barth, 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries', in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The social organization of culture difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969). For new forms of authority, see the emergence of 'holy men' in late antiquity. Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971); Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

90 Drawing on a range of thinkers, from G. H. Mead, J. L. Austin, and J. Searle (formulated as a historical programme by Q. Skinner), G. Lakoff, M. Foucault, and P. Bourdieu. Recent examples include the symbolic convergence theory (sct) of E. G. Bormann, the cultural pragmatics of J. Alexander, and the identity-network approach of H. White. Ernest G. Bormann, 'Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (1972); Jeffrey Alexander, 'Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy', *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (2004); Harrison C. White, *Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), see esp. 20–62. In the field of religion, e.g. J. Goody, Mary C. Bell, R. F. Campany. See the genealogical work of Manuel A. Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

91 This definition is drawn from the neo-institutionalism of Douglass C. North, John J. Wallis, and Weingast R. Barry, *Violence and Social Order: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 15.

individuals ('actors') adopt, the norms that define these roles, the sanctions that reinforce them, and the justifications that describe and explain them.⁹² Institutions allow individuals to turn networks into more cohesive groups, ranging from abstract communities to formal organisations. The community's practices are enshrined by symbols – narratives, metaphors, sayings, gestures, etc., – forming a symbolic reservoir that its members recognise and that new members learn in the process of socialisation into the community. By naturalising ('reifying') certain roles and patterns of behaviour, institutions help to (re)produce *social worlds*.⁹³ Individuals internalise (to various degrees) roles through participation in the institutions of different communities, including ethnic, occupational, political, and religious ones, forming what we with Bourdieu may term their 'habitus'.⁹⁴ When internalised, their various roles can be conceptualised as identities.⁹⁵ Identities are actualised through the deployment of symbols to elicit modes of thought and behaviour among the people who share the symbolic repertoire. We may label such usage *symbolic cues*.⁹⁶ Competent actors can – and political or religious authorities are often obliged to – weave symbolic cues together into elaborate displays or *symbolic performances*. Examples range from sermons to poetry readings to speeches at political rallies. For *textual communities*, texts play an important role in facilitating such performances.⁹⁷

Both institutions and identities constitute important areas of research within the study of ancient religion. A body of scholarship has emerged that draws on models and comparative material for understanding formal religious institutions in antiquity, through comparisons between ('pagan') voluntary associations, Christ groups, and synagogues.⁹⁸ Simultaneously, many scholars have brought concepts of identity and performance to bear on ancient sources,

92 See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Penguin, 1968).

93 Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 77; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 164–68.

94 Bourdieu, *Outline*, 72.

95 See Peter Burke and Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 38.

96 This term is drawn from Adam Schor's notion of 'cues' (below), in turn drawing on Bourdieu. The term 'cue' has become widespread in sociological theory, for instance in Symbolic Convergence Theory. See Ernest G. Bormann, John F. Cragan, and Donald C. Shields, 'Three Decades of Developing, Grounding and Using Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT)', *Annals of the International Communication Association* 25, no. 1 (2001).

97 While my examples here are confined to verbal ones, symbolic performances can also include elements such as 'scenery', 'stage props', etc. See Alexander, 'Cultural Pragmatics', 544–47.

98 See Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Richard S. Ascough,

as part of the linguistic turn in ancient history.⁹⁹ These two approaches are at times combined. Philip Harland has studied expressions of identity within Christian, Jewish, and ‘Pagan’ associations.¹⁰⁰ Adam Schor’s study of the fifth-century Nestorian controversy treats the cultural performance of bishop Theodoret of Cyrrihus and how it contributed to shape his network of allied Syrian bishops.¹⁰¹ But they are perhaps more often contrasted, especially in studies of lay religious practice. Situationist trends in modern sociology, and the ‘lived religion’ approach within religious studies, have contributed to a strong scepticism as to the extent to which institutions, both formal and informal group patterns, actually shape coherent ‘identities’ for most people.¹⁰² Scholarship of late antique religion drawing on these currents instead emphasise the situational nature of an individual’s identification, and the multiple identities that each individual has access to. They often argue that religious institutions generally had a limited effect on lay religious identities.¹⁰³

4.3 *The Study’s Approach*

The present study engages with the debate over lay identity by considering to what extent Manichaean institutions affected the religious identity of the villagers in fourth-century Kellis. Using prosopography and network concepts, it traces and analyses the social networks of the central actors of House 1–3, and the social dimensions of the Manichaean community in the Oasis and the village; what social groups it spread through and how far the network extended. In turn, this provides a basis for discussing lay practice and identity in the Kellis papyri. First, by examining religious practices referred or alluded

‘What Are They Now Saying About Christ Groups and Associations?’, *Currents in Biblical Research* 13, no. 2 (2015).

- 99 An important mark was the establishment of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* in 1993. For an overview, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); for such an analysis of Augustine, see Virginia Burrus, “In the Theatre of This Life”: The Performance of Orthodoxy in Late Antiquity”, in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays in Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. W. Kingshern and M. Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1999).
- 100 Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009).
- 101 Adam Schor, *Theodoret’s People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
- 102 For this criticism, Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, ‘Beyond Identity’, *Theory and Society* 39, no. 1 (2000).
- 103 See Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities*, and, furthermore, Chapter 5 in the present work.

to in the documents, we catch a glimpse of the daily patterns of interaction that made the network into a religious community. Second, by analysing the religious cues employed by the laity, i.e. their symbolic performances, we get a sense of what characterised the religious identity of this community.

Certainly, several obstacles have to be considered. For one, while we are relatively well-informed about the activities of late antique Christian authorities, such as Theodoret of Cyrillus, almost nothing is known of the historical developments and institutional context that framed Manichaean activities, apart from what we can glean from the papyri. Moreover, distinguishing between different religious 'identities' in the papyri is a challenge – and identifying particularly Manichaean performances presents additional problems, as Manichaeans shared in much of the Christian symbolic repertoire.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the documentary texts from Kellis do furnish us with evidence that make this approach worthwhile, as we shall see. They allow us to grasp how the Manichaean community was 'put into practice': how everyday, habitual activities contributed to create a distinctive identity, and to reproduce a local, Manichaean church.

¹⁰⁴ And not only Christian ones; as one recent author puts it, 'Mani appears to have made conscious use of the entire symbolic repertoire available to him.' Richard Foltz, *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to Present* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2013), 140. For the term 'symbolic repertoire', see *ibid.*, xii–xiii. For recent scholarship on religious expressions in late antique papyri, and categories such as 'Christian' or 'pagan', see Malcolm Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Lincoln H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

PART 1

The Social World of Fourth-Century Kellis



Life in Kellis: Society and Religion in an Oasis Town

1 On the Road to the Oasis

The Manichaeans visible in the House 1–3 material moved through a specific geographical and social landscape, that of Roman Kellis and its oasis surroundings, the Dakhleh Oasis in western Egypt. Excavations of the last few decades have provided a wealth of information about conditions in Dakhleh in the Roman period: its natural environment, population, government, and economic life. These factors are preconditions for understanding the villagers and their social world, and moreover affected the way Manichaeism came to be established here. They are the subject of the present chapter.

First, let us briefly look at the spread of Manichaeism in Egypt before it ventured out to the Oasis. Its history here is comparatively well-documented. Manichaean narratives from Turfan indicate that an early disciple, Adda, reached Alexandria during Mani's own lifetime, between c.242–270.¹ Mani is said to have ordered Adda to stay there and preach, and sent him copies of his writings. Other sources corroborate a Manichaean presence in Egypt by the late third century. A Neoplatonist philosopher, Alexander of Lycopolis, wrote a treatise against the Manichaeans c.300, naming the first missionaries in his locality as Pappos and Thomas.² Another early witness is a papyrus letter ascribed to Theonas, bishop of Alexandria (c.280–300), denouncing Manichaean missionaries in harsh words – female Elect, in particular. Roman authorities, too, took note of their arrival. An edict of Emperor Diocletian, promulgated in Alexandria in 302 and addressed to the prefect of North Africa,

1 Michel Tardieu, 'Les manichéens en Égypte', *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie* 94 (1982), 27–40; Ludwig Koenen, 'Manichäische Mission und Klöster in Ägypten', in *Das Römisch-Byzantinische Ägypten: Akten des internationalen Symposions 26.–30. September 1978 in Trier*, ed. Günter Grimm (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1983). Van den Berg (*Biblical Argument*, 35) argues that 'it is most probable that Addas started his mission early, about 243.'

2 He may have been in Alexandria at this point. Pappos could well be another name for Adda; see van den Berg, *Biblical Argument*, 21–23. Thomas is generally taken as the author of the 'Psalms of Thomas' in the Medinet Madi *Psalm-book*, although Jürgen Tübach has argued, based on the Mandaean affinities of these psalms, that the disciple Thomas was fictive and that the Thomas-psalms originally belonged to the Mandaean community. Jürgen Tübach, 'Die Thomas-Psalmen und der Mani-Jünger Thomas', in *Il Manicheismo. Nuove prospettive della ricerca*, ed. A. van Tongerloo and L. Cirillo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).

decreed harsh punishments for Manichaeans in the Roman Empire.³ But the movement grew in strength despite invectives and persecution, drawing ire from Christian leaders. Two authorities of the mid-fourth century, Serapion of Thmuis and Didymus the Blind, polemicised against the sect. Athanasius of Alexandria targeted Manichaeans, alongside other 'heretics', in his 39th Festal Letter (dated 367).⁴ Yet, the Coptic patriarch Eutychius of Alexandria (fl. ninth-tenth century) claimed that they were so widespread at the time of his distant predecessor, Timothy (c.380–85 CE), that Timothy made monks undergo food-tests in order to root out Manichaeans among them.⁵ Upper Egypt, in particular, has been seen as a Manichaean stronghold.⁶ Thus, Jozef Vergote, based on earlier suggestions by Michel Tardieu and Ludwig Koenen, proposed two concurrent routes of dissemination: the mission of Adda through Alexandria, and one through Aelana (Aqaba) on the Red Sea, down to the ports of Upper Egypt.⁷ At any rate, it was in Upper Egypt, from cities such as Antinoopolis, Lycopolis, and Panopolis, that the Manichaeans found roads leading from the Nile Valley to the western oases.

2 The Dakhleh Oasis

The Dakhleh Oasis is one of five oases constituting the westernmost inhabited parts of Egypt, surrounded by the Sahara Desert.⁸ They were all settled in pre-dynastic times, and have been inhabited continuously since. In antiquity, Dakhleh was often grouped together with the neighbouring oasis to its east,

3 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 91–94.

4 See David Brakke, 'A New Fragment of Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon', *Harvard Theological Review* 103, no. 1 (2010).

5 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 146.

6 Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 92–93; Siegfried G. Richter, 'Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi', in *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt*, ed. Gabra Gawdat and Hany N. Takla (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 2008).

7 Tardieu, 'Les manichéens en Égypte' and Koenen, 'Manichäische Klöster', 96–98. See J. Vergote, 'L'expansion du Manichéisme en Égypte', in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History*, ed. C. Laga, J. A. Munitiz, and L. van Rompay (Leuven: Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 1985). It has, perhaps, some support in its ability to explain differences in terminology between different Coptic Manichaean texts, as argued by Paul van Lindt, *The Names of Manichaean Mythological Figures: A Comparative Study on Terminology in the Coptic Sources* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 221–22. Van den Berg (*Biblical Argument*, 37) regards the southern route as the most probable one.

8 The others are Farafra, Bahariya, the Ammonite (modern Siwa), and Dakhleh's neighbour, Khargeh Oasis.

Khargeh, under the umbrella term the ‘Great Oasis’ (*oasis magna*), or simply ‘the Oasis’. Herodotus referred to the Great Oasis as ‘the island of the blissful’, and it had a reputation for being rich and fertile, as related by Strabo and by Olympidorus of Thebes.⁹ The latter (*fl.* mid-fifth century CE) is one of the few ancient historians from Upper Egypt itself; he claimed to have visited the Great Oasis itself. He distinguished between the ‘outer’ (ἐξωτέρω) and the ‘inner’ (ἔσωτέρω) oasis: terms which, as Guy Wagner noted, correspond exactly to the current Arabic terms ‘Khargeh’ and ‘Dakhleh’.¹⁰ The reference point for these designations is the desert. Dakhleh is ‘innermost’, towards the desert, furthest from the Nile Valley. Being larger and closer to the Nile Valley, Khargeh was the more important of the two. Well-travelled, if difficult, roads led here from the major Valley cities of Abydos and Lycopolis.¹¹ According to Strabo, the journey from Abydos to the Great Oasis – meaning probably Khargeh – took seven days.¹² The Dakhleh Oasis lay westward, beyond another stretch of desert – further *into* the desert, as its name implies, although roads also continued northward from Dakhleh, eventually reaching the Mediterranean coast. A long desert road, faster but less convenient, went directly from Lycopolis to Dakhleh. It took between six and ten days by donkey, a bit less by camel.¹³ Travel could be a challenge. A Roman official, travelling from Khargeh to Dakhleh in the late fourth century, described a journey of ‘four days and nights through waterless desert (τέσσαρας ὄλας νυχθημέρους δι’ ἀνύδρων ὁρών)’.¹⁴

The climate of the Great Oasis is indeed extreme: harsh sunlight, sand-carrying winds at times rising to storms, and long periods of heat relieved only by rare rainstorms.¹⁵ In such an environment, human settlements only

9 See Guy Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte: à l'époque grecque, romaine et byzantine d'après les documents grecs* (Paris: Institut français d'Archéologie orientale du Caire, 1987), 113–14.

10 *Ibid.*, 131 n.6.

11 See Alan Roe, ‘The Old “Darb al Arbein” Caravan Route and Kharga Oasis in Antiquity’, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 42 (2005).

12 Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 143.

13 For the journey, *P.Kellis V*, 12. Herbert E. Winlock, travelling by camel in 1908, reportedly spent eight days on the road from Assiut (Lycopolis) to Dakhleh; *ibid.*, 63. See also Bagnall and Aravecchia, ‘Economy and Society’, 168–70.

14 M.Chr. 78 (11.6–7). The author is writing to a superior, and some exaggeration is perhaps to be allowed for but is probably slight. Two roads reached Dakhleh from Khargeh: a level – but waterless – one to the south, and a longer, more difficult one to the north, but with water and some comfort available at the ‘mini-oasis’ Ain Amour, where a Roman fort has been excavated. Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 144–45; Robert B. Jackson, *At Empire's Edge: Exploring Rome's Egyptian Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 198–200.

15 Measurements put rainfall at 0 to 1mm per year. Warm summers can see the temperature remain at over 40°C for long periods, while it can change rapidly in winter, from 0°C–2°C

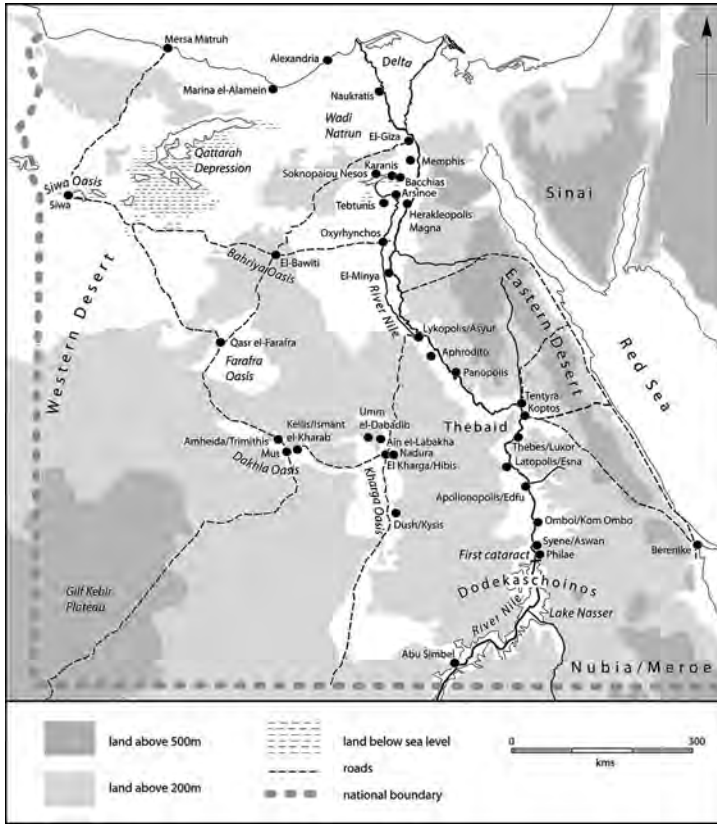


FIGURE 1 Map of Egypt
CREDIT: ANNA L. BOOZER (DRAWN BY M. MATHEWS)

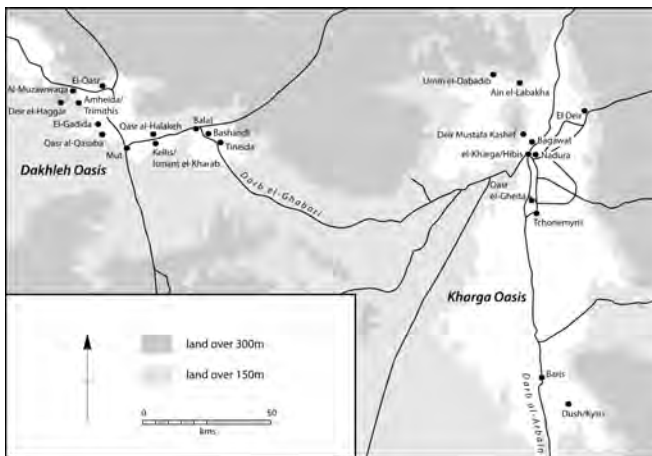


FIGURE 2 Map of the 'Great Oasis'
CREDIT: ANNA L. BOOZER (DRAWN BY M. MATHEWS)

bloom under very particular circumstances. In the oases, settled life is made possible by a large, underground aquifer layer. In some places, groundwater gushes forth in natural springs, but for the most part reservoirs, wells, and canals must be constructed in order to irrigate the land. Oasis settlements grew up around clusters of such water sources. The control of wells was a contentious issue already in Pharaonic times. According to Olympiodorus, wells were constructed through communal effort, although right of usage seems to have been strictly regulated and privately owned, as attested to by the numerous occurrences of well-tags among the ostraka with the formula ‘well of [name]’.¹⁶

As the oases were not linked to the Nile floods, human activity here took on a distinct character vis-à-vis the rest of Egypt. Bagnall has argued that Oasite society in the Roman era must have been characterised by a smaller segment of independent peasants than Egypt in general.¹⁷ Only the very wealthy could have financed well construction, and so the agricultural sector came to be dominated by a small elite of well-to-do landlords (γεωῦχοι). The basic agricultural product was grain, wheat, barley, and millet, while fruit crops were of great economic importance. By Roman times, they included grapes, olives, and dates, cultivated alongside various other products such as cotton, jujubes, honey, vegetables, and possibly sesame and cumin. Cotton may have been of particular importance to the Great Oasis.¹⁸ The introduction of new lifting devices and techniques in Achaemenid, Ptolemaic, and Roman times allowed for more intensive irrigation.¹⁹ This may have facilitated a growth in population, helped by migration from the Nile Valley. The many Roman-era archaeological sites show some population growth in Dakhleh in the first few centuries CE. In fact, Dakhleh appears to have reached its pre-modern population zenith under the Romans.²⁰ Its major population centres were Mothis, its

in the morning to 20°–25°C by midday. Anna L. Boozer, ‘The Social Impact of Trade and Migration: The Western Desert in Pharaonic and Post-Pharaonic Egypt’, ed. Christina Riggs, *Oxford Handbooks in Archaeology Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5.

16 Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 280–81; Anthony J. Mills, ‘Pharaonic Egyptians in the Dakhleh Oasis’, in *Reports from the Survey of the Dakhleh Oasis 1977–1987*, ed. Charles S. Churcher and A. J. Mills (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999), 175–76. For well-tags from Roman Trimithis, see Roger S. Bagnall and Giovanni Ruffini, *Amheida I: Ostraka from Trimithis. Texts from the 2004–2007 Seasons*. (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

17 Bagnall and Aravecchia, ‘Economy and Society’.

18 Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 284–301; *P.Kellis IV*, 36–46; Ursula Thanheiser, ‘Roman Agriculture and Gardening in Egypt as Seen from Kellis’, in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons*, ed. Colin A. Hope and Gillian Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2002). For the importance of cotton, see Bagnall and Aravecchia, ‘Economy and Society’, 154–55.

19 Mills, ‘Pharaonic Egyptians’, 175–76.

20 Boozer, ‘The Social Impact’, 15. Dakhleh was perhaps more populated in Roman than in modern times, see J. E. Molto, ‘Bio-Archaeological Research of Kellis 2. An Overview’, in

capital, and Trimithis, an urban centre that at least by the early fourth century had also received status as a *polis*. Anna L. Boozer has estimated Trimithis' population at c.25 000 in this period. A tax assessment from Hermopolis (dated c.368) indicates that Mothis was still larger, perhaps by as much as one third.²¹

While Olympidorus, in the fifth century, still considered the 'Great Oasis' prosperous, contemporary Christian authors such as Gregorius of Nazanzus, Asterios, and Zosimus held a less rosy view: they emphasised its extreme weather conditions and lack of water.²² Whether this reflected deteriorating conditions since Strabo (and consequently an anachronism by Olympidorus), or a conflation of oasis and desert by the Christians (and perhaps a desire to stress the suffering of co-believers who were exiled there), is difficult to determine. Recent archaeological surveys and excavations have found a change in settlement patterns in the late fourth and fifth century, including the abandonment of some important sites, perhaps suggesting that conditions had indeed gotten worse.²³

The Great Oasis stood out from Egypt, not only with respect to climate but with respect to cultural differences as well. Roman authorities found it relevant (at least at times) to distinguish between 'Oasites' and other 'Egyptians'.²⁴ That a distinct 'Oasite-ness' was felt by the local people themselves is indicated by Coptic documents from Kellis, where travelling to the Nile Valley is often seen as going 'to Egypt'. It may furthermore be reflected in the fate of the god Seth. This god, once important in Upper Egypt, was largely suppressed by Egyptian authorities from the 25th dynasty (760–656 BCE) onwards in the Nile Valley, but temples of Seth continued to operate in Dakhleh and Khargeh into Roman times.²⁵ A certain frontier mentality may have characterised the inhabitants.

Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons, ed. Colin A. Hope; Gillian E. Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2002), 239.

21 *PKellis IV*, 73, n.42. Anna L. Boozer, 'Urban Change at Late Roman Trimithis (Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt)', in *Egypt in the First Millennium AD: Perspectives from New Fieldwork*, ed. Elisabeth R. O'Connell (Leuven-Paris-Walpole: Peeters, 2014), 29.

22 Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 116–19.

23 Most notably Trimithis and Kellis itself. Roger S. Bagnall and Olaf Kaper, 'Introduction', in *An Oasis City*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall, et al. (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 23–24. For a tentative explanation, see Roger S. Bagnall and Nicola Aravecchia, 'Economy and Society in the Roman Oasis', in *An Oasis City*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall, et al. (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 188–89.

24 Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 214–15. For an examination of the tensions between Nile and Oasis, and the Roman construction of Oasite otherness, see Anna L. Boozer, 'Frontiers and Borderlands in Imperial Perspectives: Exploring Rome's Egyptian Frontier', *American Journal of Archaeology* 117, no. 2 (2013).

25 See Olaf E. Kaper, *Temples and Gods in Roman Dakhleh: Studies in the Indigenous Cults of an Egyptian Oasis* (Groningen: privately published, 1997), 84–85.

The Great Oasis was used by Roman authorities for exiling criminals (and, in the fourth and fifth centuries, religious ‘trouble-makers’), perhaps increasing the sense of distance from Egypt at large. Since Old Kingdom times, the areas around the settled parts of the Great Oasis had been inhabited by pastoral nomads, called ‘Libyans’ or ‘Blemmyes’, adding to its social and ethnic diversity. While conflict occasionally erupted between nomads and settled areas – the ‘Blemmyes’ are said to have pillaged Hibis in 373 – peaceful co-existence would have been the norm.²⁶

Its distinctiveness should not be exaggerated, either. Economic growth would have been helped by (and in turn attracted) settlers from other parts of Egypt. Conversely, the Oasites had an interest in goods, artefacts, and cultural trends from the Valley. Graeco-Roman artistic styles, architecture, and literature have all left traces in Dakhleh. Christianity was established here by the early fourth century; churches have been found even in small hamlets such as Ain el-Gedida (probably ancient Pmoun Berri) and Ain es-Sabil.²⁷ The appearance of Manichaeans here in the same period, not long after the initial arrival of the movement in Egypt, has to be seen in this light.

2.1 *Local Government*

The Roman presence in the Great Oasis in the late Roman period was extensive. The military provided an especially visible manifestation of Roman power: in Dakhleh, a *castrum* was built in the late third century near Trimithis, at what is today al-Qasr, and equipped with an equestrian military detachment, the *Ala I Quadorum*.²⁸ For the most part, however, the Romans relied on a system of civilian officials, drawn from local urban elites and village property holders. As we shall see, many such officials make their appearance in the House 1–3 material, providing evidence for the inhabitants’ links to different hubs of power in the imperial structure. This structure therefore needs to be presented in some detail.

26 Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte*, 394–400; Boozer, ‘Frontiers and Borderlands’, 278–82.

27 Nicola Aravecchia, ‘Christians of the Western Desert in Late Antiquity: The Fourth-Century Church Complex of Ain el-Gedida, Upper Egypt’ (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 2009), 257; Nicola Aravecchia, Roger S. Bagnall, and Raffaella Cribiore, ‘Christianity at Trimithis and in the Dakhla Oasis’, in *An Oasis City*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall, et al. (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

28 Paul Kucera, ‘Al-Qasr: The Roman *castrum* of Dakhleh Oasis’, in *The Oasis Papers 6: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project* ed. Paula Davoli, Roger S. Bagnall, Colin A. Hope (Oxford: Oxbow, 2012), 312. Other units may have been present; Rodney Ast and Roger S. Bagnall, ‘New Evidence for the Roman Garrison of Trimithis’, *Tyche* 30 (2015).

Up until the fourth century, the Great Oasis was a single administrative unit – a municipality, called a *nome* – consisting of both Khargeh and Dakhleh, centred on the city of Hibis in Khargeh – although unusually for a nome, the ‘Great Oasis’ had several urban centres with status as *polis*.²⁹ The most important civilian representative of the Roman government was the municipal governor or *strategos* (στρατηγός), appointed by the prefect in Alexandria. The strategos supervised nome government: he controlled the public records and adjudicated conflicts, which elsewhere in the Empire was handled by the local city council (βουλή). Such city councils were formally introduced to Egypt only in 200/1.³⁰ Their members, the *magistrates* (ἄρχοντες), were drawn from among wealthy and respected local notables, by scholars often referred to as the curial class. Magistrates were responsible for organising and financing public services, like keeping the peace, managing taxation, or arranging festivals. They were assisted by *liturgists* (λειτουργοί), people drafted to actually perform services such as guard duty or tax collection. Magistracies and liturgies were usually restricted to half a year or one year’s service, although by the fourth century the same person could serve several terms.³¹ Generally, liturgies and, by the fourth century, magistracies were considered burdens from which many sought to be exempted.

Like the rest of the Empire, Egypt saw a large-scale administrative reorganisation in the late third and early fourth century.³² Upper Egypt was made into a separate province, the Thebais, with its own governor seated in Antinoopolis.³³ A new office, the *curator civitatis* or *logistes* (λογιστής), replaced the strategos as chief civilian representative in the nomes, while the strategos was demoted

29 Roger S. Bagnall and Giovanni R. Ruffini, ‘Civic Life in Fourth-Century Trimithis. Two Ostraka from the 2004 Excavations’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 149 (2004): 143–44.

30 Although some form of local civic bodies also existed before this date; Alan K. Bowman and Dominic W. Rathbone, ‘Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt’, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 120–27.

31 Naphthali Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt*, 2nd ed. (Firenze: Edizioni Gonnelli, 1997), 65; 76. For repeated service, see Roger S. Bagnall, ‘Property Holdings of Liturgists in Fourth-Century Karanis’, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 15, no. 1/2 (1978).

32 For a summary, see Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 59–67; Alan K. Bowman, ‘Egypt from Septimus Severus to the Death of Constantine’, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. Alan K. Bowman, Averil Cameron, and Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

33 Various rearrangements were made in the course of the fourth century. See Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 63–64; Alan K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 BC–AD 642: From Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 81–84.

and renamed *exactor civitatis*.³⁴ Instead of being outside appointees, both offices came to be drawn from among the local notables. In the ‘Great Oasis’, Dakhleh was made into a nome at this time, with Mothis as its capital. It became known as the ‘Mothite Nome’, while Khargeh was the ‘Hibite Nome’, both subjected to the governor of the Thebais.³⁵ Yet, despite this division, it seems that the logistes and the exactor retained overall responsibility for both, and so the Great Oasis remained administratively quite centralised, a point to which we return below. The city councils, too, saw big changes. Many traditional magistracies disappeared. The councils were made to take increased part in administration of the surrounding countryside. The rural districts into which nomes were subdivided (*pagi*) now came under the supervision of new liturgical officials, drawn from the curial class, the *praepositi pagi*. The Great Oasis likely had peculiar arrangements also in this regard.³⁶ Another new magistrate, the *riparius*, oversaw law and order.³⁷ One such riparius, who doubled as strategos/exactor, was of local significance in Kellis – perhaps particularly to the Manichaean community, as we shall see.

The villages that dotted the countryside had their own liturgical officials, locals who were responsible for maintaining order, keeping records, and collecting taxes, overseen by the praepositus.³⁸ Liturgists were appointed from among villagers of a certain financial standing, to ensure that services were performed and taxes paid. Like other liturgies, service was compulsory, and villagers served at their own cost and responsibility – and, like their urban counterparts, many sought to avoid them. Local offices included the ‘village head’ or *komarch* (κώμαρχος), an important office that remained popular despite the

34 Brinley R. Rees, ‘The *curator civitatis* in Egypt’, *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 7–8 (1953–1954): 98–104; Lewis, *Compulsory Public Services*, 82. The term ‘strategos’ remained in use in the fourth century; J. David Thomas, ‘Strategos and Exactor in the Fourth Century: One Office or Two?’, *Chronique d’Égypte* 70, no. 139–140 (1995).

35 Bagnall suggests 307/8 as the year of division, *P.Kellis IV*, 73; see also Worp, ‘Short Texts’, 345–46.

36 Bagnall and Ruffini propose that, due to the lack of separate logistai in the Oasis cities, the praepositus ‘may have functioned as a kind of mini-logistes on the spot.’ Roger S. Bagnall and Giovanni Ruffini, *Amheida I. Ostraka from Trimithis. Texts from the 2004–2007 Seasons* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 46.

37 In conjunction with the ‘city advocate’ or *defensor civitatis* (σύνδικος, ἔκδικος). See Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 61; Sofia Torallas Tovar, ‘The Police in Byzantine Egypt: The Hierarchy in the Papyri from the Fourth to the Seventh Century’, in *Current Research in Egyptology*, ed. Christina Riggs and A. McDonald (Oxford: 2000), 115–16; Brinley R. Rees, ‘The *defensor civitatis* in Egypt’, *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 6 (1952).

38 Village liturgists were originally appointed by the strategos, transferred to the praepositus in the fourth century. Lewis, *Compulsory Public Services*, 65–66, 82. The strategos/exactor still had some function related to liturgies in Dakhleh; see P.Kellis I Gr. 23.

associated burdens,³⁹ and tax officials such as the *sitologos* (σιτολόγος), responsible for taxes in wheat and barley, and the *apaitetes* (ἀπαιτητής), for taxes on other goods and trades. This system of urban and rural officials drawn from local elites was intended to ensure an administration that required relatively little interference by the Roman government.

3 The Village of Kellis

Ismant el-Kharab, ancient Kellis, lies to the east of Mothis and far southeast of Trimithis, and is today bounded by two intersecting *wadis*. The village seems to have been a relatively new foundation, occupied from around the first to the end of the fourth century.⁴⁰ Unlike most Egyptian villages,⁴¹ it had recognisable public buildings such as a bathhouse and nymphaeum. It covered an area of 1050x650m (68.3 m²), which excavators have divided into four primary sectors: Area A, B, C and D. A short tour of these can give us a feel for its layout.

Area D was the initial focal point of the village. It was dominated by the large temple complex referred to as the Main Temple, dedicated to the divine triad of Tutu, Neith and Tapshai – the ‘great gods’ of Kellis. The datable material from the temple area covers the entire lifespan of the village, although the temple itself went out of use at some point in the early-to-mid fourth century. Around the same time, a small church was built in the north-western corner of the temple-area. Northeast of the temple lies Area B. It has been suggested that a large complex here, B/1/1, had a civic function, although recent finds are more suggestive of a group of discrete, elite housing units.⁴² Parts of it seems to have been converted into stables in the fourth century. A large and richly painted residence, B/3/1, located at the northern end of Area B, showcases the

39 Diana Delia and Evan Haley, ‘Agreement Concerning Succession to a Komarchy’, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 20, no. 1–2 (1983): 43.

40 See Colin A. Hope, ‘Observations on the Dating of the Occupation at Ismant el-Kharab’, in *The Oasis Papers: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Dakhleh Oasis Project*, ed. Charles A. Marlow; Anthony J. Mills (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001).

41 Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 112–14; James G. Keenan, ‘The Aphrodite Papyri and Village Life in Byzantine Egypt’, *Bulletin de la Société d’archéologie copte* 26 (1984); Peter van Minnen, ‘House-to-House Enquiries: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Roman Karanis’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 100 (1994).

42 Colin A. Hope, ‘The Roman-Period Houses of Kellis in Egypt’s Dakhleh Oasis’, in *Housing and Habitat in the Ancient Mediterranean: Cultural and Environmental Responses*, ed. A. A. Di Castro, Colin A. Hope, and B. E. Parr (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 201.

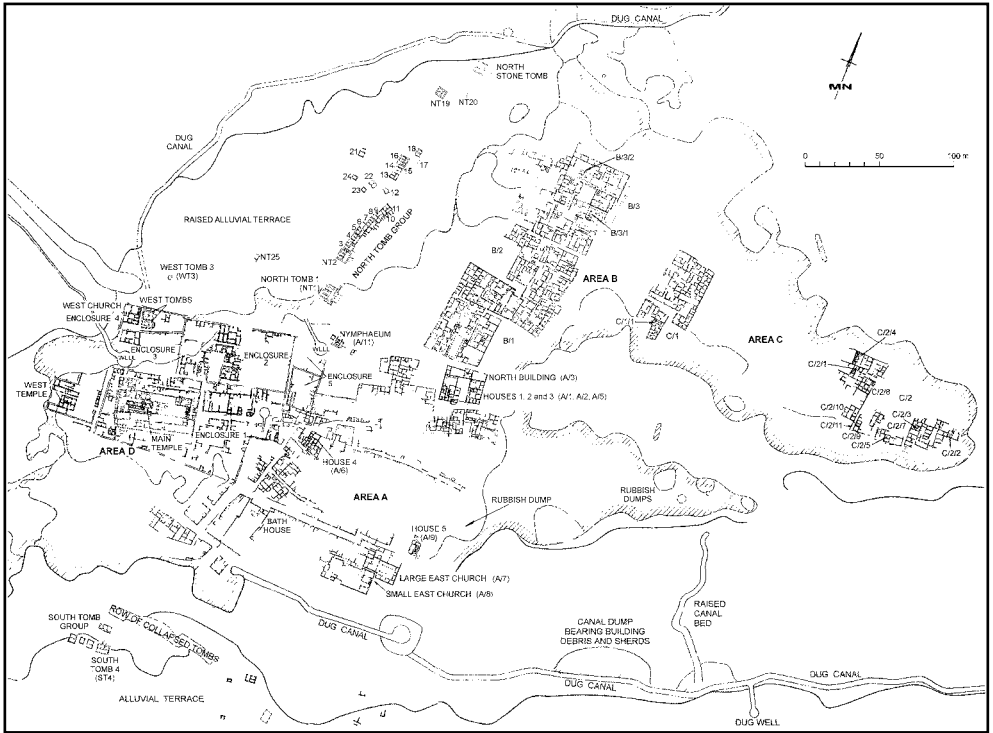


FIGURE 3 Map of Kellis
CREDIT: DAKHLEH OASIS PROJECT AND COLIN A. HOPE

wealth of some of Kellis' inhabitants in the third century.⁴³ Enjoining Area B to the east is Area C. It was an early residential area, inhabited from at least the early second century until it was abandoned in the late third, and including many workshops and evidence for metal work. Its layout consisted of 'large areas of contiguous structures which comprise open courts flanked by smaller, rectangular rooms, most having been flatroofed.'⁴⁴ Finally, Area A is bounded by the Main Temple to the west and the B/1/1 complex to the north. It was mainly a residential quarter, although distinct from that of Area C, consisting of separate housing blocks built in mud-brick, connected by alleyways and

43 Ibid., 207–9; Helen Whitehouse, 'A House, But Not Exactly a Home? The Painted Residence at Kellis Revisited', in *Housing and Habitat in the Ancient Mediterranean: Cultural and Environmental Responses*, ed. A. A. Di Castro, Colin A. Hope, and B. E. Parr (Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

44 Bagnall, Hope, and Worp, 'Family Papers', 229. See also Hope, 'Roman-Period Houses', 211.

irregular thoroughfares.⁴⁵ Two fourth-century churches were located in the south-eastern corner. In its northern part, bordering B/1/1, we find the domestic units House 1, 2, 3, and the small North Building, henceforth collectively referred to as the House 1–3 complex. These are the main find-sites for papyri, and we examine them more closely in Chapter 3.

3.1 *Its People and Their Livelihood*

In terms of population, Kellis fell far behind the two urban centres of Dakhleh, Trimithis and Mothis. Estimates of its size range from 500, at its low point, to 1500, at its zenith, probably in the third century.⁴⁶ At the same time, its residents appear to have been comparatively affluent – indeed, Bagnall and Paola Davoli have remarked regarding the houses in Area B that ‘[t]he wealth suggested by these houses is beyond anything one would have expected in a village setting.’⁴⁷ Their wealth may, in part, have been derived from the particular climatic conditions of the Oasis, which facilitated the cultivation of crops that were difficult to grow in the Nile. Bagnall has argued that crops such as cotton and olives, in particular, but also figs, dates, and jujubes could be exported profitably from the Oasis to the Nile Valley. Alum, a valuable type of sulphate salts used in textile dyes, is attested in texts from Kellis.⁴⁸

The village was abandoned in the late fourth or early fifth century. One might expect, then, that the fourth century saw a steep decline in its fortunes. Yet, it seems that Kellis remained a prosperous village well into this century. A declaration dated 357, P.Kellis I Gr. 15, mentions the appointment of as many as ten liturgists for collecting the *chrysargyron*, a tax on urban professionals like traders and artisans. Other papyri exhibit a variety of professions, most of which are also (or only) attested for the fourth century: carpenters, cobblers, potters, fullers, weavers, camel- and donkey drivers, well cleaners, bath attendants, scribes, a teacher, a bronze smith, a field guard, a geese keeper, a bed maker, and perhaps a honey seller.

Agriculture naturally held a prominent place. Here, too, the village seems to have been doing well in the mid-fourth century. Our best written source is the Kellis Agricultural Account Book (KAB), a wooden codex containing

45 *P.Kellis IV*, 5–6.

46 By Colin A. Hope and Anthony J. Mills in personal (separate) communications to J. E. Molto, ‘Bio-Archaeological Research’, 243. Bagnall, however, takes 1000 as a conservative estimate for the fourth century. *P.Kellis IV*, 13.

47 Roger S. Bagnall and Paola Davoli, ‘Archaeological Work on Hellenistic and Roman Egypt 2000–2009’, *American Journal of Archaeology* 115, no. 1 (2011): 140.

48 For cotton, see *P.Kellis IV*, 39–40; olives, 80; for alum, see Wagner, *Les Oasis d’Égypte*, 306–9. See also Bagnall and Aravecchia, ‘Economy and Society’, 150–56.

an account of rents and expenses covering the years 361–64.⁴⁹ It shows that Kellis functioned as a hub for surrounding hamlets. The author of the KAB was an estate manager, responsible for collecting rents from tenant farmers on behalf of a distant landlord: a certain Faustianos, son of Aquila, living in Hibis in neighbouring Khargeh Oasis. The manager had a storehouse in Kellis, and interacted with at least 138 named people, 36 of whom were regular tenant farmers.⁵⁰ Even so, he was probably not responsible for all the landlord's holdings in the surroundings. And while some tenants apparently struggled to pay their dues, no general decline is obvious, although comparable material from earlier is admittedly lacking.⁵¹ Economic prosperity is suggested by other documentary texts from House 1–3. As we shall see in Chapter 3 (Section 3), these reveal a small workshop producing textiles for sale, and a private trading venture operating between the Nile Valley and the Dakhleh Oasis. Perhaps cotton gave these people a competitive advantage in exporting cloth, although cotton products are not mentioned explicitly in the letters, nor found in great quantities at the site. At any rate, their trading venture must be seen in light of Roman Egyptian commerce more generally. Egypt had an infrastructure conducive to trade: it experienced some degree of competition and mobility, and was extensively monetised (in comparative terms).⁵² Internal tolls were low. Goods manufactured in cities were sold in villages and vice-versa, trade being

49 Dated to indiction years 5–7, probably covering the agricultural years 361/2, 362/3, and 363/4, see *PKellis IV*, 58–59. Indiction years were used to date documents within 15 year-cycles, inaugurated during the reign of Constantine. Bagnall noted a four-year period in the following indiction cycle (376–79) as a plausible (if less likely) alternative date for the book, but cf. Bagnall and Worp, 'Two 4th Century Accounts', 506–7.

50 Based on the prosopography in *PKellis IV*, 63–72.

51 For the manager's income, see *ibid.*, 25–27, 76–80.

52 See Richard Alston, 'Trade and the City in Roman Egypt', in *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, ed. Helen Parkins and Christopher Smith (London: Routledge, 1998; repr. 2012); Dominic W. Rathbone, 'Roman Egypt', in *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris, and Richard Saller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Matt Gibbs, 'Manufacture, Trade, and the Economy', in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christina Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For the wider context, see the long-running debate between 'modernists' and 'primitivists' concerning the Roman economy. Central contributions include Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); and Keith Hopkins, 'Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C.–A.D. 400)', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980). While modernist positions have undergone substantial revisions, it has been maintained that 'recent research has increasingly pushed away from the "minimalist" end of the spectrum'. Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden, 'Introduction', in *The Ancient Economy*, ed. Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 7.

facilitated by the ease of transport on the Nile and, for the oases, by the Roman military presence providing roads and security.⁵³

The sources even furnish us with prices for some common products, providing insight into daily life in Kellis in the mid – late fourth century. Below, two tables present a selection of prices and measures that appear in the papyri under discussion. Familiarity with prices and common measures is necessary in order to understand some passages quoted from these papyri, and to follow some of the arguments for dating actors and circles in Chapters 3 and 4. Prices did not remain static: the mid- and late fourth century saw both increasing price inflations and attempts at currency reform.⁵⁴ Prices from before c.355, and after the late 370s/380s, therefore differed notably from those of the intervening period, making it to some extent possible to date documents based on monetary terms and prices, although it should be kept in mind that prices varied not only with time, but with locality and context as well. Table 1 lists measures in Roman Egypt, while Table 2 lists prices of different everyday items culled from the Kellis texts.⁵⁵

TABLE 1 Currency and measures in Dakhleh (c.355–370)

Type	Measure	Equal to	Modern measure
Currency	1 talent (T.)		
Coin	1 nummus	c.1 T. ^a	
Coin	1 solidus (sol.)	c.8000–12 000 T. ^b	72 sol. = 323 g gold
Weight	1 mna	c.1 litra (Roman pound)	323 g
Weight	1 centenarion (cent.)	100 litrai	32.3 kg

a See *P.Kellis V*, 144.

b The recently published O.Trimithis I 19, c.352–360, gives a price of 7511 T./sol. It fits well with Bagnall's (*P.Kellis IV*, 57–59) previous calculation of a mean of 8000 T./sol. for the $\kappa\alpha\beta$. Against this, *P.Kellis V* Copt. 11 seems to place the worth of a solidus at 11 500 T., although the interpretation of the Coptic is uncertain, see *P.Kellis V*, 59. *P.Bingen* 120, dated c.367, provides a price of probably c.12 000 T./sol.; Bagnall and Worp, 'Two 4th Century Accounts', 504–7. The two latter probably relate to a slightly later period than the two former.

53 Colin Adams, *Land Transport in Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 91–115.

54 Roger S. Bagnall, *Currency and Inflation in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985).

55 The information is partly drawn from *P.Kellis IV*, 47–54; and *P.Kellis V*, 58–65; and partly gathered from the papyri by the present author.

TABLE 1 Currency and measures in Dakhleh (c.355–370) (*cont.*)

Type	Measure	Equal to	Modern measure
Dry measure	1 artaba (art.)	10 mat. / 23 mat.	38.78 litres (30 kg wheat)
Dry measure	1 mation (mat.) – large	1/10 art.	3.88 litres (3 kg wheat)
	1 mation (mat.) – small	1/23 art.	1.69 litre (1.3 kg wheat)
Liquid measure	1 chous	6 sext.	3.24 litres
Liquid measure	1 agon	3 sext.	1.62 litre
Liquid measure	1 sextarius (sext.)		0.54 litre

TABLE 2 Selected prices in Kellis (c.355–70)

Good	Amount	Value	Source
Bread	1 piece	30 T. (Nile Valley)	P.Kellis v Copt. 21
Wheat	1 art.	1000–1500 T.	P.Kellis v Copt. 15, P.Bingen 120, KAB
Barley	1 art.	500–1000 T.	P.Kellis I Gr. 10, P.Bingen 120
Cotton	1 lith.	600 T.	KAB, P.Kellis I Gr. 61
Jujube fruits	1 art.	1500–2000 T.	P.Kellis v Copt. 45, P.Kellis I Gr. 10
Olive oil	1 sext.	250–350 T.	P.Kellis v Copt. 44, P.Bingen 120, KAB
Papyrus	A pair (?) ^a	1000–1200 T. (Nile Valley)	P.Kellis VII Copt. 78
Tunic (<i>stikharion</i>)	1 piece	5000 T.	P.Kellis v Copt. 26
Cowl	1 piece	1200–1300 T.	P.Kellis VII Copt. 58
Linen sheet	1 piece	2500 T.	P.Bingen 120
Weaving wage	Per day	60–70 T.	P.Kellis v Copt. 48, 44

a Presumably, the quantity was rather large: papyrus bought by Theophanes in Antioch earlier in the same century was not as expensive compared to other goods, see John Matthews, *The Journey of Theophanes: Travel, Business, and Daily Life in the Roman East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 111. See also T. C. Skeat, 'Was Papyrus Regarded as "Cheap" or "Expensive" in the Ancient World?', *Aegyptus* 75, no. 1/2 (1995).

3.2 *Village Elites and Outside Influencers*

Naturally, village life involved differences in wealth and status, even if villages were often less hierarchical than cities.⁵⁶ Kellis certainly had families with comparatively more wealth and power than others, as attested to by for instance the painted residence in Area B. Wealthier villagers would usually serve in important village liturgies, the office of komarch being the most prominent. In the mid-fourth century, Kellis had two komarchs, appointed by lots, as well as a village scribe who took care of record keeping and scribal work.⁵⁷ However, notables and magistrates of the wider Oasis also wielded influence in Kellis, as evinced by the orders they sent to or (more often) petitions they received from locals. The Kellis papyri attest to both a logistes and an exactor, and even a deputy-exactor.⁵⁸ As noted, these officials remained responsible for the entire Great Oasis into the fourth century. On the level of the Mothite Nome, we find papyri featuring council presidents, presumably of the city council in Mothis, and a praepositus pagi of Trimithis.⁵⁹ An ex-magistrate (ἄρχαῖος) named Faustianos was petitioned in his capacity as 'defensor of the area', either the Mothite Nome or the whole Great Oasis.⁶⁰ Such high personages usually resided in cities, not villages in the countryside. However, several papyri show that high-ranking magistrates had properties and strong ties to locals in fourth-century Kellis, and some of them may even have resided there. These are Gelasios, an ex-logistes,⁶¹ Pausanias, exactor and riparius, and an ex-magistrate of unknown office, Harpokration. They are treated more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

One important channel for their influence was landownership. Both Pausanias and Gelasios owned land in the village and/or its surroundings. Even a comparatively distant figure like Faustianos, the landlord of the KAB who

56 For a short survey of empirical studies on landholding in the papyri see Roger S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History* (London: Routledge, 1995), 64–68. See also Ruffini, *Social Networks*.

57 See P.Kellis I Gr. 23, dated 352. Naphtali Lewis, 'Kleros, Komarch and Komogrammateus in the Fourth Century', *Chronique d'Égypte* 72, no. 2 (1997). For the scribe, see P.Kellis I Gr. 14, dated 356, and perhaps P.Kellis I Gr. 45, dated 382 (*P.Kellis I*, 136; but cf. *P.Kellis IV*, 63 and Lewis, 'Kleros', 346–47).

58 Note, respectively, P.Kellis I Gr. 25, P.Gascou 70, and P.Kellis I Gr. 23.

59 For the presidents, P.Gascou 72, P.Kellis I Gr. 25; for the praepositus, P.Kellis I Gr. 27. See J. David Thomas, review of *Greek Papyri from Kellis, I* by Klaas A. Worp, ed, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 84 (1998): 262. For this praepositus, named Serenos, see now Bagnall and Ruffini, *Ostraka from Trimithis*.

60 For this question see *P.Kellis I*, 65–66 n.2.

61 For an early holder of this office, see J. David Thomas, 'The Earliest Occurrence of the exactor civitatis in Egypt (P.Giss. Inv. 126 Recto)', *Yale Classical Studies* 28 (1985).

appears to have resided in Hibis in Khargeh, would have wielded influence on the local level through his landholdings.⁶² His managers (προνοήται) in Kellis collected rents and conducted other local affairs on his behalf. They were probably important men and women in their own right, themselves landowners of some stature locally, and their position would have been strengthened by ties to his large estate.⁶³ Patronage was another way for elites to make their influence felt. Harpokration had villagers among his employees, one of whom came to him for protection against liturgical service and ended up causing a violent conflict in 353. While elite influence extended down to the villagers, villagers could, in turn, take advantage of such influence for their own purposes.

This elite was not necessarily a force of stability: local feuds recur in several documents, ranging from familial to village-wide conflicts.⁶⁴ Smaller conflicts naturally dominate, such as a house break-in and assault by a komarch, or a conflict over an inheritance between the children of an ex-magistrate.⁶⁵ Two more wide-reaching conflicts are also documented. In one of them, escalation appears to have been averted. A declaration dated 352, P.Kellis I Gr. 24, shows that conflict had erupted between two men, one Ploutogenes and one Hatres. The exact complaint is unclear, as the body of the document is mostly lost, but it seems that the 'hatred' and 'enmity' of Hatres (κατ' ἀπέχθειαν καὶ κατ' ἐχθρᾶν Ἀ[τ]ρήης, l.2) had caused problems for Ploutogenes. The importance of the conflict (or the influence of the alleged victim) is attested to by the fact that at least 33 men, three of them clergy, were recruited to participate as witnesses, swearing an oath that they had not known about Hatres' actions and that they would stay aloof from involvement. The declaration was to be sent to the *dux*, i.e. the military governor, as surety, so that Ploutogenes would not suffer any further hardships. Such displays helped to restore unity and mutual trust – or at least the external projection of such – in the face of what might have become a damaging conflict.

Another large-scale conflict took place the year after, in 353, and this time it turned violent. As narrated in the petition P.Kellis I Gr. 23, it pitted two komarchs, Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis⁶⁶ and a namesake and colleague, against

62 For the connection between Faustianos and Hibis, see now also Roger S. Bagnall and Gaele Tallet, 'Ostraka from Hibis in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Archaeology of the City of Hibis', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 196 (2015): 189.

63 P.Kellis IV, 70–72. For women working as local managers, see *ibid.*, 79–80.

64 For a criticism of the depiction of village elites as monolithic entities, see Giovanni Ruffini, 'Aphrodito before Dioscoros', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 45 (2008): 238–39.

65 P.Kellis I Gr. 21 and P.Gascou 69, respectively.

66 Probably to be identified with the man in P.Kellis I Gr. 24. See Chapter 4, Section 3.1.

the ex-magistrate Harpokration. According to the petitioner, Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis, the conflict started when a villager named Taa refused to serve his allotted liturgy. He was apprehended by the komarchs, but Harpokration, his employer, sent several supporters (his son Timotheos⁶⁷ and ten allies⁶⁸) to attack the komarchs, stealing their goods and beating them severely. In turn, the komarchs mobilised supporters of their own. Harpokration's supporters were later disarmed, apparently without incident. As pointed out by Ari Bryen, it is difficult to assess the power balance between disputants, or the true course of events, based on the one-sided portrayal preserved in such petitions.⁶⁹ At any rate, it vividly illustrates how village tensions could spill over into violence, and how local power brokers could be drawn into conflict with each other.

3.3 *Culture and Religious Life*

Graeco-Roman culture had made its way also to Kellis. Rhetors were active in fourth-century Dakhleh, and the evidence indicates that one may even have taught in Kellis, as a collection of speeches by the Athenian rhetor Isocrates (436–338 BCE), produced in the fourth century and perhaps used for teaching rhetoric, was found alongside the $\kappa\alpha\beta$.⁷⁰ Fragments of a Greek legend and of a verse composition echoing – possibly parodying – Homer have been found in the Main Temple.⁷¹

Our main interest here concerns the religious life of the village, which for much of its existence was dominated by the local temple cult. The main temple was dedicated to the divinities Tutu, his mother Neith, and his consort

67 Worp noted that '[i]t would seem slightly more attractive to assume that Timotheos is Harpokration's own son rather than a mere slave', *P.Kellis I*, 72. Ari Bryen, on the other hand, takes him to be a slave (*Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 98); however, see the occurrence of a 'Timotheos son of Harpokration' in *P.Kellis I Gr. 8* (ll.16–17).

68 Termed *symmakhoi* ($\tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \sigma\upsilon\mu\mu\acute{\alpha}\chi\omega\upsilon\sigma\upsilon$, l.23). Bryen takes them to be assistants of the riparius; if so, we may here actually be dealing with a conflict between nome and village administration. Bryen, *Violence in Roman Egypt*, 98.

69 *Ibid.*, 98–100.

70 Olaf Kaper, 'The Western Oasis', in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christina Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 725; Pasquale M. Pinto, 'P. Kellis III Gr. 95 and Evagoras I', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 168 (2009). Note also *P.Kellis I Gr. 53* (l.2).

71 Colin A. Hope and Klaas A. Worp, 'Miniature Codices from Kellis', *Mnemosyne* 59, no. 2 (2006); Klaas A. Worp, 'A Mythological Ostrakon from Kellis', in *The Oasis Papers 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project*, ed. Gillian E. Bowen and Colin A. Hope (Oxford: Oxbow, 2003).

Tapsais or Tnaphersais, 'great and powerful gods of the village of Kellis'.⁷² Tutu (also called Tithoes) often took the form of a sphinx; he had become popular in Egypt as the chief of a demonic army, being often titled 'master of demons'.⁷³ An example of personal piety to these gods has been discovered in the form of a votive statue dedicated by Talaous, daughter of Thaesis.⁷⁴ The name Tithoes was moreover one of the most popular male personal names in the village – beaten only by (P)shai, the personification of an individual's 'luck', 'fate', or 'daemon'. Of other gods, we find that Seth, whose main cult-centre was located in Hibis, also received worship in Kellis.⁷⁵ Isis was a popular goddess in the Great Oasis in the form of Isis-Sothis or Isis-Demeter: a third-century dedication by a leader (προστάτης) of the Isis-Demeter cult, Ophellianos, as well as two statues of the goddess, have been found in Kellis.⁷⁶ Ophellianos' title shows the existence of a cultic association dedicated to her, and it has been suggested that the large painted residence in Area B (B/3/1) could have housed the meetings of such a cult.⁷⁷

Excavations of the Main Temple indicate that it was in continued use into the early fourth century, and ostraka found here attest to the activities of its priests and other worshippers. A man named Psais inhabited the important priestly office 'prophet' (προφήτης) in the mid-third century; another prophet, Pachoumis, was active later in that century.⁷⁸ A group of temple attendants (παστοπόροι) are listed in O.Kellis I 98, an account of oil arrears from the years 299, 300, and 302.⁷⁹ A man called Psais the potter was a leading priest at the end of the third century; he was still alive in 294 (O.Kellis I 145), but had died by c.300 (O.Kellis I 98). The last attested temple priest (ιερέυς) is Stonios son of Tpnachthes, who witnessed a contract in the year 335, P.Kellis I Gr. 13. The

72 For this title, and for the temples and priests of Kellis, see Kaper, *Temples and Gods*, 27–40, 87–138.

73 David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 115–16.

74 Klaas A. Worp and Olaf Kaper, 'A Bronze Representing Tapsais of Kellis', *Revue d'Égyptologie* 46 (1995); Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 115–16.

75 Kaper, *Temples and Gods*, 55–64; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 113. A man with the rare theophoric name Seth appears in O.Kellis I 123.

76 Hope and Worp, 'Dedication Inscription'; Olaf Kaper, 'Isis in Roman Dakhleh', in *Isis on the Nile: Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Isis Studies, Liège, November 27–29 2008*, ed. Laurent Bricault and Miguel John Versluys (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

77 Whitehouse, 'A House', 252–53.

78 See Worp, 'A New Wooden Board'; id., 'Short Texts'.

79 The *pastophoroi* were tasked with carrying sacred objects in processions and other minor duties (such as guarding the temple). Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs*, 182.

great temple building appears to have gone out of use as a place of worship around this time.

Jewish names, e.g. Mouses, Elias, and Rachel, are known from Kellis, although they are unlikely to indicate the presence of a Jewish community, but probably refer to Christians.⁸⁰ A Christian community must have been active already by c.300, as indicated by the three churches that appeared in the first half of the fourth century. The earliest of them, the Small East Church, dates from the reign of Constantine. The other two, the Large East Church and the West Church, were built shortly thereafter, in the second quarter to mid-fourth century.⁸¹ Panels of coloured glass, perhaps decorated with religious motifs, were found in the Large East Church, evincing a wealthy community around this time. Evidence for Christian presence in the period prior to this is scarce, however.⁸² The first clear evidence comes shortly after the last appearance of the pagan priest Stonios, when in 337 a certain Harpokrates, ‘priest of the catholic church (πρεσβύτερος καθολικῆς ἐκκλησι[ας])’ (I.8), subscribed as witness to a contract, P.Kellis I Gr. 58. The expression ‘catholic church’ occurs altogether three times in the House 1–3 material, each time in connection with the title of an office.⁸³ P.Kellis I Gr. 58 is the earliest, and an early attestation for this expression in the papyri in general. Another priest of the ‘catholic church’

80 *P.Kellis I*, 163. In general, however, the onomastics of Kellis do not seem to tell us much about religious change. Worp’s analysis concludes that there is comparatively little in the Kellis onomasticon to indicate ‘Christianisation’. See Klaas A. Worp, ‘Christian Personal Names in Documents from Kellis (Dakhleh Oasis)’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 195 (2015); for the debate regarding naming trends and religious change, see Roger S. Bagnall, ‘Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, no. 19 (1982); Ewa Wipszycka, ‘La valeur de l’onomastique pour l’histoire de la christianisation de l’Égypte. A propos d’une étude de R. S. Bagnall’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 62 (1986).

81 Gillian E. Bowen, ‘The Fourth-Century Churches at Ismant el-Kharab’, in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons*, ed. Colin A. Hope and Gillian E. Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2002).

82 Two almost identical contracts dated 319 and 320, P.Gascou 18 and 19, pertaining to a trade-venture to the Nile Valley, use the expression ‘with god’ (σὺν θεῷ), often taken to indicate Christian belief. This assumption is not unproblematic; see Malcolm Choat and Alanna Nobbs, ‘Monotheistic Formulae of Belief in Greek Letters on Papyrus from the Second to the Fourth Century’, *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 2 (2001–2005): 40–41; Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 104–5. However, one of the men is named Ouonsis, a figure that also features (if likely as a patronym) in the context of a ‘presbyter of the catholic church’ in P.Kellis I Gr. 24.

83 Worp counts four (*P.Kellis I*, 74), but the last, a Psekes found in P.Kellis I Gr. 48, is not described as καθολικῆς. For the expression ‘catholic church’, see Ewa Wipszycka, ‘Katholiké et les autres épithètes qualifiant le nom ékklesia: contribution à l’étude de l’ordre, hiérarchique des églises dans l’Égypte byzantine’, *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 24 (1994).

was involved in the dispute between Ploutogenes and Hatres in P.Kellis I Gr. 24, dated 352. Finally, P.Kellis I Gr. 32, dated 364, features a 'reader of the catholic church' (ἀναγνώστης καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας, l.21), although located in Aphrodito. Use of the term 'catholic church' may reflect a distinction between different church communities in the village. Thus, a few Sahidic Coptic letters from House 4 and D/8, published in *P.Kellis VII*, may pertain to adherents of a 'mainstream' Christian Church existing alongside a Manichaean one, as we shall see.

4 Oasis Society and Religious Movements

The first evidence for Manichaeans in Kellis is contemporary with the evidence for 'catholic' officials, i.e. the 330s, although the movement must have arrived in the Great Oasis earlier. We return to its spread, growth, and interaction with other religious communities in the village in Chapter 6. The concluding discussion here is more impressionistic, confined to general remarks concerning aspects of Oasis society that may have affected the way Manichaeism extended its reach from the Nile Valley to the Oasis. Two such attributes stand out as possibly consequential for the spread of religious communities in the Oasis: its centralised elite and its mobile inhabitants.

A common way for network researchers to conceptualise the spread of religions is to see them as information flows within networks of actors of varying centrality.⁸⁴ In centralised societies, information has to flow through a relatively limited set of people. The natural environment of the Oasis necessitated a degree of spatial and social centralisation, as we have seen. Agricultural organisation was more strictly hierarchical here than elsewhere in Egypt, due to the investments of labour and resources needed to develop new plots of land. The author of the KAB reported to a landlord living all the way over in Hibis in Khargeh. Political centralisation is also evident, considering that the chief officials of the Roman administration were responsible for both Khargeh and Dakhleh.

The Great Oasis, then, seems to have had a rather narrow group of decision-makers, both administrative and economic. The influence held by such a centralised elite will have affected how religion spread to and through the Oasis. It could be argued that this made it more difficult for new religious movements to enter, as the social status and conservatism of the political elites might make

84 See for instance Anna Collar, 'Network Theory and Religious Innovation', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 22, no. 1 (2007); Woolf, 'Only Connect?'

them less amenable to social and/or religious deviation.⁸⁵ On the other hand, they would also have been more frequently exposed to new ideas or trends from the Nile Valley than other inhabitants. Moreover, such centralisation can quickly become a boon to religious movements if they manage to elicit support from central figures in the network of power. The sudden appearance of churches all over Dakhleh in the first half-to-mid fourth century suggests that this centralisation at any rate did not constitute a barrier to the spread of Christian (and/or Manichaean?) communities.

Another feature of Oasis society may have contributed to this spread, however, namely the high degree of mobility of parts of its population. Mobility in the antique world, the physical movement of people and goods, has recently seen increased scholarly interest.⁸⁶ Manichaeism, as a religious movement, has often been ascribed a particularly high degree of mobility, through the itinerancy of its Elect and its affiliation with trade communities. A high degree of mobility was characteristic of certain groups within Oasis society as well. No Nile River provided easy transportation. A comparatively large segment of the population therefore had to be engaged in the overland movement of goods, which according to Bagnall may have offset the stark hierarchy, since '[t]here were a lot of *onelatai*, donkey drivers, and *kamelitai*, camel drivers, in the oases, far more than in most Valley communities.'⁸⁷ These did not only work within the Oasis itself, but served the need and desire of Oasites for contact with the Nile Valley. In turn, this may have given such groups a more prominent place in the Oasis than in Egypt at large. It can be no coincidence that the people most closely associated with Manichaeism in Kellis were also deeply engaged in the Nile Valley-trade, as we shall see.

85 See the arguments in Collar, *Religious Networks*, 19–20.

86 The topic has attracted attention at least since Lionel Casson, but has recently seen an uptick. A landmark study is Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). For a collection of both empirically and theoretically oriented studies of the Roman Empire, see Luuk de Ligt and Laurens E. Tacoma, eds., *Migration and Mobility in the Early Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). A recent study of physical mobility in Egypt is Adams, *Land Transport*. For a study concentrating on long-term patterns of movement in the Oasis, see Boozer, 'The Social Impact'. For movement in relation to cult in particular, see Simon Price, 'Religious Mobility in the Roman Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 102 (2012); Philip A. Harland, ed. *Travel and Religion in Antiquity* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011).

87 See Bagnall and Aravecchia, 'Economy and Society', 175.

The Pamour Family: Familial and Economic Networks

Fourth-century Kellis was still a bustling place. Signs of decay might be detected in the blocked doorway of the great temple of Tutu in the west, or the abandoned houses in its eastern part. But just east of the temple, a residential area of flatroofed, mudbrick housing units divided by a series of east-west lanes and narrow alleys was still prospering. Churches were built here, one even exhibiting stained glass panels, and from the papyri we learn that elite families were closely linked to the village. In this area, facing a large administrative complex to its north and with its main entrances facing a wider thoroughfare to the south, lay the group of domestic units designated House 1–3. Here were found nearly all the papyri pertaining to Manichaean presence so far excavated from Kellis. The owners of these papyri are the subject of the present chapter and the next. We introduce the people visible in these texts, tracing prominent individuals and their network of relatives and acquaintances, and we examine their business activities, the trading, weaving, and caravan-driving with which their letters are pre-eminently concerned.

In many ways, the House 1–3 complex is unremarkable. Its three separate units were built in the late third century, while occupation continued until at least the 380s, without major structural changes to their layout (for which, see Figure 4).¹ They were one-storied houses with roof terraces, whose main doorways faced a street to the south. The walls were mud plastered, with white-plastered areas surrounding niches that, along with palm-rib shelves, were used for storage. Rooms were accessed by way of wooden doorways; roofs were barrel-vaulted or supported by wooden beams. The houses were smaller and plainer than the wealthy residence in Area B, lacking *atria* and

1 For the following description, and discussions of the finds, see Colin A. Hope and Gillian E. Bowen, 'The Archaeological Context', in *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis. Vol 1.*, ed. Iain Gardner, Anthony Alcock, and Wolf-P. Funk (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999); Lisa Nevett, 'Family and Household, Ancient History and Archaeology: A Case Study from Roman Egypt', in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Blackwell, 2011); Gillian E. Bowen, 'The Environment Within: The Archaeological Context of the Texts from House 3 at Kellis in Egypt's Dakhleh Oasis', in *Housing and Habitat in the Ancient Mediterranean: Cultural and Environmental Responses*, ed. A. A. Di Castro and Colin A. Hope (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2015); and Hope, 'Roman-Period Houses'.

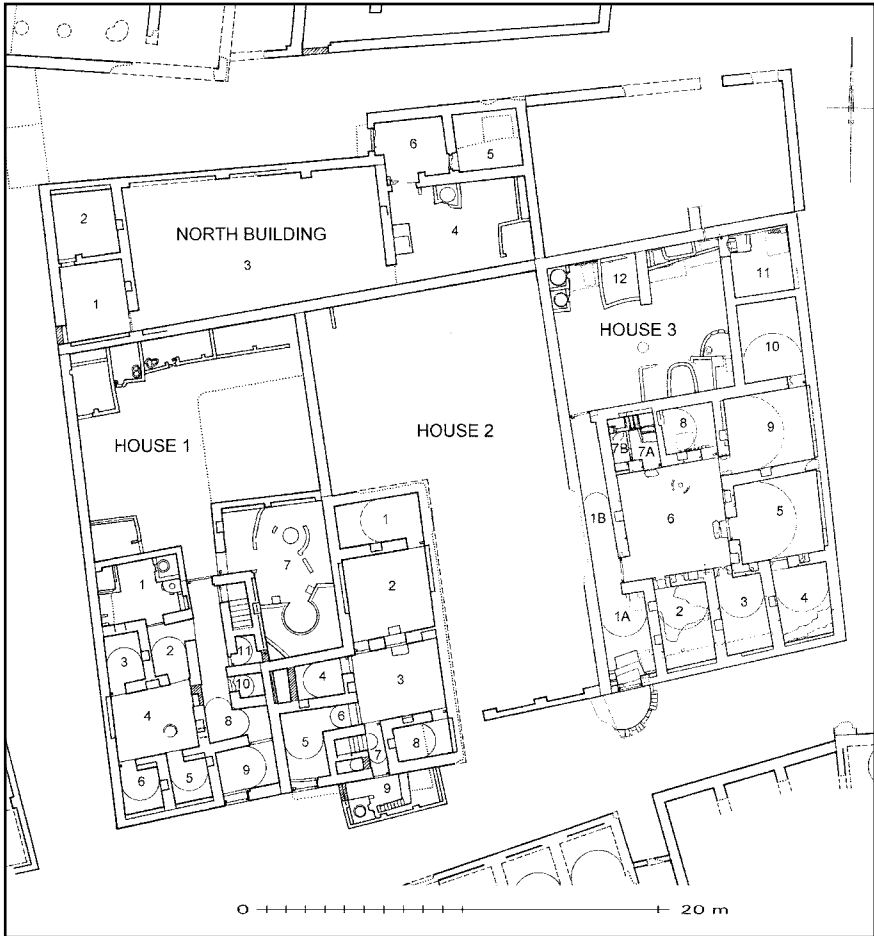


FIGURE 4 Map of House 1–3

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wall-decorations. The largest of them was House 3, which was also the first to be built. Most of its rooms were centred on an inner courtyard, Room 6, which was furnished with a hearth. A few rooms lined an external courtyard to the north, where animals may have been kept, while stairs in the central Room 7 provided access to the roof. This style largely conforms to patterns found elsewhere in Dakhleh.²

² Any 'ideological influence' on the house lay-out seems unlikely. Boozer noted, regarding the absence of kitchens in House 2, that: 'There is some reason to believe that the Manichees may have had a prohibition on cooking inside houses. It seems that Manicheans may have

The owners of the papyri, then, would seem to have belonged to the middle stratum of Kellis society – on the assumption that the people appearing in the texts also inhabited the houses, a question to which we return below. House 3 was the main papyrological find-site, furnishing a large quantity of papyri in both Greek and Coptic, most of them found in the central inner court, Room 6. House 2 also provided some important finds, mostly in Greek. Several of its texts can be prosopographically linked to those of House 3. House 1 and the North Building mainly contained fragments. But these remains, too, evince links to House 3, prosopographically and even physically.³ Altogether, the documentary papyri found in House 1–3 (so far published) make up around 208 papyri texts; 90 in Greek and 116 in Coptic, as well as some ostraka, both Greek and Coptic.

1 The Circles of House 3

Many of the documentary texts can be grouped into different ‘circles’, based chiefly on recurring authors/recipients, at times combined with other recurring features such as central actors, subject matters, palaeography, or find-site. An initial grouping was made by Klaas A. Worp, based on the Greek texts and supplemented with a few readings from the then yet-to-be published Coptic papyri.⁴ For House 2, Worp found two prominent circles: that of Pausanias and his associate Gena, and that of Tithoes son of Petesis and his son Samoun. The former were chiefly active in the first half of the fourth century, the latter in the second half. For House 3, the Greek material was dominated by Pamour 1 son of Psais 1 and his descendants. Their activities span almost the entire fourth century.

Not every document could easily be fitted into these circles, however.⁵ And turning to the Coptic material, the vast majority of Coptic texts published in *P.Kellis V* – almost all of which came from House 3 – could not be directly

lived in the Kellis 1–3 houses, and this may explain, in part, the location of the food preparation areas outside of the house.’ Anna L. Boozer, *Amheida II. A Late Romano-Egyptian House in the Dakhla Oasis: Amheida House B2* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), Ch. 6, n.143. However, such prohibitions only pertained to the Elect, who are unlikely to have been the primary users of House 1–3.

3 Most strikingly, a Manichaean codex, *P.Kellis VI* Gr. 97, was found in pieces scattered between House 1, the North Building, and House 3. See Hope and Bowen, ‘The Archaeological Context’, 108; *P.Kellis VI*, 94–97.

4 See *P.Kellis I*, 28 and 51.

5 Worp listed 25 (out of 72) documents from House 3 that could not be explained by the assumption ‘that documents found in House 3 were addressed/related to people living there’.

attributed to the circles of *P.Kellis I*. The editors made a preliminary prosopography of 173 names.⁶ They noted only one letter clearly authored by one of the above-mentioned actors, Tithoes' *P.Kellis v* Copt. 12. The rest of this material could be grouped into four main circles (excluding the 'Manichaean letters', in which names were generally lost or omitted): Tehat/Horion, Maria/Makarios, Psais/Andreas, and the Petros circle.⁷ As the Coptic texts – with a very few exceptions – lack dates and patronyms, the Greek documents remained crucial for establishing a timeline for these latter circles. Fortunately, some actors from the Greek texts make their appearance in the Coptic material as well, tying some of these circles to the mid fourth-century Pamour family. Other figures could also be linked with dated Greek texts, giving a tentative timeline for the principle circles of both House 2 and 3 (see below). The recurrence of many names made it clear that there were connections between most (if not all) of these circles, although the editors deferred from sorting out most of them until the completion of the second volume of Coptic texts.

This volume, *P.Kellis VII*, mainly contained material from House 3 (around 64 texts) not directly related to the circles from *P.Kellis V* – the editors found only three texts belonging to these circles.⁸ Instead, the bulk of letters from *P.Kellis VII* pertain to the later Pamour family. Most were authored by Pamour III, his wife Maria II, his brother Pekysis, or close associates such as Philammon II and Theognostos: what is here called the Pamour/Pekysis circle. Familial ties between these circles could be established, such as the role of Maria I, correspondent of Makarios: she appears to have been mother to Maria II, and so mother-in-law to Pamour III. The timeline remained unchanged, as the editors still placed the material of Makarios in the late 350s, and attributed those of Pamour III and Maria II to the successive generation. They concluded:

In sum, our interpretation is that the Makarios family correspondence dates from the later 350s C.E. (the evidence for this is discussed in some detail in CDT 1). Probably it was preserved for some years by his wife Maria who lived as an elderly relative in House 3. In contrast, the core Pamour documents belong to a younger generation. Perhaps they were

Ibid., 52. In several instances, however, he does note possible ties between these unaffiliated letters and the presumed inhabitants.

6 *P.Kellis V*, 21–50.

7 *Ibid.*, 11, 55–58.

8 *P.Kellis VII* Copt. 58 (Tehat/Horion), 59 (Psais/Andreas), and 60 (Petros). Of the latter two, only the incipits remain. Some material from House 3 is still unpublished, but most of it is very fragmentary. *P.Kellis VII*, 259–62.

mainly written ten-fifteen years later, and thus never mention Makarios or Matthaïos; but the old woman was still alive in the house.⁹

To sum up, the principle circles of the Greek material from House 2 and 3 are:

- House 2
 - 330s: The Pausanias/Gena circle
 - 360s: The Tithoes/Samoun circle
- House 3
 - 300–380: The Pamour family
 - 290s–320s: Pamour I, son of Psais I, and Philammon I
 - 330s–360s: Psais II, son of Pamour I
 - 350s–380s: Pamour III and Pekysis, sons of Psais II

While the principle circles of the Coptic letters of House 3 are:

- c.355: The Horion/Tehat circle
- 350s (late): The Maria/Makarios circle
- 360s (early/late?):¹⁰ The Pamour/Pekysis circle
- 360s (late): The Psais/Andreas circle
- c.370: The Petros circle

There were, however, many letters in the second volume whose relationships to these ‘core’ circles were difficult to establish. They include letters from and to Ploutogenes (P.Kellis VII Copt. 85–91), likely several persons by that name; letters from Loihat and Timotheos (P.Kellis VII Copt. 92–93); and a sizable amount of letters that could not be easily placed in any one circle (P.Kellis VII Copt. 94–121), although links to one of the above circles can usually be found in those cases where the papyrus is not too damaged.

The editors have made many valuable comments and suggestions for identifying actors and sorting out the relationships between the primary circles as well as to these other letters. However, as *P.Kellis VII* did not contain an updated prosopography, the possible ties between them remain only partially explored.¹¹ In the following, we shall introduce these actors and consider these relationships more closely. Because of the extensive usage of familial terminology in the Coptic texts, kinship terms can only reasonably be taken to designate (biological) family relationship in a few, exceptional cases. They are, however,

9 Ibid., 40–41.

10 See the discussion below.

11 Worp and R. P. Salomons have published a compilation of names from the Oasis, but without attempting a prosopography. Klaas A. Worp and R. P. Salomons, ‘Onomasticon Oasiticum: An Onomasticon’ (2009).

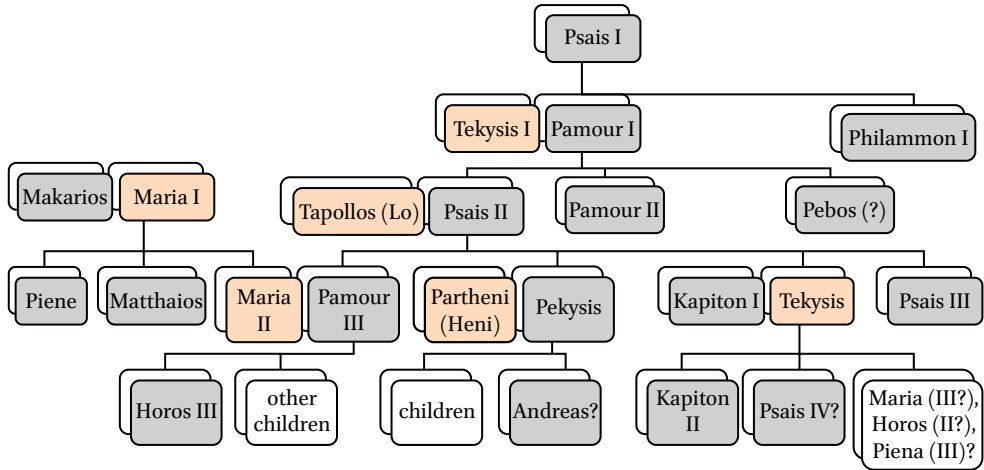


FIGURE 5 The extended Pamour family

useful for establishing broad generations.¹² Some care is needed also in this context: this usage, too, could be fluid and contextual, as evinced by instances of individuals designated both ‘father’ and ‘brother’ by the same author. We therefore have to consider a combination of kinship terms, shared prosopography, roles, dating, and find site in order to establish identifications. Even so, the identifications that can be made strongly suggest that all the above circles can be seen as forming part of the extended Pamour family, even if the evidence is often circumstantial and their precise relationships cannot always be established with certainty.

1.1 *Pamour III and Pekysis*

The earliest active member of the Pamour family found in the sources is Pamour (I), son of Psais (I), attested for the period 299–331. He was married to a woman named Tekysis (I), and worked closely with a man named Philammon (I). Their preserved documents are primarily judicial texts: only two letters can, with some uncertainty, be attributed to Pamour I and Philammon I,

12 For the usage (and difficulty of evaluating the significance) of kinship terms in Greek papyri up until the fourth century, see Eleanor Dickey, ‘Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri’, *Mnemosyne* 57, no. 2 (2004). For the Kellis material more specifically, see Iain Gardner, ‘Some Comments on Kinship Terms in the Coptic Documentary Papyri from Ismant el-Kharab’, in *The Oasis Papers 2: Proceedings from the Second International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project*, ed. Marcia F. Wiseman (Oxford: Oxbow, 2008).

respectively.¹³ Psais (II), son of Pamour I and Tekysis I, is better known. His datable activities span the mid-fourth century, from 333 to 364, and so he was born (at the latest) c.315, and probably earlier. His wife was Tapollo, and their known children include Pamour (III), Pekysis, and a daughter, probably Tekysis (III). He also had a brother, Pamour (II), but he can only be identified with certainty in one document, P.Kellis I Gr. 42: most occurrences of the name 'Pamour' in the Coptic texts relate to Psais II's son, Pamour III.

Psais II figures prominently in the mid-fourth century Coptic documents, although mostly indirectly, through references to 'father' Psais. Few letters can be attributed to his authorship. The only reasonably certain example is P.Kellis VII Copt. 110, written to his sons from the Nile Valley. The family had strong ties to the Valley: several documents found in House 1–3 were written in Aphrodito, a village located between Lycopolis and Antinoopolis not far from a route leading to the Great Oasis. Psais II had made Aphrodito his primary residence by 364, and his brother, Pamour II, had done likewise by the same year.¹⁴ Psais II's wife Tapollo seems to have remained in Kellis, while their sons took charge of business; she is sometimes referred to by the hypocoristic form 'Lo' in the Coptic letters.¹⁵

However, it is Psais II's sons, Pamour III and Pekysis, who are the most central figures in the archive. They, too, had begun travelling between Oasis and Valley by the time of or in the early 360s, and it is their circle that is best documented by the private letters. Their period of activity covers c.350 to 380. Although both brothers at times employ religious greetings and prayers, even distinctly Manichaean cues (see Chapter 5, Section 3.2), their main concern is business. Pamour III was the older of the two. He first appears in a dated document in P.Kellis I Gr. 24, dated 352, where he writes on behalf of a group of signatories. He must have been a grown man at this time, perhaps born c.330 or earlier.¹⁶ By the early 360s, he had married and fathered three children, among

13 P.Kellis I Gr. 66, written by Pamour I, and, less certainly, P.Kellis I Gr. 65, by Philammon (I?). The latter is written by a Philammon addressing a Tekysis, taken by Worp to be Philammon I writing his biological sister and Pamour I's wife, Tekysis I (*P.Kellis I*, 51, 174). However, it may also belong to a later generation, as tentatively proposed in *P.Kellis V*, 21. Worp compares it to a letter of Philammon from the Coptic material with similar concerns for financial loss. This letter has now been published as P.Kellis VII Copt. 81: it clearly dates to the mid-fourth century, and is authored by Philammon II, who was also a contemporary of at least two women named Tekysis (II and III, see n.20, below).

14 See P.Kellis I Gr. 32 and 42. Perhaps their apparent absence from a list of prominent Kellites dated 352, P.Kellis I Gr. 24, could be taken to indicate that they were already on the move by this time, twelve years prior.

15 See *P.Kellis I*, 51; *P.Kellis VII*, 40, 46; but cf. 67.

16 See perhaps also P.Kellis I Gr. 38, dated 333, which mentions a son of Psais II.

them a boy and a girl. This is documented by P.Kellis I Gr. 30, a contract dated to 363, concerned with the rights of property that belonged to Pamour's deceased wife, given to their son, Horos (11).¹⁷ By this time, Pamour had clearly developed strong ties to the Nile Valley, as this property was located in Aphrodito. It may well be that his wife originated there. The scribe even labels Pamour and Horos as 'Egyptians', perhaps referring to the family's attempt to integrate into Valley society.¹⁸ Still, Pamour was located in the Oasis at the time when the contract was drawn up, and had to be represented by his father, Psais 11. He must have kept going back to the Oasis also after putting down roots in the Valley. At the same time, all his preserved letters, both Coptic (P.Kellis VII Copt. 64–72) and Greek (P.Kellis I Gr. 71), are written from the Nile Valley. They are most often addressed to his brother Pekysis and/or a brother Psais (11), but greet a number of other associates as well. Several of his letters contain postscripts by a Maria (11), probably his wife, although identifying her with the woman in P.Kellis I Gr. 30 presents some problems (see below). At the time of his last appearance in a dated document, P.Kellis I Gr. 33 (369), he was again in Kellis, leasing out a room in a house. It does not specify that he was residing in Aphrodito at this time, and so he may still have been formally residing in Kellis. At any rate, a private contract between him and Pekysis, P.Kellis VII Copt. 69, confirms that he, at some point, made his residence in the Valley.

This contract also states that Pekysis was now put in charge of their inherited property in Kellis. In addition to being addressed by Pamour 111 and greeted in other documents, Pekysis is himself the author of a number of preserved letters (P.Kellis VII Copt. 73–79, P.Kellis I Gr. 72, 76). He had a wife, probably a weaver named Partheni (11), and children – at least one boy – by c.360.¹⁹ His letters are also written from the Valley, where he, too, clearly did much business, although he retained stronger ties to Kellis than Pamour. But despite frequently occurring in the private letters, Pekysis is only identifiable

17 *P.Kellis I*, 90. For the other actors by the name Horos in the House 3 circles (Horos I and 11), see the sections on the Psais/Andreas circle and on the Horion/Tehat circle, below.

18 Lewis comments: 'Horos' family had ties of long standing with the Valley ... It is not hard to imagine that Oasis families with such Valley connections might be dubbed "Egyptians" by their neighbours, thus expressing, I suspect, much the same combination of envy and disdain with which some people used to speak (or still speak?) of "city folk". Lewis, 'Notationes legentis', 29–30. While plausible, it does not explain why the nickname appears in a document drafted in the Valley. Perhaps the disdain was rather that of the villagers in Aphrodito towards 'Oasites' – newcomers who were trying to become 'Egyptian'.

19 She is often identified by the hypocoristic Heni; see *P.Kellis VII*, 142. There were in fact two persons of this name: a 'mother' Partheni (1) (P.Kellis v Copt. 19, 47?) and a 'sister' Heni/Partheni (11) (e.g. P.Kellis v Copt. 25). The latter is Pekysis' wife, and most instances of Partheni/Heni probably relate to her.

with certainty in one datable Greek document: P.Kellis I Gr. 44, a loan-contract from 382 written in Aphrodito, which sees him borrowing a gold solidus from another Kellis villager located there. It does not specify that he was residing in Aphrodito, and Pekysis likely brought it back with him to the village, so he was probably still a Kellis resident at this point.

Many other associates feature prominently in the letters of these two brothers; including their sister Tekysis III,²⁰ her husband Kapitón I, the couple Philammon II and Charis, a certain 'father' Horos I, and the 'brothers' Psais III, Andreas, and Theognostos. All of these occur as authors and/or recipients in their own right, although in several instances their specific relationship to Pamour III or Pekysis is difficult to discern. In the case of Psais III, he was probably another, younger brother of Pamour III/Pekysis. Below it is argued that he and 'brother' Andreas should be identified with the protagonists of the Psais/Andreas circle.

The family seems in general to have been on good terms with each other. The letters contain many expressions of longing for each other's company or concern for each other's health. To be sure, formulaic phrases to this effect are common in the papyri, and it is difficult to differentiate between heartfelt concern and stock *topoi*. But some peculiar expressions, at times reinforced by pious religious language, suggest that these were not only formalities. In P.Kellis I Gr. 71, Pamour III greets Psais III as 'most honoured and truly longed for brother' (ll.1–2), while in P.Kellis VII Copt. 72, he addresses Psais III and Theognostos with an elaborate prayer and phrases such as: 'For no one knows the love for you that pierces my heart, save God alone' (ll.5–7). In P.Kellis I Gr. 72, to Pamour III, Pekysis writes in the margins: 'I'll come to you quickly for this, because you appeared heavy-headed' (l.43). At the same time, the letters also attest to tensions. Tekysis III's husband, Kapitón I, seems to have disappeared after a bitter conflict: in P.Kellis I Gr. 76, Pekysis writes that his brother-in-law has gone off somewhere in the Valley, that they no longer have anything in common, and refers to him as 'a certain so-called Kapitón (τινος λεγομένου Καπίτωνος)' (ll.6–7).

The later history of the family is unknown. Only two papyri from House 3 give evidence to activity after Pekysis' loan contract from 382, but these do not (as far as we can tell) concern descendants of Pamour III or Pekysis. Another loan contract dated 386, P.Kellis I Gr. 45, may concern a nephew of theirs:

20 There seems to have been three Tekysis'; Tekysis I, wife of Pamour I; 'mother' Tekysis II; and Tekysis III, daughter of Psais II. It is possible that the former two should be identified. Most instances of the name probably relate to Tekysis III. For her marriage to Kapitón I, see P.Kellis VII Copt. 75, P.Kellis I Gr. 76.

Kapiton (II) son of Kapiton (I), at that time resident in the village Thio.²¹ The latest datable text of the archive is P.Kellis I Gr. 77, a heavily fragmented record of a judicial proceeding from 389, where no familiar name is discernible.

Excursus. Dating the Pamour/Pekysis Circle: Maria II and P.Kellis I Gr. 30

The editors dated the private letters of Pamour III and Pekysis to the late 360s or early 370s. However, the contract P.Kellis I Gr. 30, dated 363, may in fact put most of them about half a decade earlier, in the early 360s. This argument needs some explication. The contract pertains to an exchange of property rights between Horos (III), son of Pamour (III) son of Psais (II), and a man named Psenpnouthes. Horos III has inherited a share in a house in Aphrodito from his mother, but as both Horos and his father Pamour III are unable to participate, it falls to grandfather Psais II to represent them. Since Maria II is by far the most likely candidate to be the wife of Pamour III, her death in 363 would place all letters that she was involved in at a time prior to this date.²² Conversely, letters by Pamour III where Maria II is absent, but where one would expect her to add a postscript, could more tentatively be dated after her death.²³ A mention of her death might even be found in a letter by their relative, Philammon II. In P.Kellis VII Copt. 80, he speaks of a 'great evil' that has come upon Pamour,²⁴ writing to Pekysis that: 'For you are the ones who ought to comfort him; surely we know that a great evil has befallen him. And we also heard that the old woman departed the body' (ll.12–16). Since the second evil involves the death of an elderly woman, the first evil may similarly involve a death, and one which was especially hard on Pamour III. The death of his wife seems an obvious candidate.²⁵ The name Maria does not appear in Philammon II's other letters.

Still, this chain of events remains conjectural, and there are some objections. One concerns the age of Pamour III's son, Horos III, who inherited his

21 Given the late date, it is likely that Kapiton (I) had left. For him, see Kapiton son of Korax in P.Kellis I Gr. 24.

22 These include P.Kellis VII Copt. 64–66, 71, 77, P.Kellis I Gr. 71, perhaps P.Kellis V Copt. 42 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 115, as well as P.Kellis I Gr. 72 and 73.

23 Primarily the letters P.Kellis VII Copt. 72 and 103. One might add that her presence or absence is unclear in some presumed Pamour III-letters: P.Kellis VII Copt. 67, 68, and 70. The authorship of P.Kellis VII Copt. 70 is, however, unclear, while P.Kellis VII Copt. 67 and 68 are very lacunose (it is possible that Maria's postscript is in fact partly preserved in the former). See *P.Kellis VII*, 60.

24 For Pamour as the main object of consolation, see *ibid.*, 123.

25 It may be that Maria II herself mentions having fallen sick in one of Pamour III's letters, although the writer of this part of the letter could also be Pamour. See P.Kellis VII Copt. 71, but cf. 72.

mother in P.Kellis I Gr. 30. He was, at some point, appointed to a village liturgy in Kellis, according to Pekysis' letter P.Kellis I Gr. 72. In this letter, Pamour's wife is still alive and sends greetings to her husband in the Valley. Naphtali Lewis has suggested that Horos did not represent himself in P.Kellis I Gr. 30 because he was a minor, and so had to be represented by his grandfather.²⁶ However, Horos being a minor at his mother's death would seem to be inconsistent with her being alive at his liturgy-appointment: liturgies were usually reserved mature, able-bodied men.²⁷ In this case, Pamour III must have had two wives: one who died in 363, while Horos III was a minor, and one who was alive after Horos came of age and was appointed to the liturgy. The latter could be Maria II, making the editors' date of the Pamour letters to the late 360s probable.²⁸ On the other hand, the need for a representative in P.Kellis I Gr. 30 can be satisfactorily explained by Horos III having been home in the Oasis – where, indeed, he is located in P.Kellis I Gr. 72.

Another objection comes from cross-referencing with the other circles. If Maria II was the wife who died in 363, most of Pamour III's letters would be contemporary with, or separated only by a few years from, those of the Maria/Makarios circle. However, as noted by the editors, Makarios is absent from the letters of the Pamour/Pekysis circle. They proposed a generational shift between the two, in the form of a ten – fifteen years gap between the Maria/Makarios letters in the late 350s and the Pamour letters in the late 360s–c.370.²⁹ In that case, Maria II has to be taken as Pamour III's second wife. Still, it seems to me that the extensive overlap between these circles in other respects suggests that, while there may well have been a temporal gap, it was not very large.

26 Naphtali Lewis, 'Notationes legentis', in *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 34, no. 1–4 (1997).

27 In theory, men may have become liable to liturgies already at the age they became liable to the poll-tax, i.e. at 14, but the youngest liturgists hitherto documented in the papyri range between 18–20 years, and the vast majority are older. See Lewis, *Compulsory Public Services*, 72 n.46. Assuming this also held true for Horos, it would put at least 5 years between P.Kellis I Gr. 30 and 72, placing the latter at the earliest c.368.

28 Although as the wife remains unnamed in both P.Kellis I Gr. 30 and 72, we cannot say for certain which wife – the one pre or the one post-363 – would be Maria II. A third possibility, that Maria II was not Pamour III's wife at all (but, for instance, his biological sister), appears much less likely.

29 The editors qualify this, writing: 'it is certainly conceivable that Makarios and Pamour might both write to Kellis at approximately the same time, and still give the impression of this generational "shift" because they are addressing different contemporaries. Thus, when we speak of generations we do not necessarily imply (say) a twenty year gap between such. In the above example, there are a number of factors that lead us to a notional date for the Makarios family letters ca. the latter 350s.; and for Pamour ten to fifteen years later.' *P.Kellis V*, 11.

Central ‘older’ figures, such as Psenpnouthes I and Kyria I, Philammon II and Charis, ‘mother’ Tapshai I, and Apa Lysimachos, are active in both circles. Moreover, a similar objection could be directed at the letters of the Horion/Tehat circle, which the editors take to be roughly contemporary with Maria/Makarios, although its central actors are absent also here. On the principle that we should not assume a remarriage if the evidence can be explained in a more straightforward manner, I prefer a dating in the early 360s for most of the letters of Pamour III, with perhaps a three – five year gap between him and the letters of the Maria/Makarios circle. Letters by other members of this circle (Philammon II, Theognostos, Pekysis) that do not feature Maria II, could still belong to a somewhat later period (e.g. mid-360s).

1.2 *Maria I and Makarios*

Another circle identified by the editors is centred on ‘mother’ Maria (I). She is the main recipient of at least seven Coptic letters, written by her ‘brother’ Makarios and her ‘sons’ Matthaïos and Piene.³⁰ She was located with other relatives and associates in Kellis. Maria I was presumably the biological mother of Matthaïos and Piene; Makarios could be either her husband or brother. The letters of this circle exemplify the difficulty of tracing familial ties, due to the authors’ generous use of kinship terminology. Thus, Makarios addresses Maria I alongside her ‘brethren’, Psenpnouthes I and Kyria I, and ‘mother’ Tamougenia; in addition, he mentions or greets a large number of other ‘brothers’, ‘sisters’, ‘mothers’, and ‘fathers’ (see Chapter 6, Section 3.1).

Many of the names recur in the Pamour/Pekysis circle. This includes those of Pamour, Pekysis, and Philammon themselves, who can be identified with the central actors from that circle.³¹ A passage in Pamour III’s letter P.Kellis I Gr. 71 provides a clue to the relationship between them, as pointed out by the editors.³² In a postscript added by Maria II, she addresses her ‘mother’ Maria.

30 P.Kellis v Copt. 20–22, 24 (Makarios); 25–26 (Matthaïos); 29 (Piene). She is also addressed in Makarios’ letter P.Kellis v Copt. 19, where Matthaïos is the primary recipient. Several other letters (P.Kellis v Copt. 23, 27, 28, 52) were likely addressed to her – or at least products of the same writers – but are too fragmented to be explored.

31 Certainly in the letters P.Kellis v Copt. 24 and 25, but probably also in P.Kellis v Copt. 20, 22, and 26, where Pamour and Philammon occur travelling together to/from the Nile Valley. An identification of Pamour III in the latter three instances is doubted by the editors (P.Kellis V, 36), but it is noteworthy that Pamour is not greeted with the people in Kellis in the three letters that also place a Pamour in the Nile Valley, while he is in the former two – although the greetings in P.Kellis v Copt. 26 admittedly break off at the point where his name may have occurred. Note also the close ties of Pamour III and Philammon II evinced in the letters (e.g. P.Kellis VII Copt. 82).

32 See P.Kellis VII, 40–41.

There is little reason to doubt that this is Maria I, biological mother of Maria II. Maria I, Makarios, Matthaïos, and Piene can thus be comfortably identified as the in-laws of Pamour III. Yet, Makarios and Matthaïos do not recur in the Pamour/Pekysis circle at all, and while several variants of the name Ploutogenes (i.e. Piene) do occur, these are so common both in the House 1–3 texts and Kellis at large that an identification here is difficult.³³

Makarios, Piene, and Matthaïos all write from locations in the Nile Valley. Makarios and Matthaïos both write from Hermopolis and seem to have made it their primary residence, but they also made trips to nearby Antinoopolis. Makarios did conduct some business in the Valley. His letters contain many mundane requests for items (often textiles), fruit, or money, in return for which he provided often bad news of the family's doings in the Valley – indeed, the editors noted that '[i]t seems to be somewhat characteristic of Makarios (or at least his style) that he spends a good deal of his time being “distressed” at one thing or another.’³⁴ But Makarios' business concerns are nested in elaborate religious language and religious concerns. Thus, in the incipit of P.Kellis v Copt. 22, he greets Maria and her co-recipients as ‘the good care-takers, zealous in every good thing, the children of the living race, the fruit of the flourishing tree and the blossoms of love’ (ll.4–6). In P.Kellis v Copt. 19, addressed to Matthaïos, he attributes a saying to ‘the Paraclete’, exhorts Matthaïos to study religious literature, and discusses the affairs of a certain ‘deacon’. The letters of Matthaïos and Piene display a similarly religious tone, employing prayers typical of the Manichaean repertoire (see Chapter 5), while mundane requests are almost absent from their letters. Moreover, Makarios and the two sons often discuss the doings of what is clearly figures of religious authority, such as Apa Lysimachos and ‘the Teacher’. Young Piene was particularly close to these men; he is found staying with Lysimachos in Antinoopolis, and following the Teacher all the way to Alexandria. It is likely that he was receiving religious instruction.³⁵

1.3 *Psais III and Andreas*

In *P.Kellis V*, the editors included three letters addressed to a man named Psais: two written by a certain Ouales (i.e. Valens) and one by a certain Ammon;

33 Ploutogenes/Piene features in various forms in the other letters, including ‘Gena’, ‘Iena’, ‘Tene’, and ‘Piena’. While the editors do not identify him with any of these other figures, it is evident that the name belongs to this name-family. See *P.Kellis VII*, 143–44.

34 *P.Kellis V*, 185.

35 Argued by e.g. Baker-Brian, ‘Mass and Elite’, 180–81. See Chapter 8, Section 3.2.

P.Kellis v Copt. 35, 36, and 37, respectively.³⁶ Psais is greeted with a ‘brother’ Andreas both in P.Kellis v Copt. 36 and 37. In turn, both Psais and Andreas are called ‘brothers’ by the authors, although they are clearly not their biological brothers. Relatives may include the two ‘little brothers’, Iena and [Hor], greeted by Ouales in P.Kellis v Copt. 36.³⁷ This group of brothers are the primary actors of what may be termed the Psais/Andreas circle. As we shall see, their texts are of great importance for understanding the later history of the Pamour family, as well as for Manichaean textual practices at Kellis. Unfortunately, however, its actors are also difficult to relate to other texts, due to the currency of their names – Psais, Iena (i.e. Ploutogenes), and Hor, in particular – at Kellis. Yet some identifications can be made.

For one, some texts can be attributed to this circle based, among other indicators, on featuring the same constellation and sequence of names as P.Kellis v Copt. 36 (see Table 3). On this basis, at least five more texts can be added to the Psais/Andreas circle.³⁸ Somewhat less certainly, these actors can be related to the so-called Ploutogenes letters, where it seems possible to identify, amongst others, the ‘little brothers’ of Psais/Andreas with two figures here termed Ploutogenes III and Horos II.³⁹ Finally, and most importantly, the duo Psais and Andreas can be shown to feature prominently in the Pamour/Pekysis circle. A connection between these circles was anticipated by the editors in *P.Kellis V*,⁴⁰ and the material in *P.Kellis VII* bears it out. The closest associate of Pamour III and Pekysis is, indeed, a certain ‘brother’ Psais III, regularly occurring with a younger ‘brother’ Andreas. A large number of other prosopographic ties between the two circles strongly supports the identification of these two with the principle figures of the Psais/Andreas circle.⁴¹

36 Another letter to Psais and Andreas, probably authored by Ouales, appeared in *P.Kellis VII* as P.Kellis VII Copt. 59, but only fragments are preserved.

37 Hor is reconstructed, but is a likely fit, considering both the lacuna size and the texts adduced below.

38 P.Kellis VII Copt. 105, 111, 115, 118, and P.Kellis I Gr. 75. Arguments for relating these to Psais III are found in the editors’ commentary to the respective texts, and see also *P.Kellis VII*, 144. Not every brother occurs in every letter, and in P.Kellis VII Copt. 115 a ‘child’ named Maria (III?) occurs alongside Piena and Hor. Still, there are other recurring figures and topics that serve to tie these letters together.

39 Specifically, in letters P.Kellis VII Copt. 88, 89, and 91. For a sustained discussion, see Teigen, ‘Limbs’, 83–88.

40 *P.Kellis V*, 57–58.

41 See especially P.Kellis VII Copt. 105 and 115, and the occurrence of many Pamour associates in the above-mentioned Ploutogenes letters (n.39).

TABLE 3 Sequence of Psais, Andreas, Ploutogenes, and Horos

Text	Author / greets / carries	Receives / greeted
P.Kellis v Copt. 36		Psais, Andreas, Iena, [Hor]
P.Kellis VII Copt. 105	Psais, Piena, Hor	Andreas
P.Kellis VII Copt. 111		Psais, Andreas, Hor
P.Kellis VII Copt. 115	Andreas	Psais, Piena, Hor
P.Kellis VII Copt. 118		Psais, Iena, Hor
P.Kellis I Gr. 75		Psais, Ploutogenes, Hor

Through these documents we gain a sense of the role of Psais and his associates within the Pamour family. Psais III was primarily located in Kellis, where he had an important role in attending to household matters and textile work for the Pamour family, being often asked to acquire wool or hire workers.⁴² He was also involved in religious affairs: several letters addressed to him contain strong expressions of religious sentiment, and some request him to perform religious duties.⁴³ Considering the responsibilities entrusted to him by Pamour III and Pekysis, it is likely that he was their biological brother.

Turning Andreas, Ploutogenes III, and Horos II, it is likely that they, too, were younger relatives of the Pamour family, although the specifics of their relation are difficult to determine. Unfortunately, Ploutogenes/Horos cannot unambiguously be identified in the letters of Pamour III and Pekysis. This may provide a hint as to the dating of this circle. As previously discussed, the letters by Pamour III and Pekysis, including those to Psais III/Andreas, probably date to the early – mid 360s. It seems likely that the letters where Ploutogenes III and Horos II are mentioned by name belong to a later period in the history of the household, when these two had reached adulthood. The gap may not have been very large, as figures from the Maria/Makarior circle were still active in their time. A period of five to ten years after the letters of the Pamour/Pekysis circle – i.e. the late 360s or early 370s—seems reasonable, and is in line with what was previously suggested by the editors.⁴⁴ At this point, Pamour III and Pekysis had probably largely taken over their father's responsibilities, the former having moved more or less permanently to the Valley, bringing a new generation to the fore in the Oasis.

⁴² See P.Kellis v Copt. 37, and P.Kellis VII Copt. 105, as well as many of the Pamour letters.

⁴³ See the afore-mentioned P.Kellis v Copt. 36, but also P.Kellis VII Copt. 73 and 111.

⁴⁴ *P.Kellis V*, 11.

1.4 *Tehat, Horion, and Horos I*

Another central figure in the material is the weaver Tehat. The name is found in a range of different documents: as recipient (P.Kellis v Copt. 18, 51, P.Kellis VII Copt. 58) and author (P.Kellis v Copt. 43, 50) of several letters. Two of these letters, P.Kellis v Copt. 18 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 58, were written by a man named Horion.⁴⁵ His letters concern orders for clothes sent to Tehat and her associate Hatres, and strongly imply that Tehat was responsible for a textile workshop located in Kellis. She was in all likelihood the author of a group of accounts in Coptic (P.Kellis v Copt. 44, 46–48), based on language, prosopographic ties and contents. Tehat is greeted by a neighbour of the family, Samoun, in the Greek letter P.Kellis I Gr. 12,⁴⁶ and could well be a ‘sister Hat’ referred to in two Coptic letters, P.Kellis VII Copt. 93 and 95. Finally, she may be identifiable with a Tehat owing cotton ‘for weaving’ in the KAB (558–59), in which case her father’s name was Iena.⁴⁷

In P.Kellis v Copt. 43, Tehat writes from outside of Kellis, addressing a ‘son’ whose name is difficult to decipher.⁴⁸ Much of the Coptic text is lost, but Tehat appears to be imploring the son to send something with pack animals and perform an act of charity. A Greek postscript to this letter is better preserved. It contains a message concerning a shipment of oil, and greetings from a Leporius and a Makarios. P.Kellis v Copt. 50 is likewise a letter to a son by a female author, dealing with freight to ‘the border (ἰτταϩ)’⁴⁹ and work related

45 The editors changed their spelling to Orion in *P.Kellis VII*, but without providing an explanation; see *P.Kellis VII*, 20. I have therefore continued the usage of ‘Horion’ found in *P.Kellis V*.

46 The context is fragmentary. Worp first read Θατμε[... μετὰ τῶν] υἱῶν αὐτῆς, but noted that he had not found a name ‘Thatme[...]’ to be previously attested (*P.Kellis I*, 38). I here follow Bagnall, who reads Θατ με[τὰ τῶν] υἱῶν αὐτῆς (*P.Kellis IV*, 66 n.28). A link between Tithoes/Samoun and Tehat is strengthened by recurrence of the names Tapsais, Tbeke, and Tithoes in both circles, see Chapter 4, Section 1.

47 Perhaps Iena (i.e. Ploutogenes) could be identified with Ploutogenes son of Pataias, found in documents from House 2. This would make Tehat the daughter of a neighbour of the Pamour family with long-standing interests in textiles. Another possibility is Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis, komarch in 353. This supposition receives support from the still-visible remains of the name ‘Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis’ in a letter reused for the account P.Kellis v Copt. 47, probably authored by Tehat. Perhaps Tehat was reusing her father’s papyrus: her preserving his documents could explain the presence of other documents of Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis in House 1–3 (P.Kellis I Gr. 18, 23, 24). However, these can only be suggestions, in lieu of further evidence.

48 For the suggestion ‘Psenpsais’, see *P.Kellis V*, 252. Read perhaps ⲭ[ⲙ]ϩⲗⲓ in P.Kellis v Copt. 43 (ll.1–2)? Other Egyptian names in Tehat’s writings often lack the initial ϫ.

49 Regarding this term, the editors write: ‘The term can also mean a district or nome. We suppose that it means the entry-point to the Oasis, where there would be official and military control.’ *P.Kellis VII*, 164.

to 'the storehouses (ⲛⲉⲗⲟⲡ)'. Although the names of both author and recipient are lost, the frame and the occurrence of a Hatres working with the author and of an associate named Horion provide good reasons for identifying the author as Tehat.⁵⁰

In addition to the two letters to Tehat/Hatres, three more letters from this Horion have been preserved addressed to a 'brother' Horos (P.Kellis v Copt. 15–17) – a man who did, however, have close ties to Tehat/Hatres.⁵¹ Whereas Horion's letters to Tehat/Hatres are primarily business-oriented, his letters to Horos evince a more complex relationship. Horos I and Horion were probably not biological brothers.⁵² Horion's letters still suggest a strong tie between them, and are adorned with religious language, greeting Horos for instance as a 'limb of the Light Mind'. They, too, discuss work, in this case work that Horion is doing on behalf of Horos, involving transactions of money, oil, and wheat. At least some of these transactions are described as for the *agape*, a form of charity probably intended for Elect (see Chapter 8). Several 'our sons', such as Timotheos, Rax, and Pateni, assist Horion in his transactions. The kinship terms are clearly used in a communal sense, and probably in a (lay) religious context.

Turning to their dating, a variety of evidence gives a date range of c.355–70 for Tehat,⁵³ and dates in the mid – late 350s for Horion. Although the letters cannot be placed with certainty beyond the broad period c.355–80, the editors inclined towards a date in the mid-late 350s due to prosopographical considerations.⁵⁴ As to their location, Tehat was probably chiefly located in Kellis, although she also made trips such as that to the 'border', while Horion wrote from somewhere perhaps not too far off from Kellis.

This raises the question of their relationship to the Pamour family. The accounts attributed to Tehat mention Psais II and Pamour (probably III) by name, but these central members of the family do not appear in the letters of Horion. Instead, another group of figures may offer a key to the relationship between the circles, namely Partheni II, Theognostos, and Horos. As mentioned previously, Partheni, often shortened 'Heni', was the wife of Pekysis:

50 Ibid., 276.

51 See a greeting to 'son' Hatres in P.Kellis v Copt. 17, and perhaps the reference to 'their father Hor' in Tehat's P.Kellis v Copt. 43 (l.30) – the latter unfortunately in a highly fragmented context.

52 Not least, Horion mentions 'my father' in P.Kellis v Copt. 15 (l.10).

53 This includes Tehat's Coptic accounts (dating 355–73), her contact Timotheos son of Tiberios (for whom, see P.Kellis I Gr. 3, mid-350s), as well as her appearance in the ⲕⲂⲂ (361–64) and in the letter of Samoun (360s).

54 P.Kellis V, 140.

her name recurs several times in relation to textile work on behalf of Tehat. Furthermore, she was closely linked to the figure of Theognostos, a 'brother' often greeted by Pamour 111 and Pekysis.⁵⁵ His name is found in Horion's letter P.Kellis v Copt. 17, where he is greeted together with Hatres as a 'son'. Finally, there is the appearance of a certain Horos as an important addressee in several letters of Pekysis (P.Kellis VII Copt. 76, 78, 79). Admittedly, the name 'Horos' is common in Kellis, but there are to my mind good reasons to identify these two. For one, Pekysis' letters to Horos also feature Theognostos and Partheni 11, who as we have seen have independent links to Tehat and Horion. Secondly, while Pekysis generally does not use elaborate religious cues, the letters addressed to Horos are all furnished with prayers; some quite elaborate (see Chapter 5, Section 3.2). To this we can compare the similarly religious tone in the letters by Horion to Horos. Third, the letters by Pekysis and Horion that address Horos were found together.⁵⁶ It is probable that they belonged to a separate 'Horos dossier'. Based on this, the different Horos' discussed above can be taken as a single figure, Horos 1.

The interconnections between Horos 1, Tehat/Hatres, Theognostos, and Partheni suggest that they constituted a distinct subgroup within the archive. A possible explanation could well be that we are here dealing with a group of relatives connected to the Pamour family by way of Pekysis' wife Partheni 11, and so a counterpart to Pamour 111's in-laws, the circle of Maria/Makarios.⁵⁷

1.5 *The Petros Circle*

Less clearly related to the other circles are the letters from a certain 'son' to his 'mother', P.Kellis v Copt. 38–41. As the names of both the author and the recipient are intentionally omitted, and as most of the letters mention a certain brother Petros, they were grouped together as the 'Petros letters'. Another letter, P.Kellis VII Copt. 91, could stem from the same author.⁵⁸ In addition to 'mother', the principal addressee, the son addresses an unnamed 'brother' in P.Kellis v Copt. 40, and an unnamed 'father' in 38. Other, named 'brothers' (Timotheos, Herakles) and 'fathers' (Pini, Dios, Ormaouo) also occur. The mother and her associates are located in Kellis, as made explicit in P.Kellis v Copt. 40. The son is probably situated somewhere in the Oasis, as he seems to be not too far away.

55 The editors suggest that they were siblings; see *P.Kellis VII*, 135.

56 Horion's P.Kellis v Copt. 17 and Pekysis' P.Kellis VII Copt. 78 and 79 were all found in Room 11; Horion's P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and 16, and Pekysis' P.Kellis VII Copt. 76 in Room 9.

57 For this argument, see Teigen, 'Limbs', 91–94.

58 Although this is uncertain; see *P.Kellis VII*, 163.

The letters mention transactions of produce (especially jujubes) and textile work to be handled by the mother. There are references to other letters being written, sent, and received. Less mundane concerns are also in evidence, as in P.Kellis v Copt. 39, which relates to the search for a magical charm or amulet. Several pieces of evidence led the editors to suggest that Petros and Timotheos could be identified with two monks by those names known from the $\kappa\alpha\beta$, and so are likely to have been Manichaean Elect, and, more cautiously, that the son may have been situated in a monastic context.⁵⁹

The precise relationship of the son/mother to the rest of the house is unknown. Several of the associates named there do not recur elsewhere. However, those names that do can be linked to Partheni II, Theognostos, and Tehat, a link supported by the find spots of these documents. Partheni probably herself appears as ‘Henī’ in P.Kellis v Copt. 38, although the reading is not certain. More firmly established are two rare names, ‘father’ Pini and ‘brother’ Hom: these only occur elsewhere in a group of documents linked to Theognostos, Partheni II and Psais III.⁶⁰ To these prosopographic links we may add that a discussion of magical charms is found both in Ouales’ letter to Psais III and in Petros letter P.Kellis v Copt. 40. Other indices link the Petros letters to Tehat/Horion. Both Petros himself and ‘brother’ Herakles recur in both circles.⁶¹ In P.Kellis v Copt. 41, the son asks his mother to make two headscarfs for him: it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the term for ‘headscarf’ ($\phi\omicron\upsilon\gamma\kappa\alpha\rho\iota$) used here is otherwise only attested in the account P.Kellis v Copt. 48, where a Herakles is involved in the work.

These pieces of evidence, then, provide another indirect link between Tehat and Partheni II/Theognostos, as well as with Psais III. They point to an identification of the ‘mother’ with either Tehat or a woman in her immediate circle, and the ‘son’ with one of the younger associates of the Pamour family. As to their dating, these ties to Psais III, and the identification of Petros and Timotheos with the monks found in the $\kappa\alpha\beta$, suggest a date for these letters in the mid-late 360s or perhaps early 370s. Still, the absence of other central actors from the Horion/Tehat circle and the Pamour family remains puzzling, as is the presence of otherwise unknown names such the ‘fathers’ Ormaou and Dios. The question of the precise identities of the ‘mother’ and the ‘son’, and their ties to the Pamour family, has to be left open.

59 See *P.Kellis V*, 235, and the arguments in Chapter 9, Section 3.3.

60 For ‘brother’ Hom, P.Kellis v Copt. 45, P.Kellis VII Copt. 84; for ‘father’ Pini, P.Kellis VII Copt. 73, 83, and 105.

61 For Petros, see P.Kellis v Copt. 18; for Herakles, P.Kellis v Copt. 48, P.Kellis VII Copt. 58, and P.Kellis I Gr. 14.

2 The Pamour Family

In the preceding sketch of the main documentary circles, we have identified a few actors who recur in different circles, and proposed some ways the circles interrelated. From this it emerges that all of them can be seen to form part of a single kinship group, centred on the household of Pamour III and Pekysis – an extended ‘Pamour family’. In the rest of this chapter, we shall make this depiction more explicit, and explore the way this kinship group functioned.

First, let us consider whether the Pamour family inhabited the physical space in which their documents were found, i.e. House 3. This question has consequences for the documents’ status as a coherent archive, belonging to a single family group, and to whether the material context is salient for assessing this family. An answer in the negative was initially broached by Gardner, who noted that ‘[t]here would seem to be more textual remains and artefacts than can be accounted for by simple residential context.’⁶² Instead, he pointed out that House 3 could have functioned as a dumping ground for material collected from elsewhere. Colin A. Hope, on the other hand, suggested an answer in the affirmative:

it is certainly unnecessary to postulate that because of the quantity of material found in House 3 documents from diverse sources at Kellis, possibly houses near to House 3, might have been collected therein preparatory to removal on the abandonment of the area.... Whilst the 150 vessels and more from room 6 might seem surprising, and the number restored to date from the house is in the region of 200, these may also have been accumulated throughout the fourth century and also represent the possessions of various family groups or sub-groups who resided in House 3.⁶³

This is also, to some extent, supported by the evidence of P.Kellis I Gr. 38 (dating 333), a contract found in House 3 that describes a building given to Psais II, located adjacent to the house of his family. The description of this structure fits largely – if not perfectly – with the so-called North Building, the northern part of the House 1–3 complex.⁶⁴ Furthermore, in her study of the textile industry at Kellis, Gillian E. Bowen pointed to the discovery of weaving equipment and numerous textile fragments as indicating that parts of the block had been used as a weaving workshop, fitting well with the dossier pertaining to

62 *P.Kellis II*, ix.

63 Hope and Bowen, ‘The Archaeological Context’, 115–16.

64 See Worp’s discussion in *P.Kellis I*, 109.

Tehat.⁶⁵ However, in an article from 2011, Lisa Nevett questioned this conclusion, based on an analysis of the structure's layout. She noted the difficulties in reconciling the finds of archives from multiple households, that of Pamour and that of Tehat, with the archaeology of the site, writing: 'there is little indication that the house was divided into separate, self-contained units ... While it is possible that more than one household may have been resident in the house at once, there is nothing to demonstrate this in the archaeology'.⁶⁶ But after similarly analysing finds from Karanis, she concluded: 'Physical boundaries do not appear to have been required to separate co-resident groups. [...] Rather, a physical house seems to have operated as an organic whole despite changes in the make-up of the occupying household or households'.⁶⁷ The layout, then, neither proves nor disproves the hypothesis that the Pamour family inhabited the house. Bowen has recently made a renewed argument for the occupation of the House 3 by the family, based on the prosopography of the texts themselves. She identified four separate archives based on find spots, yet found strong connections between them. Even where she could not establish direct links in style or prosopography, indirect ones were usually found. Based on this, Bowen confidently concluded that 'the documents found in House 3 belonged to the occupants'.⁶⁸ Our analysis above can be taken to support this conclusion. The large degree of prosopographic overlap between the circles strongly suggests that they stem from a single group, in turn making it likely that these people owned the physical space of House 3.

Yet, there is seldom a one-to-one relationship between 'house' and 'household'. As Anna L. Boozer notes, 'the term "house" refers to an architectonic unit, while the term "household" describes a basic unit of economic and social cooperation'.⁶⁹ A household may own more than one house, and a house may be inhabited by more than one household. Nor is 'household' synonymous with 'family'. In order to understand the relationship between the circles, we need to consider their material in light of wider Roman-Egyptian household organisation. Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier's work on the demography

65 Hope and Bowen, 'The Archaeological Context', 116; Bowen, 'Textiles, Basketry and Leather: Goods from Ismant el-Kharab', in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons*, ed. Colin A. Hope and Gillian E. Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2002), 97.

66 Nevett, 'Family and Household', 23.

67 *Ibid.*, 29.

68 Bowen, 'The Environment Within', 240.

69 Anna L. Boozer, 'Towards an Archaeology of Household Relationships in Roman Egypt', in *Mediterranean Families in Antiquity: Households, Extended Families, and Domestic Space*, ed. S. R. Huebner and G. Nathan (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 176. This distinction was less explicit in antiquity, as the ambiguity of Gr. οἶκος and Copt. ⲏ indicate.

of Roman Egypt, based on census returns, provides a good point of departure.⁷⁰ As they point out, households in Roman Egypt differed from ‘modern’ (i.e. ‘Western’) ones. A majority of people lived in complex households, consisting either of extended families or of multiple (conjugal) families. Multiple family households, i.e. those where more than one conjugal family lived together, may have made up around 25% of all households.⁷¹ The households of such multiple-family units involved, on average, 9.38 members (in the countryside), although high mortality rates caused much change over time. Wedded couples would often live with their parents (extending the family ‘upwards’) and with siblings (extending it ‘horizontally’) for some time after marriage, forming what we may call two-generational multiple families. While their composition varied, Bagnall and Frier highlights one typical form as consisting of brothers who continued to live in their parents’ household after marriage (turning into same-generational multiple families, *frères*, on their parents’ death). Such sibling groups maintained strong bonds, for instance owning property together. Lodgers (ἔνοικοι) and slaves were common, adding another layer of complexity.⁷²

This resonates well with what we can deduce from the House 3 papyri. It is likely that Pamour III and Pekysis continued to live together in the house of their parents after their marriages (when they were not away on business), forming a two-generational, multiple-families unit. A younger brother, Psais III, lived with them and took charge of affairs while Pamour III and Pekysis were in the Valley.⁷³ Close bonds kept the siblings together – economic and religious as well as familial, as we shall see. They housed lodgers, and probably slaves.⁷⁴ Not least, they maintained close ties to their in-laws. Pamour III’s

70 Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The only census documents from Kellis stem from the second century, and pertain to a single conjugal family at a much earlier period; the family of Tithoes and Talaeis, registered in Mesobe, but living in Kellis with two daughters (who, incidentally, were spinners) and a female slave. Bagnall, Hope, and Worp, ‘Family Papers’.

71 For villages, they estimate c.15.8% solidary, 4.2% without family, 36% conjugal families, 17.9% extended families, and 25.3% multiple families. Bagnall and Frier, *Demography*, 67.

72 *Ibid.*, 62–68.

73 A similar situation can be gleaned in P.Kellis I Gr. 13, an inheritance contract where three brothers divided up a single house, together with an unrelated couple. See also Hope, ‘Roman-Period Houses’, 226.

74 Pamour leased out a room in a house in 369 per P.Kellis I Gr. 33. For slaves, see P.Kellis I Gr. 19 (c.299) for the earlier generation, and note perhaps the request for a ‘girl’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 64.

mother-in-law, Maria I, seems to have moved in with Psais III, and her relatives cooperated with the Pamour/Pekysis circle in the Valley.⁷⁵ Other members of the familial group were clearly closely tied to the main household; including Tekysis III and Kapiton I, Philammon II and Charis, and the ‘brothers’ Andreas, Ploutogenes III, and Horos II. Some of them may have lived in the house, but due to – among other factors – the frequent movement of people, it is not possible to be sure how many actually did so at any one time.

3 The Family Business

Economic interdependence and cooperation are important aspects of any household. Another way to approach the ties between the circles, then, is to consider the economic cooperation between them. It should come as no surprise that the documentary evidence left by the Pamour family is overwhelmingly concerned with economic activities, the livelihood on which they depended. Their activities were diverse: they included trade in the Nile Valley, transport of goods between Oasis and Valley, and textile production and -sale in the Oasis. We examine each of these below.

As mentioned above, central members of the Pamour family were frequently away from Kellis due to trade interests in the Nile Valley. Already the first generation we have documents from, that of Pamour I and Philammon I, participated in the Oasis – Valley trade, as documented by P.Kellis I Gr. 19 and 66. Pamour I’s son, Psais II, followed in his footsteps, and his sons, Pamour III and Pekysis, followed him in turn. By their time, at least, the family had established a foothold in Aphrodito, where they owned a house. Movement back and forth between Oasis and Valley was regular and involved many members of the community, men and women alike. A rough division may be seen between senior traders, who remained in the Nile Valley, and younger ones, who made shorter stays in order to assist with trade. The length of such a limited stay may be gleaned from P.Kellis I Gr. 73, where a young man named Tryphanes is sent to sell goods for a period of between ten and 20 days, which would constitute an absence of c.26–36 days in total.⁷⁶ A division of responsibilities between the Pamour brothers can also be discerned. Pamour III was the elder, and the one put in charge after their father left: in P.Kellis VII Copt. 110, father Psais II bids him ‘take care of your brothers who are with you’ (l.44tr). Even after leaving

⁷⁵ P.Kellis VII, 40.

⁷⁶ Taking travel time to be eight days each way, and on the assumption that he went back to the Oasis afterwards. For this estimate, see Chapter 2, Section 2 and n.13.

for the Valley, Pamour had some overall responsibilities for settling accounts and disbursing expenses in the Oasis.⁷⁷ Pekysis, for his part, seems to have had a particular responsibility for textiles. Concerns for wool and dyes recur frequently in his letters. This may in part be explained by him having trained as a weaver, as Pamour III in one letter asks him to cut a garment ‘by your own hand’ (P.Kellis VII Copt. 103, l.21).⁷⁸

Yet the brunt of their work probably involved selling goods on behalf of their father Psais II and ‘father’ Philammon II. They worked particularly closely with the latter. In one letter, Philammon II remarks concerning Pamour III that: ‘He is with me daily. He is diligent, doing his work well, so much so that I said to him: “As long as you perform your work, nothing I do makes a loss”’ (P.Kellis VII Copt. 82, ll.33–36). At times, at least, their work entailed travel to the big city – more specifically, the ‘twin cities’ of Antinoopolis and Hermopolis Magna. These cities, located right across the Nile from each other, were both regional trade hubs. Hermopolis had an indoors market, a *macellum*, and Antinoopolis was the starting point of the Via Nova Hadriana, which linked the Nile to the Red Sea trade.⁷⁹ Pamour III and Pekysis travelled to this area on business, while Makarios and Matthaios were based there for longer periods.⁸⁰ The brothers’ trips to these larger markets may well be seen in light of the practice among textile merchants in antiquity of employing travelling agents. Such figures are described in an excerpt from Ulpian in the *Digest*: ‘it has also seemed reasonable to give the name of business-agent to the people to whom clothes-dealers and linen-merchants give clothing to be carried round and disposed of – the people that we colloquially call travelling vendors [*circitores*]’.⁸¹ This strategy may have helped small-scale merchants such as the Pamours diversify their markets.

As regards the goods they carried, these were not limited to textiles. The family sold jujubes in the Valley, as mentioned by Pamour III in P.Kellis VII Copt. 64. A wider range can be inferred from P.Kellis I Gr. 51, admittedly not

77 See P.Kellis VII Copt. 64 and 72. For the former, note the comments in *P.Kellis VII*, 46.

78 Pekysis’ textile concerns are in evidence in nearly all his letters. For the authorship of P.Kellis VII Copt. 103, see the discussion in *P.Kellis VII*, 196.

79 Although less important in the fourth century than previously, see Andrew Wilson and Alan K. Bowman, ‘Introduction: Trade, commerce and the state’, in *Quantifying the Roman Economy: Methods and Problems*, ed. A. Wilson and A. K. Bowman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15. For a *macellum* in Hermopolis, documented for the late third century, see Alston, ‘Trade and the City’, 285.

80 For Pamour III’s and Pekysis’ activities, see, respectively, P.Kellis v Copt. 25 and P.Kellis I Gr. 71.

81 *Ulp. Dig.* 14.3.5.4–5, citation and translation in Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 359–60.

pertaining directly to the Pamour family, which mentions (among other goods) dried figs, dried grapes, and fine linens being carried to the Valley on a single trip. Bagnall has further proposed that olives played an important role in the Oasis – Valley trade.⁸² It seems that, rather than relying on one commodity alone, the traders provided a selection of ‘Oasis specialties.’ As Jennifer Cromwell has rightly pointed out, it would have given them a larger set of economic strategies to draw on.⁸³

Before trade could commence, goods and traders had to cross the distance between Dakhleh and the Valley. The most common way to travel was by camel, better suited than donkeys or horses for long hauls in the desert, if also more expensive to buy and maintain.⁸⁴ The term βαρωζ was used for caravan animals, mostly camels, but also with reference to their drivers who were paid freight wages (ζημῆ).⁸⁵ Trust was another important currency, and concerns for the reliability of one’s agent is expressed in several letters.⁸⁶ One way to secure trustworthiness was to employ relatives. Members of the Pamour family, such as Philammon II, Pamour III, Pekysis, and their brother-in-law Kapiton I, often brought items with them across the desert. Yet freight was not only undertaken on behalf of the immediate family. In P.Kellis I Gr. 79, Philammon (probably II) is titled ‘camel driver’ (δρομεδάριος), and several documents indicate that Psais II undertook paid freight work.⁸⁷ This would

82 Bagnall and Aravecchia, ‘Economy and Society’, 156.

83 Jennifer Cromwell, ‘Domestic Textile Production in Dakhleh Oasis in the Fourth Century AD’, in *Egyptian Textiles and their Production: ‘Word’ and ‘Object’*, ed. Maria Mossakowska-Gaubert (Lincoln, NE: Zea Books, 2020), 145–46 n.4. Cromwell sees textiles as of little import to the traders, suggesting that garments were mainly produced for internal consumption and that olives was the primary commodity. This is to my mind less plausible in light of the letters’ overwhelming preoccupation with textile production and materials (below). Olive transactions found in the documents are largely restricted to the Oasis.

84 Adams, *Land Transport*, 88, 106. Perhaps caravans at times used wagons: wagons for cross-desert transport is attested in papyri from the eastern desert, and a contract for a loan to purchase a large wagon (ἄμαξα) was found in House 3, P.Kellis I Gr. 46. See Roger S. Bagnall, ‘The Camel, the Wagon, and the Donkey in Later Roman Egypt’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 22, no. 1 (1985); and Adams, *Land Transport*, 66–67.

85 A camel (βαμογλ) occurs in P.Kellis v Copt. 50. For βαρωζ, see the discussions in P.Kellis V, 62–63, 172; P.Kellis VII, 75, 167. The human driver is clearly intended in for instance P.Kellis v Copt. 20 (L.54).

86 Philammon (I or II) asks for a ‘trustworthy fellow’ (πιστοῦ ἀνθρώπου) to bring him money in P.Kellis I Gr. 65 (ll.24–25), Horion for ‘an honest man’ (οὐρμήμιε) to bring clothes in P.Kellis VII Copt. 58 (L.30), while a certain Timotheos spends most of P.Kellis VII Copt. 92 answering an accusation that he has been negligent during freight.

87 See P.Kellis v Copt. 44, which mentions a payment of 950 T. to Psais II son of Pamour I for freight, and P.Kellis I Gr. 50, a receipt for freight issued by Psais Tryphanes. To these we

have provided another source of income to supplement their trading activities, although it should be stressed that the documented instances of freight are all conducted within the context of a shared network of affiliates.⁸⁸ They themselves paid close social connections, such as the 'son' Lammon and the 'brother' Papnouthes, for freight.⁸⁹ Numerous other 'familial' agents are found carrying goods on their behalf, such as 'father' Pishai, 'our son' Timotheos, and 'our brother' Plousiane.⁹⁰

Back in Kellis, the most important economic activity by far evinced by the documents is the production of textiles. The material evidence from the House 1–3 complex is also abundant. Weaving equipment was found in House 1–3, including wall fittings for two looms in House 1, a warping frame in House 2, and a carefully patched piece of decorated textile, exhibiting high quality workmanship, from House 3.⁹¹ The family, then, probably ran a local textile workshop.⁹² The documents certainly point in this direction. Several family members, mostly women and younger men, participated in organising weaving. Of the men, Psais III and 'brother' Theognostos played important roles, being tasked with engaging and paying weavers and storing and distributing materials on behalf of their associates in the Nile Valley. Psais III, in particular, is frequently addressed by Pamour III and Pekysis. He appears to have had a special responsibility for financial matters in the Oasis, in the absence of Pamour III.⁹³ Theognostos, for his part, is never directly addressed by Pamour III or Pekysis, although they frequently greet him. It is two letters to him from Philammon II, P.Kellis VII Copt. 80 and 81, which reveal that he, too, had responsibilities for managing production of clothes. Much of the actual

can add that a Psais brought two garments to Makarios in P.Kellis v Copt. 19, he may be identifiable with Psais II; similarly, in P.Kellis I Gr. 66, Pamour I mentions a Psais who is to be paid for freight of two camel loads; it may be that this is his son, Psais II. Several other documents indicate an engagement with freight, e.g. P.Kellis I Gr. 27, 29, and 77.

88 Makarios in P.Kellis v Copt. 19, Tehat in P.Kellis v Copt. 44, and Psais Tryphanes in P.Kellis I Gr. 50. See further Chapter 4, Section 5.

89 Pekysis refer to payments for freight of wool to the Oasis in several letters (P.Kellis VII Copt. 75, 78, 79, 96), for four agents: Pane, Lammon, Papnouthes, and Andreas. Of these, only Pane is not known from elsewhere.

90 For Timotheos, see P.Kellis v Copt. 17; for Pishai, P.Kellis v Copt. 25 and 26; and for Plousiane, P.Kellis VII Copt. 80 and 92.

91 Bowen, 'Textiles, Basketry and Leather', 93, 97.

92 For such workshops, see Kerstin Dross-Krüpe, 'How (Not) to Organise Roman Textile Production', in *Egyptian Textiles and their Production: "Word" and "Object"*, ed. Maria Mossakowa-Gaubert (Lincoln, NE: Zea Books, 2020), 138; Gibbs, 'Manufacture', 42–43.

93 *Ibid.*, 199–200. Psais is often involved in monetary transactions; see P.Kellis VII Copt. 64, 72, 102, 105, 108.

textile work fell to the women. In the Pamour/Pekysis circle, Partheni II and Tekysis III are both tasked with weaving and sending garments to the Valley. However, they were also involved on the financial side of things, as well as taking care of other family affairs. Tekysis is requested to provide money and settle payments on several occasions,⁹⁴ while a letter addressed to Partheni, P.Kellis VII Copt. 95, mentions several payments that she is involved in, some relating to work at 'Hat's place' – the workshop of Tehat.

The most detailed information on textile production comes from Tehat's dossier. From the letters of Horion, we learn that her work entailed dyeing materials, spinning weft, and cutting garments, for which she charged 'weaving wage' (ΒΕΚΕ ΩΩΞΕ). She also sold finished garments and organised their freight. Her 'staff' included male co-workers, such as Hatres and Herakles, as well as a group of weavers.⁹⁵ There are good reasons to identify Tehat as the author of most, if not all, of the Coptic accounts P.Kellis v Copt. 44–48.⁹⁶ These accounts are more akin to reports, reporting on sales, expenditures, and the ongoing textile work of Tehat and her associates to an unnamed, male co-worker. He was apparently responsible for supervising the work, but was not a very distant figure, as Tehat asks him to help with weaving and indicate shared financial responsibilities. The group of weavers paid for work include Partheni, Kame, and Lo, all of whom can be identified with members of the Pamour family.

Among the expenditures in the account P.Kellis v Copt. 44 are payments of wages (ΒΕΚΕ) for Pamour (III?) and of freight wages (ΞΗΜΕ) for Psais (II) son of Pamour (I). This raises questions concerning how work was organised and burdens shared between the workshop and the traders. Unfortunately, their relationship remains rather obscure. Perhaps, to venture a hypothesis, we can discern a cooperation between two originally separate kinship groups: one focused on the Nile Valley trade and led by Psais II/Philammon II, the other oriented towards textile production and led by Tehat/Horos I. The two were, at some point, united by the marriage of Pekysis and Partheni II. At any rate, the archive shows that kinship relations played a big part in structuring economic activities. Trade in the Valley, camel driving in the desert, and textile production in Kellis were interconnected activities that involved not only the households of the Pamour brothers, but the whole extended family, and others besides.

94 P.Kellis VII Copt. 75, 78, 120.

95 See e.g. P.Kellis v Copt. 18, where Horion asks Tehat/Hatres to make their associates 'weave a cowl' (ll.20–21).

96 See *P.Kellis V*, 253, 257.

4 Conclusions

In the course of this chapter, we have considered key actors in the House 3 circles, and the way these were linked together. From the above analysis it emerges that the large majority of documentary material can be related to one extended family group, divided into three main social circles: the Maria/Makarios circle (documents dating late 350s), the Pamour/Pekysis circle (early–mid 360s), the Psais/Andreas circle (late 360s–370s), centred on the multiple-family group of the brothers Pamour III and Pekysis and collectively referred to as the Pamour family. The circle of Tehat/Horion, although somewhat distinct from the others in terms of prosopography, also had familial ties to the Pamour family, perhaps by way of the marriage of Pekysis and Partheni II. Finally, the Petros circle remains difficult to place due to the anonymity of writer and recipient; yet, they had many associates in common with all these circles, especially with Horion/Tehat and Psais/Andreas. It seems that both the Horion/Tehat and the Petros circle can be added to the extended Pamour family. Parts of this extended family made use of the houses in which the texts were found, until around the last decade of the fourth century. Not least, they were all connected by strong economic interests and cooperations. To this it should be added that they also had regular and close interaction with several groups that were *not* part of the extended family group. It is to these that we turn in the next chapter.

Village Networks: The Small World of Fourth-Century Kellis

No family is an island unto itself. For the Pamour family, the village of Kellis was one of the primary arenas of their social life, one where they interacted with larger social entities based on kinship alliances, economic activities, political institutions, and religious practices. The current chapter examines the family's position within this village world, taking a relational approach. What sort of influence did the family wield? Who were their close associates? How did they interact? These questions are of relevance to the questions that will preoccupy us in Chapter 6, namely the extent of the local Manichaean community and the social networks in which affiliation with it spread.

Unfortunately, the Pamour archive itself presents something of an obstacle to gaining a proper sense of the family's position. The archive looms large among the papyri from the village, its bulk painting a picture in which family members appear more prominent than they in were. Luckily, fourth-century papyri from other find sites do widen our perspective, and the House 1–3 material itself contains documents that pertain to larger village concerns, which together can help to correct this Pamour-centric picture. They reveal other circles of villagers with whom the Pamour family interacted: their neighbours in House 2, Oasis notables who may have acted as patrons, and fellow-traders in Kellis and on the Nile who formed their primary business associates. In the course of this chapter, we shall examine the prosopography, role, and relationship to the Pamour family of these various groups. We conclude with a quantitative network analysis based on the textual material, using the whole spectrum of documentary papyri from the village in order to map the social circles of fourth-century Kellis.

First, however, there are some documents that could provide more direct clues as to the family's position. For one, the family is known to have served as liturgists in the local administration, attested in P.Kellis I Gr. 72 where Horos III is said to have been appointed to a liturgy. Unfortunately, the author of this letter, Pekysis, neglects to mention the nature of the liturgy. In itself, then, it does not tell us much about their wealth and status, apart from that they belonged to the (rather large) upper segment of villagers who were obliged to perform such service.¹ More promising are two expense accounts dating to the first half

¹ Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 135–36.

of the fourth century, P.Kellis 1 Gr. 53 and 54, which could point to a higher level of responsibility.² They list payments for a range of expensive services of a public nature. P.Kellis 1 Gr. 53 includes entries of payment for a teacher brought from the Nile Valley, translation services, and for a *prinkipos*, probably the ‘chief of staff’ of the governor in the Thebaid. P.Kellis 1 Gr. 54 features a rhetor, a messenger, and a shorthand writer, and Worp proposes to restore one line as referring to an order from the office of the *strategos*.³ Such expenses may be taken to imply that the document belonged to a prominent local official. Unfortunately, we cannot be certain that they belonged to the Pamour family. Other possible owners are Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis and Pausanias (for whom, see below). No other document mentions a member of the family holding such office, and other evidence from the same period on the contrary indicates that they had trouble with local officials. In a petition dated 321, P.Kellis 1 Gr. 21, Pamour 1 lodged a complaint concerning longstanding trouble with a *komarch*, Sois son of Akoutis. This man was stirring up local soldiers and military officials against him, and finally broke into his house and assaulted his wife. Perhaps this conflict was part of a larger power struggle between different fractions in the village, but this remains unknown. At any rate, the family is unlikely to have been among the most powerful villagers, as will also be seen in the analysis below.

1 Meet the Neighbours

Let us turn to the people with whom the Pamour family had more friendly relations, starting with the Pamour family’s closest associates – in a literal, physical sense. The Pamour family was not the only inhabitants of the House 1–3 complex. Texts found in the neighbouring structure, House 2, pertain to two circles, both centred on carpenters: the Ploutogenes circle and the Tithoes family. That one or both of the carpenters inhabited House 2 is made likely by the discovery of carpentry tools and -materials there.⁴ The papyri themselves provide support, in the form of prosopographic ties between these circles and House 3, as we shall see.

2 The sum of money paid for the teacher in P.Kellis 1 Gr. 53 points to a date in the first half, as does the (restored) occurrence of the *strategos* in P.Kellis 1 Gr. 54, although it should be noted that this term was still in use in the Oasis in 352, per P.Kellis 1 Gr. 23.

3 See the notes in *P.Kellis I*, 152, 154.

4 Colin A. Hope, ‘The Find Context’, in *The Kellis Agricultural Account Book*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxbow, 1997), 9.

The earliest of the two circles in House 2 is that of the carpenter Ploutogenes son of Petesis. The documents pertaining to him relate to his business correspondence with two local *grandees*: Pausanias in P.Kellis I Gr. 5 and 6 (330s?) and Harpokration in P.Kellis I Gr. 7 (c.350?).⁵ The former is known to be an acquaintance of the Pamour family, and Ploutogenes acted as an agent on his behalf (see below). His father, Pataias, appears in several documents: as a signatory to two declarations, P.Kellis I Gr. 3 and 24, and as associate of a certain Aionianos and his father Gelasios in P.Kellis I Gr. 16. Ploutogenes and his father appear to have been prominent figures in the second quarter of the fourth century, not least because Pausanias, Harpokration, Gelasios, and Aionianos can all be shown to have been *ex-magistrates*.

Ploutogenes also interacted with the Pamour family: he is the only witness in P.Kellis I Gr. 76, where he vouches for the trustworthiness of Pekysis son of Psais II. The document was found in House 3, and is of a much later date than those from House 2 (perhaps the 370s). Beyond that, the nature of Ploutogenes' relationship with House 3 is obscure. A few associates (mostly colleagues) occur in the above-mentioned documents, but none can be identified in the House 3 circles. Without such supporting evidence, further identification of this figure with any of the homonymous men in the House 3 texts remains speculative. Yet, these documents do provide circumstantial evidence for long-standing relations with the people of House 3.

The second House 2 group can be described in more detail. It, too, is centred on a carpenter, a man named Tithoes (I) son of Petesis. The material relating to him includes five Greek texts, P.Kellis I Gr. 8–12, and one in Coptic, P.Kellis v Copt. 12. Of these, the letters P.Kellis I Gr. 12 and P.Kellis v Copt. 12, exchanged between Tithoes I and his son Samoun, provide insight into Tithoes I's familial circle. It included Samoun and his son, Tithoes II, several sisters greeted by or send greetings to Samoun, such as Tsenpamoun, Tapshai, and Tehat, as well as a couple, 'brother' Psenpnouthes and 'sister' Kyria. To what extent these are literal siblings of Samoun is unclear. Tithoes I himself did have a biological sister, married to the son of a camel driver named Horos son of Mersis, documented by the inheritance contract P.Kellis I Gr. 9. The names of both the sister and her husband are lost, but Horos son of Mersis was another neighbour, known from documents found in House 3 (see below).

5 In contrast to among others Nevett ('Family and Household', 21), I take it that Ploutogenes, not Pausanias, should be identified as the owner of their correspondence. This is based on the additional find of P.Kellis I Gr. 7, pertaining to Ploutogenes, in close proximity to P.Kellis I Gr. 6, as well as on the find of documents relating to Pausanias elsewhere in the village.

How Tithoes I was linked with Ploutogenes is unclear, although their shared occupation is unlikely to be a coincidence. His activities belong to a later date, to the second half of the fourth century. Only one text pertaining to Tithoes I with a consular date is preserved, P.Kellis I Gr. 8 dating to 362, but two other documents point in the same direction: P.Kellis I Gr. 10, a memo addressed to Tithoes I, can be dated to 368/9,⁶ while P.Kellis I Gr. 11, a similar memo to his son Samoun, belongs to the later part of the fourth century.⁷ This would lead us to expect a close relationship between Tithoes I and the House 3 circles. Numerous prosopographic links between them bear this out.⁸ Thus, the couple Psenpnouthes and Kyria, who greet Samoun, recur in both the Maria/Makarios and the Pamour/Pekysis circle. And while Samoun is absent, the name Tithoes occurs in several Pamour letters.⁹ Its popularity in Kellis means that an identification with Tithoes I or II cannot be taken for granted. Yet, the presence of ‘father’ Tithoes in a letter by Tapsais to Psais III, P.Kellis VII Copt. 116, strongly supports an identification of both these two with their namesakes in the Tithoes family. The name Tapsais, in fact, recurs frequently in the texts from House 3.¹⁰ It is clear that the two families cultivated close social ties; ties that may have involved economic cooperation, as members of the Tithoes family engaged in textile work and travelled to the Nile Valley. Carpentry must have provided an important venue for cooperation with the Pamour family as well, in the case of both Tithoes I and Ploutogenes. The many wooden codices found in House 3, some of which we touch on in Chapter 7, point in this direction.

6 The sum of 800 T. for an artaba barley, combined with a mark for the twelfth indiction year, places it in either 368/9 or 383/4 (*P.Kellis I*, 34). Considering the date of P.Kellis I Gr. 8, and the barley prices found in the KAB and P.Bingen 120, 368/9 is the most plausible date.

7 No date is preserved, but Samoun is now recipient, and there has been a steep price increase, from 800 T. to 2000 T. per art. barley. This is much higher than that found in other texts of the 360s, and this document, then, probably belongs to the 370s or 380s. For inflation in this period, see Bagnall, *Currency and Inflation*, 46–47.

8 Of the 14 relatives/associates in the letters of Tithoes I (P.Kellis I Gr. 10–12; P.Kellis v Copt. 12), ten recur in the House 3 circles: Tithoes, Tapsais, Tehat, Tbeke, Pebok, Psenpnouthes, Kyria, Andreas, Makarios, and Ammon, to which we can add their mutual relationship with Horos son of Mersis (see below).

9 P.Kellis VII Copt. 70, 72, 77, and 116. Of these, only Tithoes ‘of Peiaune’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 77 is very unlikely to pertain to the family of Tithoes I; see *P.Kellis VII*, 104.

10 While there were two figures named Tapsais (see P.Kellis VII Copt. 65), one of them, here labelled Tapshai II, should be taken as the ‘sister’ of Samoun. The figure of Lammon provides an important link, as he is closely linked with the names Tapshai and/or Tithoes on several occasions: P.Kellis v Copt. 19; P.Kellis VII Copt. 65, 70, and 116.

Moreover, weavers in antiquity depended on carpenters for their tools, and weaving utensils were found alongside the carpentry tools in House 2.¹¹

Finally, another neighbour was the camel driver Horos son of Mersis. He may not have lived in House 1–3, but he did own a camel stall adjacent to the house of Psais 11, as recorded in P.Kellis 1 Gr. 38, dating to 333. Horos may well have been a man of some means: camel stalls were usually expensive to maintain.¹² Nor was he ‘merely’ the owner of neighbouring property: as mentioned above, a son of his married into the family of Tithoes 1. Moreover, two freight receipts, P.Kellis 1 Gr. 51 and 52, point to close ties to the Pamour family. Both date from c.320, were found in House 3, and relate to goods Horos had transported to Hermopolis in the Nile Valley.¹³ Their discovery in House 3 strongly suggests that the family had a stake in his trips. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that Pamour 1 is known to have engaged transport to Hermopolis in the same period: the location of Horos’ camel stall would have made good practical sense if he and the Pamour family cooperated in trade.

From these documents, we catch glimpses of the complex weave of relationships that were formed in the House 1–3 complex, as neighbouring families socialised, worked together, and intermarried. Ties extended across housing units and occupational backgrounds. As we shall see in Chapter 6, this has important implications for our understanding of the spread of religious affiliation in the village.

2 Oasis Notables

While the neighbourhood was an important unit for social interaction and cooperation, the family was not limited to its immediate social peers. Several documents show that the Pamour family’s social network included notables and ex-magistrates of some note, even figures who wielded influence over the whole Great Oasis. Not least, these are, on occasion, found to have interacted directly with actors known from the House 1–3.

11 Ewa Wipszycka, *L'industrie textile dans l'Égypte Romaine* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1965), 51–52. For the House 2 finds, see Hope, ‘The find context’, 9.

12 Adams, *Land Transport*, 89. The name ‘Horos son of Mersis’ is found as owner of an orchard in an ostrakon from Trimithis, O.Trimithis 1 241, dating to the late third–early fourth century (see the comments of Bagnall and Ruffini, *Ostraka from Trimithis*, 30). If this is the same man, he clearly had far-flung interests in the Oasis. He would also be quite old by the time of P.Kellis 1 Gr. 38.

13 His name and the dating formula have to be restored in the former, see P.Kellis 1, 148–49.

While petitioning the governor over a conflict with Pollon son of Psais in P.Kellis I Gr. 20 (dating c.300–320), Pamour I received the support of a man named Phibion, an ex-magistrate of Hermopolis.¹⁴ Nothing more is heard of Phibion, but it clearly shows that the family had ties to notables in the Valley at an early date, perhaps of patronage. More can be said about their ties to a local notable named Pausanias. He is known from several Greek texts from House 2 and 3: three letters, P.Kellis I Gr. 5, 6 (House 2), 63 (House 3), and two contracts, P.Kellis I Gr. 4 (House 2) and 38 (House 3). The contracts are dated 331 and 333, respectively. P.Kellis I Gr. 38 preserves Pausanias' patronym, 'son of Valerios', and his title, ex-magistrate of Mothis, showing that he had served as magistrate already by 333. Furthermore, texts from other parts of Kellis provide additional information. While Pausanias' office is unspecified in P.Kellis I Gr. 38, a petition to Pausanias found in the structure D/8, P.Gascou 69, specifies them as riparius and exactor.¹⁵ This riparius/exactor can be confidently identified with the man in P.Kellis I Gr. 38, as another papyrus also from D/8, the official letter P.Gascou 71 (dated 336/7), is addressed specifically to Pausanias son of Valerios. The contracts from House 2 and 3 evidence close ties between this man and the Pamour family. P.Kellis I Gr. 4 is unfortunately very fragmented, the remains of a contract of retirement from usage of property (παρραχώρησις). Pausanias here hands over property to a figure whose name is lost, but which could well be restored as Pamour.¹⁶ More secure is P.Kellis I Gr. 38, a similar contract for the grant of property by Pausanias. Here the name of the recipient is well-preserved: Psais (II), son of Pamour (I). The background for this gift is not mention, but it suggests that Pausanias acted as a patron to Psais II (see Chapter 6, Section 2.4). Interaction between them must have gone beyond this grant, as the text also mentions that Pausanias owned other properties neighbouring on Psais II's house. The other documents from House 2 and 3 provide further indications of a strong relationship to their inhabitants. These are all private letters, and so Pausanias is not furnished with either patronym or official title, but there is little reason to doubt that they involve the same man. In P.Kellis I Gr. 6, from Ploutogenes to Pausanias, the former styles the

14 For the name of the assailant, see Jean-Luc Fournet, 'Notes critiques sur des pétitions du Bas-Empire', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 28 (1998): 8–10; Nikolaos Gonis, 'Notes on Miscellaneous Documents', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 143 (2003): 160–61.

15 This information was first provided by Worp, cited in Colin A. Hope, 'Excavations in the Settlement of Ismant el-Kharab: Five Field Seasons 1995–1999', in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons*, ed. Colin A. Hope and Gillian E. Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2002), 202–4. The papyrus was subsequently published in Worp, 'Miscellaneous New Papyri'.

16 As suggested in *P.Kellis I*, 20. If correct, this is probably Pamour I, son of Psais I.

latter ‘master’ (δεσπότης) and ‘nobility’ (εὐγένειά). The correspondence shows that Ploutogenes acted as an agent for Pausanias, performing errands on his behalf together with other agents. The letter P.Kellis I Gr. 63 is of a rather different sort. It is written by a man whose name is lost, but who calls himself ‘father’, who addresses Pausanias and a certain Pisistratos as ‘sons’. The kinship terms are clearly used in an extended sense, and several distinct religious cues point to the author being a Manichaean Elect (see Chapter 8, Section 2.3). It shows Pausanias to have been a Manichaean adherent, providing a point of commonality with the Pamour family. Unfortunately, the trail of their relationship does not go beyond the mid-fourth century. Pausanias does not surface in the Coptic texts, nor in other published Greek documents dated after the 340s. Pisistratos, a younger associate or relative of Pausanias,¹⁷ was still involved with people in Kellis in the 360s. He does not occur in the Coptic texts, but is found helping one of the family’s associates with a loan, in a contract datable to the later fourth century.¹⁸

Two other local notables had ties to Ploutogenes son of Pataias, but are not known to have interacted with the Pamour family, namely Gelasios and Harpokration. Gelasios, a contemporary of Pausanias, is featured in two documents from House 2, both from the circle of Ploutogenes. One, P.Kellis I Gr. 7, is a letter from Harpokration to Ploutogenes, where he greets ‘brother’ Gelasios; the other, P.Kellis I Gr. 16, a memo from a certain Aionianos to his ‘father’ Gelasios, ordering the delivery of dates to ‘brother’ Pataias (dated 329/30 or 344/5?). The name recurs in P.Kellis I Gr. 29 (dated 331), found in House 3, a receipt for transport of ‘statues’ (ἀνδρε[ι]άτων) to Alexandria. This Gelasios is titled ex-logistes, making him one of the (formerly) most important officials in the whole of the Great Oasis. But is he the same as the man in the House 2 texts? Bagnall and Ruffini have objected that Aionianos’ order implies ‘father’ Gelasios to be an inferior, making an identification with the ex-logistes unlikely.¹⁹ However, there is other evidence that points to an identification. A contract from House 4 in Kellis, P.Gascou 67 (dated 368), features Aionianos, son of Gelasios, ‘ex-magistrate of Mothis’. He is clearly identifiable with the man in P.Kellis I Gr. 16.²⁰ That Aionianos had held office strongly suggests that his father Gelasios had, too, and that the associate of Pataias and Ploutogenes can

17 See O.Kellis I 85, where Pausanias orders chickens for his ‘son’ Pisistratos.

18 See P.Kellis I Gr. 46 (House 3) and the comments in *P.Kellis I*, 137–38. The name Pisistratos is rare for the Roman period, but recurs in Kellis for the later fourth century in P.Bingen 120 (366/7), O.Kellis I 85 and 287.

19 Bagnall and Ruffini, *Ostraka from Trimithis*, 37 n.20.

20 Not least because the name ‘Aionianos’ does not seem to be attested outside of Kellis. No other occurrence was found in the Trismegistos database (per 10/9/2020). A possible

be identified with this notable. Moreover, P.Gascou 67 shows that Aionianos owned land in the vicinity of Kellis, indicating that the family's engagement there was extensive.²¹ With regards to his ties to the House 1–3 circles, however, little can be said with certainty. The discovery of the freight receipt P.Kellis I Gr. 29 in House 3 may suggest that members of the Pamour family performed work on his behalf, although the agents are unfortunately not named. Neither Gelasios nor Aionianos are otherwise found in the Coptic or other Greek texts from House 1–3.²²

A previously discussed ex-magistrate, Harpokration, similarly had ties to House 2. He was the 'villain' of the petition P.Kellis I Gr. 23 who allegedly helped one of his employees escape liturgical duties and sent attackers against the komarchs.²³ The petitioner, the komarch Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis, describes him as having considerable power locally (ἐπὶ τὸ[πῶν]). On the other hand, his letter to Ploutogenes son of Pataias, P.Kellis I Gr. 7, suggests that he normally had more peaceful ties to the village. Here he politely requests a *dalmation* tunic, discusses some matters in lines that are unfortunately illegible in the letter body, and ends by cordially asking for Ploutogenes' orders in return. His family retained ties to the village and to House 2: in 362, his son Timotheos helped sign a sales contract, P.Kellis I Gr. 8, to which the later inhabitant of House 2, Tithoes I son of Petesis, was also a part. However, no direct ties to the Pamour family are found.

Finally, the family may have had ties to the landlord Faustianos son of Aquila. He was a contemporary of the Pamour family, and a landowner with extensive holdings in the vicinity of Kellis and elsewhere in the Oasis, as documented by the KAB, but probably resided in Hibis. The KAB belonged to one of his managers. Its discovery in House 2 might suggest that his manager should be sought among the actors there, but no certain identification can be made.²⁴ Yet, there is evidence for cooperation between the manager and House 3 circles in the codex. Tehat owes the manager cotton-weaving, and is paid for *agape*,

Manichaean background for the name was broached by Gardner, referred to by Worp in *P.Kellis I*, 46–47.

21 See also P.Gascou 82 (early fourth century) from the structure D/8. Still unpublished texts from D/8 may shed further light on the figure of Gelasios; see Worp, 'Miscellaneous New Papyri', 438.

22 However, note O.Kellis I 288, an order from Aionianos to his 'son' Makarios, found at the West Church.

23 He should probably also be identified with the 'lord father' Harpokration, asked for orders in P.Gascou 80, a letter addressed to a local official named Petechon. Note P.Kellis I Gr. 69, from House 3, where a Petechon requests orders from a logistes, whose name is lost.

24 For a discussion of a possible identification, see *P.Kellis IV*, 224.

while associates of the Pamours are paid for transport.²⁵ These arrangements probably relate to *ad hoc* acts of cooperation, or contracted work, not employment. A 'landlord' (γεωδύχος) also occurs in some Greek letters of the Pamour family archive, there are good reasons to identify him with Faustianos.²⁶ These letters are addressed to or from a man named Elias, who worked as an agent for the landlord. Members of the Pamour family who feature in these letters may have done so, too, although in what capacity is most unclear. Still, Faustianos remained a distant figure, geographically as well as socially.

How close the other notables actually were to Kellis remains unknown. While Faustianos was in Hibis, Harpokration and Gelasios may have retired to the village (or its vicinity) after the end of their service, and Pausanias may even have resided there while officiating.²⁷ Still, the Pamour family are only seen to have had direct ties to the family of Pausanias, and neither he nor Pisistratos were intimate associates. The social distance was likely too large: members of the curial class were not everyday associates of people of the family's standing. Nonetheless, being able to call on such men for favours, for instance in judicial matters, would have been of great importance. These ties to the elite of the Great Oasis would have been vital for the family – and the religious community – when manoeuvring the Roman power structure.

3 The Village Elite

3.1 *Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis*

These high and mighty notables were not the only prominent figures in the village. Among the associates of the Pamour family we can discern another elite group, namely those wealthy villagers who were (at least in theory) obliged to

25 For Tehat, see KAB 106, 1264–1265; for freight payments to a group of people identifiable with associates of the Pamour family (including Kapiton, Papnouthes, and Psais), 1299–1315. Pekysis may make an appearance, as an agent working with Sarapis in KAB 1691. See the discussion of the Sarapas circle in Chapter 6.

26 For Elias, see P.Kellis I Gr. 68, 75, 78, and 81. The brothers from the Psais/Andreas circle are greeted in P.Kellis I Gr. 75, while a Pekysis and a Psais (presumably III) interact with him in P.Kellis I Gr. 68. These letters evince ties to the KAB, pointing to an identification of the landlord with Faustianos. Most notable is Siris, a tenant who pays dates in the KAB (1.1430) and owes dates in P.Kellis I Gr. 78. One may further compare the preoccupation with Mesobe in P.Kellis I Gr. 68 to that of the KAB manager (*ibid.*, 73–74).

27 For the retirement of officials from cities to villages in the Roman period, see Andrea Zerbini, 'Human Mobility in the Roman Near East: Patterns and Motives', in *Migration and Mobility in the Early Roman Empire*, ed. Luuk de Ligt and Laurens E. Tacoma (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 328–29.

undertake its most important and expensive liturgies. In contrast to the more distant notables, we would expect these to have a larger presence in the private material and be more central to the peer network of the family, an expectation borne out by the material.

P.Kellis I Gr. 24, an oath-declaration drawn up in 352, provides a good starting point for identifying other leading figures. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 3.2), it concerns a conflict between two men, Ploutogenes and Hatres, whose point of contention is lost. Luckily, the list of signatories is largely preserved. It is divided into four groups, each subscribed for by a competent writer, and features in total about 33 names, of which 26 can be read, as a rule accompanied by a patronymic. It thus provides a snapshot of a large group of prominent male villagers in Kellis in the middle of the fourth century. How big a percentage of the local elite they constituted, and exactly how prominent they were, is unknown. But the Ploutogenes in question is probably the son of Ouonsis, one of two komarchs of Kellis in P.Kellis I Gr. 23, and so the conflict revolved around a central actor in the village hierarchy.²⁸ Admittedly, Ploutogenes claims to be of ‘modest circumstances’ (τῆς ἐμῆς μετριότητος) in that document. However, this should not be taken to mean that his family was poor, by any means. About a generation earlier, in 319–320, an Ouonsis financed the purchase of transport animals for a trade venture to the Nile Valley, with the then-respectable sum of 12 talents.²⁹ The name Ouonsis is not otherwise known in Kellis, so he is very likely Ploutogenes’ father. The number of signatories to the oath in P.Kellis I Gr. 24 shows that Ploutogenes himself was a man of considerable local influence. That he had some kind of link to the Pamour family is implied by the finds of other documents pertaining to him among the Greek material in both House 2 and 3.³⁰ Still, they do not feature him interacting directly with members of the Pamour family, and, as in the case of Ploutogenes son of Petesis, the name is too common to trace him in the Coptic material, in the absence of other evidence.

3.2 *Psais Trpyhanes, the Loudons, and Psenpnouthes*

More certainty can be gained when we turn to the first group of signatories to the declaration. The group is headed by three clergymen not otherwise identifiable

28 P.Kellis I Gr. 24 features a [son of] Ouonsis’ (l.3), whose name is lost, and an ‘aforementioned’ Gena (short for Ploutogenes) (ll.7–8). Worp is hesitant with identifying the two (*P.Kellis I*, 74), but the contemporaneity of the documents, and prosopographical links between them, make an identification of the two Ploutogenes probable.

29 P.Gascou 18 and 19, see Bagnall, ‘Two Partnership Agreements’.

30 A fragmented contract, P.Kellis I Gr. 18, and traces in P.Kellis v Copt. 47.

in the House 1–3 material.³¹ Thereafter follow four men: Psenpnouthes, Psais Tryphanes, Timotheos son of Loudon, and Loudon son of L[oudon?], signed for by Sarapammon son of Psais. Their occurrence here is unlikely to be accidental: presumably they were, after the clergy, the most prominent men on the list. Of these, the name Psais Tryphanes recurs frequently in the House 3 material.³² Pekysis calls him ‘father’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 78, showing him to be a respected associate. While Psais Tryphanes primarily features in the Pamour/Pekysis circle, a son of his named Tryphanes also occurs in the Maria/Makarinos and Horion/Tehat circles.³³ Their family was involved in various aspects of the Pamours’ business: freight, textiles, and trade. In P.Kellis I Gr. 73, a letter from Psais Tryphanes to Pamour III, he asks Pamour to help out his son Tryphanes with selling goods, likely textiles. This shows a high degree of trust between the two. Sending one’s children to fellow artisans for training in a craft was not unusual, as evinced by contracts for apprenticeships found in the papyri,³⁴ but although Psais Tryphanes mentions ‘wages’ (μισθός), their arrangement was clearly more informal. Ties between the Pamour family and Psais Tryphanes went beyond purely economic ones.

The subsequent two figures on the list, Timotheos and Loudon, are similarly found as business associates of the Pamour family in the Coptic material. They were perhaps brothers: Timotheos and Loudon II, sons of Loudon I. Timotheos is a common name in House 1–3 and Kellis at large, and tracing him on his own is difficult. Loudon, on the other hand, is rare. It is not attested outside of House 1–3, and, in fact, only elsewhere found in Tehat’s letter P.Kellis V Copt. 50, although variant forms of this name – Louitoni, Loutou, and Toni/Tone – occur in a few other texts.³⁵ P.Kellis V Copt. 50 involves both figures, as Tehat greets from Loudon and immediately after to(?) Timotheos ‘son of Toni’. Tryphanes, too, is present with Tehat and Loudon, providing another link to P.Kellis I Gr. 24. The relationship of these two figures to Tehat involved business dealings, as she discusses a payment of barley(?) by Timotheos (amongst others) in the following lines. Their involvement in the family’s business went

31 These are: Paminis the presbyter and two deacons, Pkour[...]s and Cholos.

32 P.Kellis I Gr. 50, 71, 73, P.Kellis VII Copt. 78, and possibly 112. The latter, a letter addressed to a Psais, was written on the recto of the private receipt P.Kellis I Gr. 50, and probably prior to that text; *P.Kellis VII*, 230–31. It is likely that Psais Tryphanes reused a letter he had received for the receipt, not least in light of the fact that P.Kellis VII Copt. 112 contains greetings to a ‘father’ Toni (i.e. Loudon, see below).

33 P.Kellis V Copt. 26, 50, and P.Kellis I Gr. 73.

34 Venticinque, ‘Family Affairs: Guild Regulations and Family Relationships in Roman Egypt’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 50 (2010), 288–92.

35 P.Kellis V Copt. 37, 47, 50; P.Kellis VII Copt. 78, 112. See *P.Kellis V*, 48.

beyond Tehat: in P.Kellis v Copt. 37, Psais III is asked to procure wool from Louitoni by a certain Ammon – himself a close business associate, a warehouse owner located in Psbtneis, and a Manichaeon.³⁶

Finally, we turn to Psenpnouthes, the figure who heads this group. He is less easy to place, both due to the commonality of the name in the Christian era, and the loss of the short title/patronym attached to it in P.Kellis I Gr. 24. A man by this name, husband to Kyria (I), appears in the Coptic texts as ‘brother’ to Makarios, and ‘father’ to Matthaïos and Maria II. As such, it is likely that he was a relative of Pamour III’s in-laws. Makarios consistently greets him first in his letters, even though he does not address him, presumably as a sign of respect. He also had an interest in textiles, indicated in Matthaïos’ P.Kellis v Copt. 26, and might be identified with a man of this name involved in Tehat’s workshop.³⁷ Decisive evidence for identifying this man with the one in P.Kellis I Gr. 24 is lacking, but circumstantial evidence points in this direction: the dating of the declaration fits well with the Maria/Makarios circle, he is a figure of some stature in both, and the man in the declaration is associated with men who can definitely be shown to be close business associates, Psais Tryphanes and the Loudons. While less secure than the others discussed, the identification does not seem unlikely.

3.3 *Pebos and Horion, Sons of Tithoes*

The second group of signatories to P.Kellis I Gr. 24 also provides some figures of local influence and close ties to the Pamour family. It is subscribed for by Pamour III, and so we might expect close associates of House 3, but only the two brothers who head the group can be identified as such: Pebos and [Ho]rion, sons of Tithoes. These were important figures in mid-fourth century Kellis. Both were supporters of the komarch Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis in his conflict with Harpokration the ex-magistrate in P.Kellis I Gr. 23. Here, Pebos is said to have disarmed Harpokration’s nine ‘henchmen’, for which he must have been able to mobilise assistants of his own, while Horion witnessed on behalf of Ploutogenes. Horion later occurs in the KAB: not as a regular tenant, but as providing a sizable amount of hay in a specific transaction (KAB 241–42). The brothers, then, must have been landowners of some means and stature in Kellis. That they had strong ties to the Pamour family is evinced by several

36 Based on his identification with Ammon the warehouse-owner in P.Kellis v Copt. 44 and 46 (note his recurring connection with a *stikharion*). Whether he, in turn, should be identified with an associate of Makarios by this name is unknown. For his religious affiliation, see Chapter 6, Sections 2.3 and 4.2. For Loudon II, see P.Kellis v Copt. 47.

37 For his link to Tehat, see P.Kellis v Copt. 48, as well as their shared ties to Tithoes I.

contracts made in Aphrodito, which Pebos son of Tithoes drew up on behalf of family members.³⁸ The ties may well have been closer, considering that he at this point had settled in Aphrodito, as had central members of the Pamour family. Both the names Pebos and Horion also occur in the Pamour family's Coptic material. For instance, a 'brother' Pebos travelled from Pamour III in Aphrodito to Pekysis in Kellis per P.Kellis VII Copt. 66,³⁹ while Horion was, as we have seen, a key affiliate of Tehat and Horos I.⁴⁰ Identifying the two Horion's, in particular, would have a great impact on our understanding of this correspondence. But while possible, the evidence remains insufficient, and there are other possible identifications.

4 Villagers in the Valley

Not all the associates of the House 3 circles are found in the village itself: several Kellites had gathered in the village of Aphrodito in the Valley in the mid-fourth century. Among these, as we saw, were members of the Pamour family, such as Psais II and Pamour II, but also affiliates such as Pebos son of Tithoes. The contracts he drew up on behalf of family members feature other Kellites who had moved to the Valley. P.Kellis I Gr. 44 describes the creditor, a man named Antoninus, as formerly from Kellis but now residing in Aphrodito, while P.Kellis I Gr. 42 names Sofia, daughter of Besas, who received a loan from Pamour II, as likewise a former Kellis inhabitant. The same is said of Aurelia

38 P.Kellis I Gr. 42 (364), 43 (382), and 44 (374/87?). An obstacle to identifying this Pebos son of Tithoes with the man in P.Kellis I Gr. 24 is that Pamour III employs the formula 'because they do not know letters' (I.15), suggesting that this man lacked a high level of Greek literacy. However, writers were not always careful about the formula's accuracy, especially in lists; see Herbert Youtie, 'Because They Do Not Know Letters', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 19 (1975): 107. Given that Pamour III subscribes for altogether nine men, it is more attractive to take the formula here as a stock phrase, presumably valid for most but not all those listed, than to assume that there were two Pebos son of Tithoes, associates of Pamour III, from mid-fourth century Kellis.

39 See perhaps also 'brother' Pebos writing Psais III in P.Kellis VII Copt. 111, or 'father' Pebos featuring in P.Kellis VII Copt. 120. Both of these were involved in text production, which fits with this man. An identification with one or more of these would tie Pebos son of Tithoes closely to the Manichaean community, but see Chapter 9, Section 2.3.

40 A possible connection may be found in P.Kellis I Gr. 14 (356), where N. N., 'son of Tithoes', writes on behalf of a Horion. It is possible to restore the former name as 'Pebos', while the latter is likely to be identified with the man in the Coptic correspondence. However, the patronymic 'son of Tithoes' here has a different form than that found in the other documents of Pebos, and so restoration of his name is not a given, see *P.Kellis I*, 43.

Marsis, who rented a room from Psais II in Aphrodito in P.Kellis I Gr. 32. Both P.Kellis I Gr. 42 and 32 date to the year 364. The contemporary Coptic letters hint at a wider, Aphrodito-based network as well. In P.Kellis VII Copt. 90, the author, a certain Apa Psekes, mentions that he has resided at a location away from Kellis – probably Aphrodito, although the name must be restored – for 20 years. He also mentions a large sum of money (six solidi), half of which he had received from his ‘father’ Ploutogenes in Kellis, showing continued interaction with his home-village.⁴¹

Kellites in Aphrodito, then, continued to do business among themselves. It is likely that they maintained a degree of collective identity and strong ties to their hometown. Oasites certainly considered themselves distinct from ‘Egyptians’, i.e. Valley dwellers, and there may be traces of a more specific village identity in the evidence. Psais III seems to hint at such an identity in a passage from P.Kellis VII Copt. 105, where he writes: ‘indeed, I, my brothers, I want to come to the Oasis for these very seasons; if you reach me anew and I forget my village’ (ll.43–46). Although the phrase is not without difficulties of interpretation,⁴² Psais seems to be expressing a strong wish to return so as not to forget his home. For comparison, one may consider a third-century letter from Oxyrhynchus, P.Oxy. xxxi 2595. Here a Horigenes writes his brother Serenos (presumably in Oxyrhynchus) asking him to come, adding: ‘You will do well to come to us for a few days, for there are many Oxyrhynchites here’ (ll.5–7, trans. Adams). As Adams points out, it shows that a sense of collective identity existed among ‘diaspora’ Oxyrhynchites.⁴³ Thus, while Pamour III and his family may have been trying to integrate and become ‘Egyptian’, as they are labelled by the scribe of P.Kellis I Gr. 30, many of their contacts were still fellow-villagers. It is clear that we should not think of the Pamours’ interaction with the Valley as that of an isolated family and their relatives, but as part of a larger mobilisation of Kellites.

41 Two other contemporary documents from House 3 could relate to him: a ‘father’ Psekes travelled with ‘father’ Pishai from Antinoopolis to Kellis in Matthaïos’ letter P.Kellis v Copt. 25, and a ‘father’ Psekes, presbyter, witnessed a manumission on behalf of Valerios son of Sarapion in P.Kellis Gr. I 48 (dated 355). See Chapter 8, Section 3.4.

42 See *P.Kellis VII*, 206.

43 For translation and remarks, Colin Adams, ‘Migration in Roman Egypt: Problems and Possibilities’, in *Migration and Mobility in the Early Roman Empire*, ed. Luuk de Ligt and Laurens E. Tacoma (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 277–78.

5 A Trade Association?

To sum up, the Pamour family had strong social and economic ties with leading families in Kellis and retained contact with fellow-villagers in the Valley. This network included prominent villagers, such as Psenpnouthes I, Psais Tryphanes, and Pebos son of Tithoes. Many other affiliates, occurring primarily in the Coptic material, can be added to those discussed above, such as ‘father’ Antinou, ‘son’ Lammon, and ‘brother’ Papnouthes.

The question of how this network is to be understood remains to be addressed. In particular, we should consider whether we could be dealing with a formal association (κοινωνία, συνόδος). Such associations were a staple of the ancient world, and a broad phenomenon, ranging from those devoted to specific divinities to those organised around certain crafts (συνεργασία), although no association had only one function.⁴⁴ Occupational associations hosted regular gatherings, collected membership fees, kept accounts of shared expenditures, had formal leaders, and assisted members in economic matters.⁴⁵ Scholarship has long emphasised associations’ role as ‘social clubs’, as substitutes for people who lacked the security provided by kinship ties. Some recent works have argued that this emphasis downplays the economic functions of occupational associations.⁴⁶ Thus Philip Venticinque has argued that associations complemented rather than replaced ties of kinship, helped members absorb economic hardship, and strengthened mutual business ties.⁴⁷ Their role as ‘social clubs’ was in other words important also economically.

Going back to the Kellites, it must be stressed that there is no direct evidence for a formalised trade association in the documents so far published. Any argument for such a framework must be indirect. That said, some circumstantial evidence can be adduced. For one, there is the close cooperation

44 Harland, *Associations*, 25–53. Building on the work of Kloppenborg, Harland follows a typology of associations based on membership rather than purpose or ‘function’; dividing between associations primarily based on 1) household, 2) ethnic/geographic, 3) neighbourhood, 4) occupation, and 5) cultic connections. Of these, the Kellis association – if this is what it was – would primarily have been a professional association (ibid., 38–44), although household members, geographic factors, and cult (as we shall see in Chapter 6, Section 2.3) were all constitutive elements.

45 Venticinque, ‘Common Causes: Guilds, Craftsmen and Merchants in the Economy and Society of Roman and Late Roman Egypt’ (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2009), 54–67, 213.

46 Harland, *Associations*, 59–61; Venticinque, ‘Common Causes’, 24–54; id., ‘Family Affairs’; Matt Gibbs, ‘Trade Associations in Roman Egypt: Their *raison d’être*’, *Ancient Society* 41 (2011).

47 Venticinque, ‘Family Affairs’, 292–94.

between different familial groups.⁴⁸ The affiliation with figures such as Loudon and Psais Tryphanes shows that the group included families outside the extended kinship group. It could be objected that their activities involved weavers as well as traders, women as well as men, somewhat at odds with the norm of single-occupation, male-only associations. On the other hand, little is known about the way textile production was organised within trade associations, and it seems likely that such cooperation must have been common.⁴⁹ A formal framework would be strongly supported if, as has often been supposed, membership in occupational associations became compulsory for traders and artisans at the time of Diocletian, but this has been challenged by among others Adriaan J. B. Sirks, and the debate is still ongoing.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, it does seem that the late Roman state preferred to collect taxes, especially the chrysargyron tax, by way of occupational associations,⁵¹ and there is some tentative evidence for such collective payments from House 1–3.⁵²

We cannot know for sure whether the traders of Kellis were organised as a formal association or not – if so, its documents must have been stored elsewhere. The absence of strong evidence should caution us against assuming a formal framework. At any rate, the papyri do show that the Pamour family cooperated closely with fellow-traders from Kellis outside their own kinship group, and participated in a large trading group that shared resources, used common storehouses, and supported each other in selling goods. This larger ‘trust network’ would have assuaged some of the risks, deflected losses, and made it possible for the Pamour family to participate in the markets of the Nile Valley.

48 Ibid., 276.

49 See Gibbs, ‘Trade Associations’, 294; Harland, *Associations*, 38.

50 A. J. B. Sirks, ‘Did the Late Roman Government Try to Tie People to their Profession or Status?’, *Tyche* 8 (1993); Venticinque, ‘Common Causes’, 188–90, and 205–6.

51 Venticinque, ‘Common Causes’, 180; Gibbs, ‘Trade Associations’, 292.

52 A letter by Pekysis to a ‘brother’ Sarapis, P.Kellis 1 Gr. 76, may pertain to such a collective payment. Sarapis is waiting for a payment of the chrysargyron tax. That Pekysis titles him ‘brother’ may suggest that Sarapis is not a formal tax official, but a fellow-trader responsible for collecting taxes. For kinship terms in associations, see Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 63ff; for the guild official (ἐπιστάτης) elected to collect taxes in associations, see Venticinque, ‘Common Causes’, 204. Similarly, a tax payment by Philammon 1 and Pamour 1 documented in the receipt O.Kellis 1 4 seems to have been on behalf of a collective, and could conceivably imply that they acted as representatives of a trade association. See *O.Kellis I*, 34.

6 The Village Network

Instead of trying to pin down a formal organisation, then, we need to continue our relational investigation. To conclude the chapter, we examine the informal social ties in Kellis through quantitative social network analysis, following the methodology used by Ruffini in his analysis of the network of sixth-century Aphrodito.⁵³ This approach furnishes us with a fuller sense of the Pamour family's network. As we shall see, it can also highlight actors, peripheral (or even invisible) in the House 3 material, that may yet be of great interest for understanding the local Manichaean community. Below, we examine some network representations of the textual material from Kellis, and consider their implications for the social world of the Pamour family. By using a database of the texts from Kellis and the actors they feature, we trace relationships between actors through the whole body of relevant texts, and analyse the connectivity of the village network, and the centrality of certain actors, in statistical terms.

The present network is constructed from a dataset of close to 600 texts. House 1–3 was the single largest find spot, but the dataset includes finds from the whole village.⁵⁴ From it has been extracted a second dataset of around 1750 actors. Texts and actors are assigned ID-numbers and other attributes, such as 'Type' (either 'text' or 'actor'), and stored in an excel spreadsheet. Another sheet, a so-called edge-list, links actors to the texts in which they appear. These sheets are then uploaded into Gephi, a free social network analysis software, which generates a so-called two-mode, or actor-to-text, network.⁵⁵ Next, all but those texts dating from the period under consideration, i.e. mid- to late fourth century, are removed, leaving a network of 230 texts with 554 agents. Finally, this two-mode network is transformed into a one-mode network, linking actors directly to those actors connected to the same texts, with the help of a plug-in for Gephi called 'MultiMode Network Projection'. Various statistical

53 See Ruffini, *Social Networks*, 198–241. For a more comprehensive version of the present analysis, see Teigen, 'Limbs', chapter 5.

54 Of the 598 documents in the database, 347 texts (c.60%) were not from House 1–3. The other primary site was the Main Temple, with its associated shrines (D/1–4, 150 texts). The West Church (D/6, 53 texts) was another important find-site. Smaller finds came from a rubbish heap (A/10, 30 texts) and from domestic settings: houses in area C (C1 and C2, 37 texts), structure D/8 (D/8, 31 texts), House 4 (A/6, 24 texts), and House 5 (A/8–9, 5 texts). A few ostraka were found in the East Church (A/7, 9 texts), while the large block in Area B (B/1) has only yielded three jar docketts so far. In addition, 5 texts of unknown provenance within the village have been included.

55 For these tables, see: <http://hdl.handle.net/1956/18580>. Gephi has been chosen for its accessibility and for being freely available. A more popular software is UCINET/Pajec; for these, see Ruffini, *Social Networks*, 29–30.

tools allow us to consider both the characteristics of the network as a whole, and the centrality of individual actors within it. Important statistical measures for the network as a whole are *density*, *diameter*, and *average path length*.⁵⁶ In examining the centrality of actors within the network, on the other hand, one can employ measures such as *degree centrality*, *closeness centrality*, and *betweenness centrality*.⁵⁷ It is the last measure, that of betweenness centrality, which primarily concerns us here. It rates node ‘accessibility’, scoring them according to how often they appear on the shortest paths that other nodes have to take in order to reach each other – i.e. which actors are most important as bridges between different sub-groups. The charts presented below portray the relative betweenness centrality score of the actors by way of size: the more central an actor, the larger he/she is shown on the chart.

Some important limitations need to be noted. A common criticism of social network analysis on historical sources is that the centrality detected is an artifice of these same sources, rather than reflective of historical reality. In the case of the Kellis material, this causes actors from the House 1–3 texts to appear much more central than they were due to the accidental survival of their archive – especially the body of private letters, which are mainly concerned with matters internal to the family. Furthermore, it may be objected that the approach gives a misleading picture of those interactions that are visible, as people are linked merely for occurring together in the same document, subsuming different types of interaction under ‘connection’. To this it may be countered that, with regards to the first point, our interest is with the relationship between the Pamour family and the rest of the village, rather than a bird’s eye view of the village as a whole, to which the Pamour archive remains indispensable. Moreover, we can to some extent account for the bias of family affairs by considering an iteration of the network where we exclude the private letters from House 3.

As to the second point, it is true that a more fine-grained method for interaction could have been used, distinguishing between different forms of interaction, and adding directionality or positive/negative values to ties. But the model is not meant to be an accurate picture of social hierarchies in the village, but to highlight actors who were often active in different social circles, and

56 Density measures the number of *actualised* ties relative to that of *possible* ties between the nodes, i.e. the network’s degree of connectedness. Diameter shows how many ties there are between the two nodes that are furthest apart; i.e. the longest distance from one ‘end’ of the network to the other. Average path length shows the average amount of ties that one randomly chosen node has to pass through in order to reach any other.

57 Degree centrality measures the total amount of connections. An actor’s rank depends on the number of texts (s)he occurs in and how many other actors occur in the same texts. Closeness centrality is a measure of which nodes have on average the shortest path to all the others, being closest to the ‘centre’ of the network.

who only appear when the whole body of material is considered. While admittedly a blunt measure, co-occurrence does imply ‘connection of some sort’, as Ruffini has put it (*italics in original*).⁵⁸ It allows us to detect actors who were well-positioned to, for instance, mediate, broker deals, spread information, or distribute resources, as far as the evidence allows us to map them. To be sure, the specifics of an actor’s role have to be considered individually. There are also co-occurrences that do not imply social links at all. Ruffini pointed out the problem of leaving large ‘event documents’, such as fiscal registers, in the database.⁵⁹ They contain a large number of actors, but do not imply any actual familiarity or interaction between most of them, and so have to be removed. For this reason, the only large event document from Kellis, the KAB, is removed from the present analysis. The same objection can be made for smaller accounts, lists, and even some letters.⁶⁰ At the same time, some accounts and lists do imply or presuppose interaction – e.g. *dekania* lists,⁶¹ priest lists, and some accounts. The analysis therefore examines network iterations both excluding and including smaller accounts/lists, so that the difference can be appraised.⁶² A final issue that needs to be accounted for is difficulties in making prosopographic identification. The centrality of an actor can sometimes shift drastically depending on whether he or she is identified as present in a certain document. On the one hand, occurrences of names may be mistakenly attributed to one actor, inflating his or her centrality; on the other, the absence of identification may cause us to underestimate an actor’s centrality. The edge list therefore assigns a certainty value to each link between actors and texts.⁶³

In order to account for these limitations, then, we shall consider three iterations of the village network. The first is generated from all 230 texts, dating roughly 320–390, and features 554 actors. In order to control for the bias of the Pamour archive, a second iteration excludes all the private letters from House 3. Finally, a third iteration excludes both accounts/lists and House 3

58 Ruffini, *Social Networks*, 25.

59 *Ibid.*, 203–4.

60 See for instance Brand, ‘Speech Patterns’, 109.

61 For *dekania* lists, i.e. lists of villagers drafted for guard duty, see Roger S. Bagnall, ‘Army and Police in Roman Upper Egypt’, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 14 (1977). For such lists from Kellis, see O.Kellis I 124–137, P.Kellis I Gr. 60.

62 For *dekania* lists, i.e. lists of villagers drafted for guard duty, see Roger S. Bagnall, ‘Army and Police in Roman Upper Egypt’, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 14 (1977). For such lists from Kellis, see O.Kellis I 124–137, P.Kellis I Gr. 60.

63 From 0 to 6, using a scale of decreasing certainty. The ‘core’ occurrence of an actor is designated 0. Next, 1 is a certain identification with actor 0; 2 an all but certain, 3 a very likely, 4 a likely, 5 an uncertain, and 6 a tenuous identification. Evaluation criteria are: patronymics, find spot, rarity of the name, presence of shared actors, dating, and the activity that the actor engages in. The networks below are based on those links considered ‘likely’.

letters. The actors who recur in all these lists are more likely to actually have been central in some way. In our analysis, we draw attention to some general features of the network, and what they may tell us of village connectivity, and we end by discussing some recurring actors more closely. As we shall see, we have already met most of them, but there are also two previously unnoticed figures that score high in the networks, and who are of significance for the local Manichaean community.

6.1 *Network Charts and Tables*

	All documents (Chart 1)	Excluding H ₃ letters (Chart 2)	Excluding H ₃ letters and accounts/lists (Chart 3)
Components	26	28	37
(non-isolates)	(18)	(24)	(29)
<i>Actors</i>	554	393	257
<i>Average path length</i>	3,514	3,822	3,114
<i>Density</i>	2,50 %	2,40 %	3,20 %

Giant component

<i>Actors</i>	489	301	145
<i>Average path length</i>	3,52	3,848	3,122
<i>Density</i>	3,10 %	3,70 %	8,80 %
<i>Diameter</i>	9	9	9

Top ten names

<i>Degree centrality</i>	Pamour III (5073)	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)
	Philammon II (5051)	Pamour III (5073)	Pebos s.Tithoes (1091)
	Psais II (5089)	Pebos s.Tithoes (1091)	Ploutogenes s.Ouonsis
	Psenpnouthes (5010)	Ploutogenes s.Ouonsis	(5155)
	Andreas (5008)	(5155)	Pamour III (5073)
	Kapiton I (1014)	Psenpnouthes I (5010)	Pataias (1011)
	Lammon (5057)	Pataias (1011)	Kapiton I (1014)
	Pekysis (5081)	Kapiton I (1014)	Psenpnouthes I (5010)
	Psais III (1264)	Sarapammon s.Psais	Sarapammon s.Psais
	Charis (5052)	(1052)	(1052)
	Loudon II (5110)	Pinoutas s.Ploutogenes	
	Tehat (5035)	(1016)	
		Psais s.Peteminis (1012)	

(cont.)

	All documents (Chart 1)	Excluding H3 letters (Chart 2)	Excluding H3 letters and accounts/lists (Chart 3)
<i>Closeness centrality</i>	Pamour III (5073)	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)
	Psenpnouthes I (5010)	Pebos s.Tithoes (1091)	Pebos s.Tithoes (1091)
	Psais II (5089)	Ploutogenes s.Ouon. (5155)	Ploutogenes s.Ouonsis (5155)
	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)	Pamour III (5073)	Pamour III (5073)
	Lammon (5057)	Psenpnouthes I (5010)	Pataias (1011)
	Kapiton I (1014)	Psais s.Tryphanes (7036)	Psenpnouthes I (5010)
	Partheni II (5087)	Kome (4087)	Psais Tryphanes
	Hatres (5030)	Timotheos s.Harpokra- tion (1035)	Kapiton I (1014)
	Psais Tryphanes (7036)	Pataias (1011)	Sarapammon s.Psais (1052)
	Tehat (5035)	Harpokration (1026)	Pinoutas s.Ploutogenes (1016)
<i>Betweenness centrality</i>	Petros (5036)	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)	Pamour III (5073)
	Psais II (5089)	Petros (5036)	Psenpnouthes I (5010)
	Pausanias s.Valerios (1017)	Pausanias s.Valerios (1017)	Pebos s.Tithoes (1091)
	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)	Pamour III (5073)	Pausanias s.Valerios (1017)
	Psenpnouthes I (5010)	Kome (4087)	Horion s.Tithoes (1090)
	Pamour III (5073)	Ammonios f.Psais (8352)	Gelasios (1261)
	Ammonios f.Psais (8352)	Psais II (5089)	Psais II (5089)
	Kapiton I (1014)	Pisistratos (1175)	Pataias (1011)
	Tehat (5035)	Porphyrios (9508)	Harpokration (1026)
	Pisistratos (1175)	Psenpnouthes I (5010)	Tithoes I s.Petesis (5013)

6.2 Models and Social Reality

The part of the network dominated by the Pamour family is characterised by a high degree of connectivity and many possible routes for the dissemination of information.⁶⁴ Thus, although Chapter 3 assessed the material in

64 For a more extensive examination of the network of House 1–3, see Teigen, 'Limbs', 134–36. A similar result, based on a different network construction, is shown by Brand, 'Speech Patterns', 110.

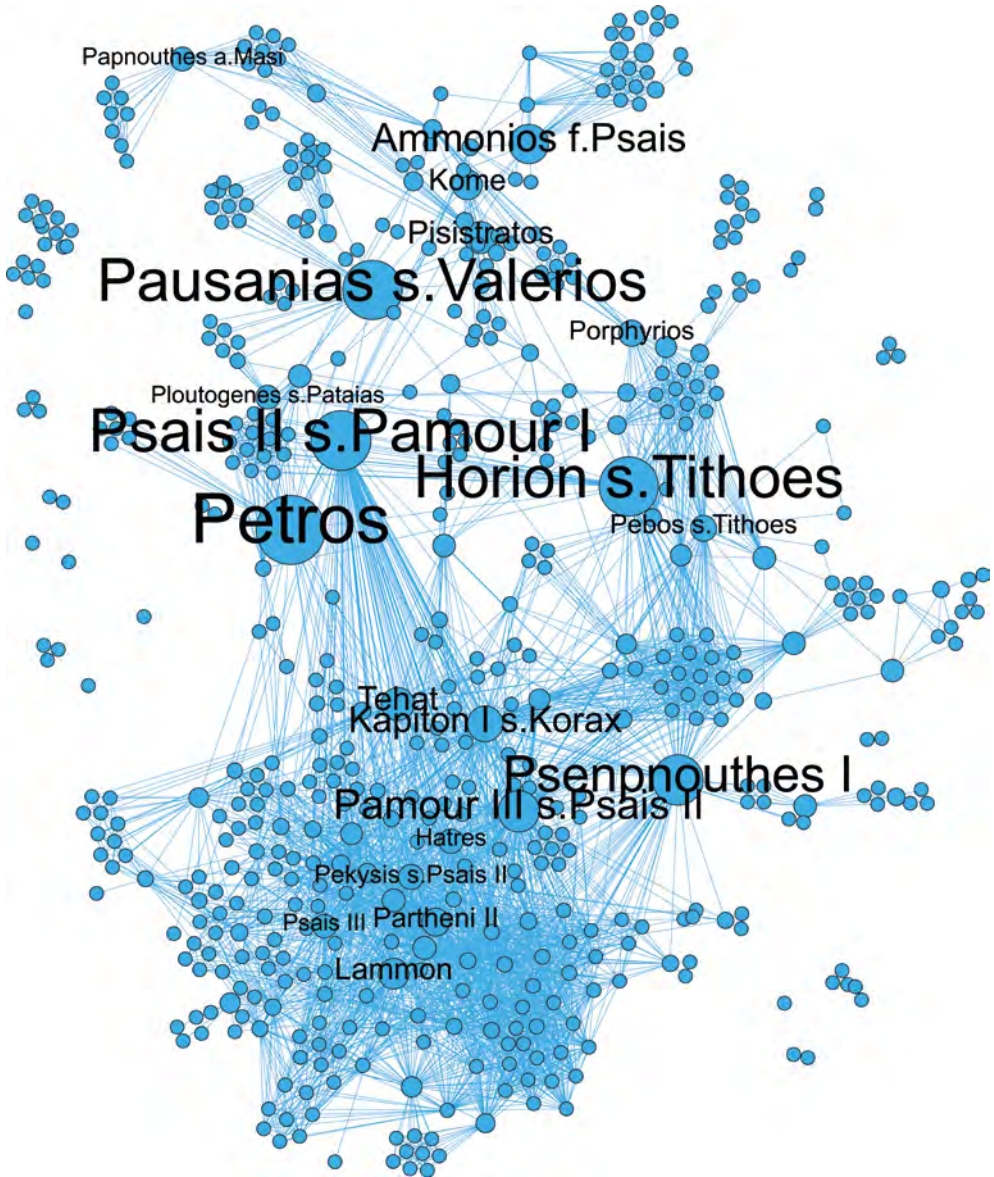


CHART 1 All documents

terms of different circles, the overlap between them is so extensive that they are hard to differentiate. Even circles presumed to be chronologically separate, such as Horion/Tehat and Psais/Andreas, are tightly connected. This gives weight to the hypothesis that the central House 3 circles belonged to a single kinship group whose material pertains to a relatively short time span. However, while the other parts of the network are less cohesive than that of

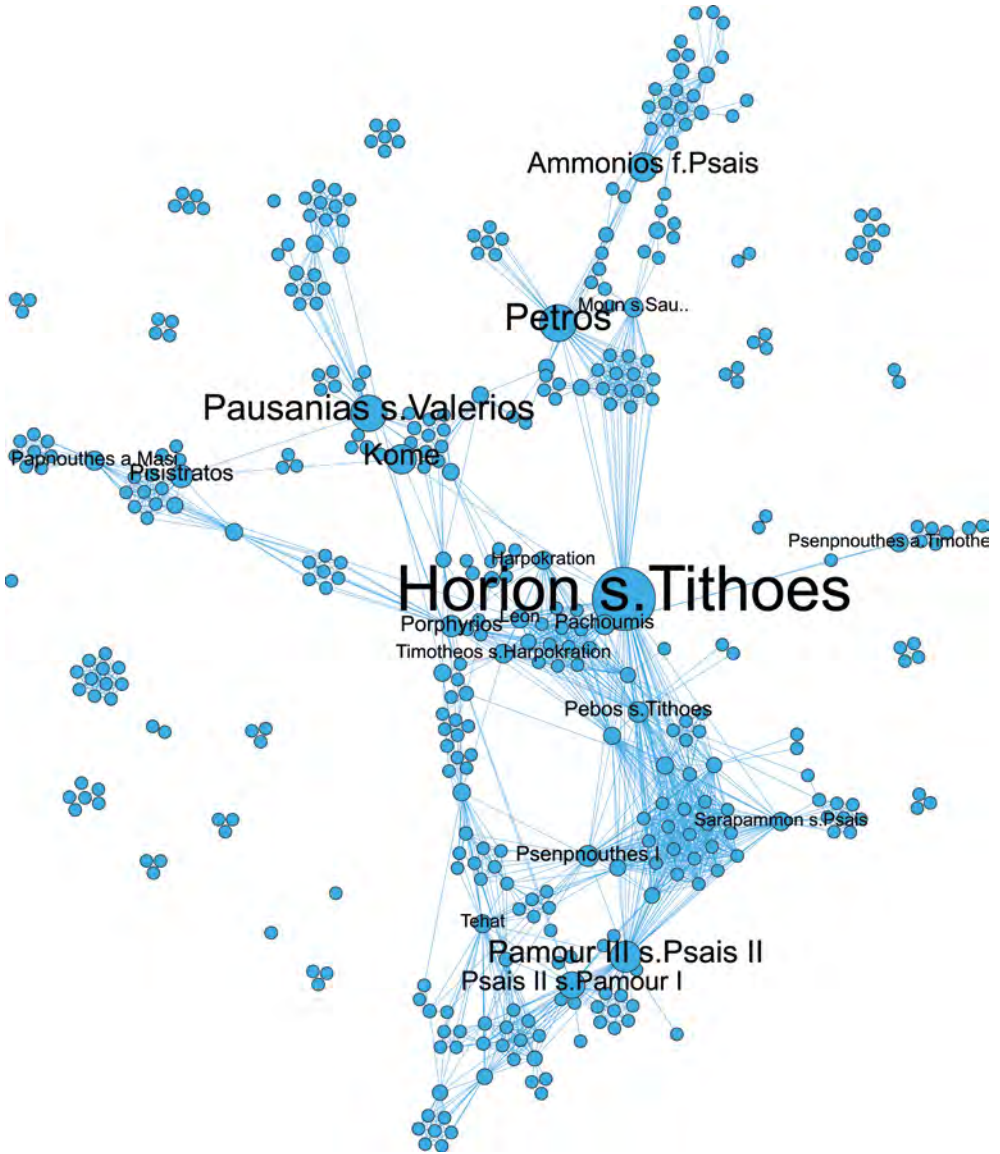


CHART 2 Excluding House 3 letters

the Pamour cluster, we cannot therefore conclude that the Pamour family was more tightly interconnected than 'normal'. It rather reflects the number and type of documentary texts (so far) published from other parts of the village, as discussed earlier. Similarly, the dominance of members of the Pamour family in centrality in Chart 1 does not reflect any hegemony by this group over the village. When the private letters from House 3 are removed, only a few of the

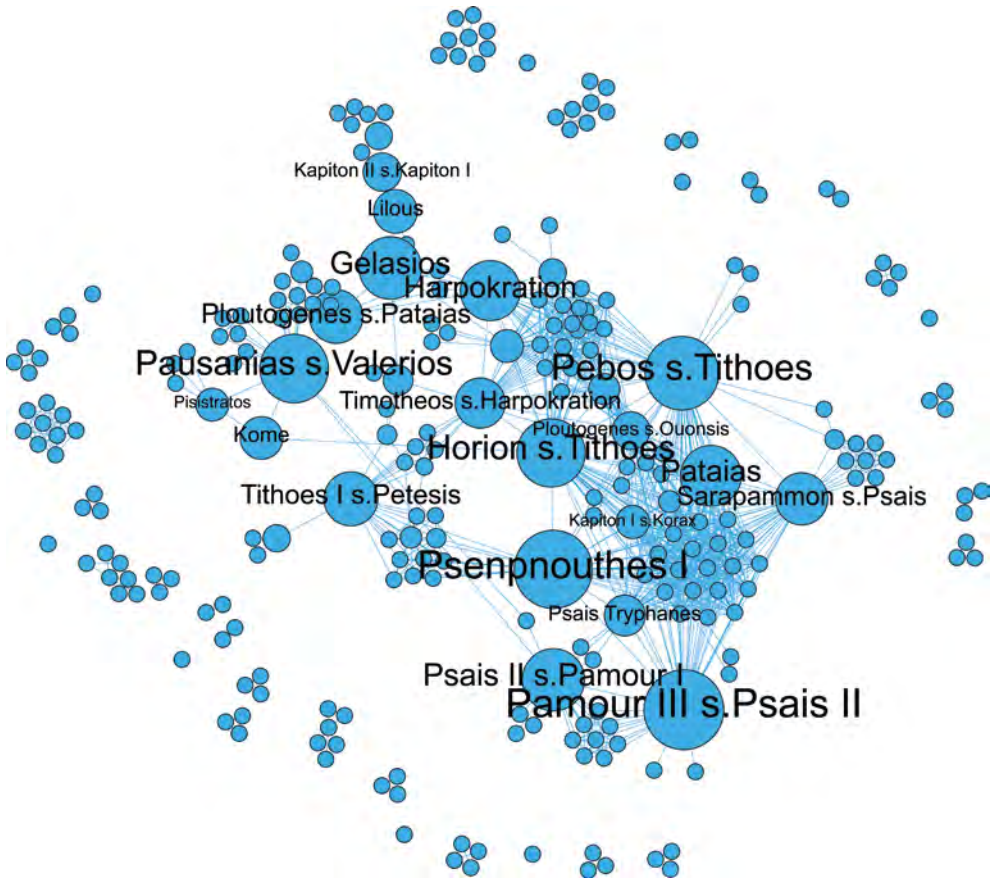


CHART 3 Excluding accounts and House 3 letters

main family members (Pamour III, Psais II) score high in terms of betweenness centrality, despite the fact that their archive still make up a sizable part of the total documents (see Chart 2).

Beyond the members of the family, we may note that several of their close associates appear with high centrality scores. In particular, there are several associates that remain prominent in all the network iterations: Pebos and Horion, sons of Tithoes, Pausanias the ex-magistrate, and Psenpnouthes I. As has been discussed above, these figures can be shown to have been of village-wide importance. Their centrality scores here do not necessarily imply that they were ‘the’ most important figures in the village, however, but highlight their role in mediating between the Pamour family and other circles in the village. There are, in fact, only a few figures that have not been discussed individually so far, namely Petros, Kome, Ammonios father of Psais, and Porphyrios. The

two latter are of less interest: while they may have been important figures in other circles, their roles remain obscure.⁶⁵ The two former, on the other hand, deserve closer attention. The figure of Petros is the primary recurring actor in the Petros letters, where the son consistently refers to him as ‘our brother’ and entrusts him with various messages and writings. The name occurs once in the House 1–3 material outside this circle, in Horion’s letter P.Kellis v Copt. 18 to Horos I. His prominence in the network is based on an identification with a Petros that occurs in a group of West Church ostraka accounts, by way of the KAB. The KAB features a Petros ‘the monk’ who pays rents on behalf of a *topos Mani*, partly in olive oil.⁶⁶ Similarly, O.Kellis I 121, an account of olive oil from the West Church, lists Petros and four other actors, one of whom is explicitly titled ‘monk’, and the others potentially identifiable as such.⁶⁷ The name ‘Petros’ is not common in Kellis outside the West Church and House 1–3, being only found once. It is likely that Petros, found in the KAB, the House 1–3 texts, and O.Kellis I 121, was a Manichaean Elect active in the village, who acted as a mediator between House 3 circles, large landowners, and a Manichaean religious institution. Based on find spot, relative rarity of the name in Kellis, and a similar role as a tenant, this man is further identifiable with Petros who occurs in a group of ostraka accounts from the West Church (O.Kellis I 114, 115, 117). This explains his position above. It may be objected that the identification of the monk with the man in these potsherds is less certain, and so his centrality could be inflated. Still, it is not unlikely that a religious authority with financial responsibilities would have featured prominently in village life.

Kome is another central figure not previously considered. While only occurring among the top ten in Chart 2, he is rated 12th in the iterations of Chart 1 and 3. He, too, occurs in ostraka from the West Church (and elsewhere), and can be identified by reference to the KAB, where a man by this name is one of the largest and most important tenants.⁶⁸ At times, he mediated on behalf

65 Porphyrios was an agent of Harpokration and an important associate of the author of P.Bingen 119, while Ammonios bridges some of the accounts from the West Church.

66 For the identification of Petros with this man, see Chapter 8, Section 1. For the *topos Mani*, see Chapter 9, Section 3.3.

67 The account names Petros, Psais ‘monk’ (μόνοχ), Bok, Alexandros, Horos s.P[...], and Korax son of Tithoes. It is possible that the account lists a series of monks, Psais being the only one explicitly labelled as such. A presbyter named Psais is found in P.Kellis VII Copt. 92. For Bok, note Pebok, ‘father’ at a monastery in P.Kellis v Copt. 12; for Horos, the associate of Lysimachos in P.Kellis v Copt. 30 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 72; for Alexandros, perhaps ‘Apa Alexandros’ in an ostrakon from nearby ‘Ain el-Gedida (see Aravecchia, ‘Christians’, 247).

68 There are two Kome’s in the KAB; Kome the tenant and Kome the bath-man (ibid., 64). Kome the tenant acted several times as an agent for the KAB manager, and paid dues in wheat, hay, chaff, and chickens. This agrees well with the Kome from the ostraka, who

of known actors: in O.Kellis 1 85, a memo, Pausanias orders Kome to provide chickens for Pisistratos on the second indiction year (328/9, or perhaps 347/8). There is good reason to think that Kome's position in the network reflects his role as a relatively wealthy tenant farmer in the vicinity of Kellis. Furthermore, his relationship to Pausanias and to a monk named Timotheos tie him indirectly to the Pamour family, a point to which we return in Chapter 6.

In the course of this chapter, we have situated the Pamour family in the village by sketching their ties to different circles. Although certainly not marginal, its members do not appear to have been the most prominent citizens of Kellis. Yet they had a diverse and extensive network of contacts, among whom many prominent figures can be discerned. This network included colleagues active in the family's business venture, weavers, traders and camel drivers, but also neighbouring carpenters, Oasis notables, local landowners, and other villagers who for unknown reasons had moved to Aphrodito in the Nile Valley in the mid – late fourth century. Prominent figures include, in particular, Pebos and Horion sons of Tithoes, a circle of traders tied to Psenpnouthes 1 and Psais son of Tryphanes, and the ex-magistrate Pausanias son of Valerios. Many of these relationships are, moreover, significant for understanding the Manichaean community in the village, as we shall see in Chapter 6. First, however, we need to examine what characterised this 'Manichaeanness' in the first place. It is to this matter that we now turn.

pays chicken to Pisistratos on behalf of Pausanias in O.Kellis 1 85, who acts as an agent in O.Kellis 1 112 from the same find site, who owes dues in hay or chaff in O.Kellis 1 119 from House 4, and who delivers a large amount of fava flour (ten art.; for which cf. the amounts in the $\kappa\alpha\beta$, *P.Kellis IV*, 46) in O.Kellis 1 60 from the Main Temple, all from the fourth century. He was probably quite old by the 360s, as he had at least one grown son, Nos, according to the $\kappa\alpha\beta$. Bagnall writes: 'largest tenant in indication 5 and indiction 6, afterward replaced by his sons Nos and Timotheos ... He may well have died early in the harvest of ind. 6.' *P.Kellis IV*, 68. The name also occurs in O.Kellis 1 131, but is less securely relatable to this figure.

PART 2

A Manichaean Church: The Light Mind at Kellis



Manichaean Cues: Religious Identity in Everyday Life

The people we have met in the past few chapters juggled several roles. Pamour III was – as far as we can tell – a dutiful son, a responsible elder brother, a sometimes absent husband and father, an eager trader, a Kellite, a migrant, and probably a number of other things that we cannot discern. Other villagers were daughters, potters, mothers, weavers, carpenters, caravan drivers, estate managers, Roman officials, ‘Egyptians’, ‘Hibites’, and so on. For some, such as Pamour III himself, we may add ‘Manichaean’ to the list. However, the nature of this ‘Manichaeanness’ is difficult to ascertain. Shared religion is, by and large, not something that the Pamour family or their associates discuss at length: indeed, the main body of evidence for Manichaean affiliation is the literary texts, not the documentary letters. How are we to judge the importance of religious identity to Pamour III and the rest of his associates? And how can we be sure that this identity was ‘Manichaean’? These questions will, in various guises, follow us throughout the rest of this book.

The present chapter sets the stage by clarifying some theoretical concepts broached in the introduction, and applying them to a selection of documentary letters. While religious affiliation is never discussed explicitly, authors of House 1–3 did employ religiously charged phrases, allusions, and terms: what we may call ‘religious cues’. These cues comprise the best-preserved evidence we have for the way the actors themselves articulated their religious identity. Below, we examine what they tell us about the role of religious identity in the everyday lives of the House 3 inhabitants, and the extent to which they can be taken as belonging to a specifically Manichaean tradition. But before we turn to the House 1–3 material, we need to take a step back and consider some theoretical perspectives on everyday religion and lay identity, in order to situate the present contribution. We therefore start by looking at recent trends in scholarship on late antique religious identity.

1 Religious Identity and Lived Religion

Sociologists have had ‘identity’ in their line of sight since the mid-20th century. The term was popularised in the 1960s by among others Erik Erikson and

Erwin Goffman, and already by the 1970s there were complaints that it had become something of a cliché.¹ Still, it has retained its currency among scholars, and identity theory has become a central field of sociological inquiry. The literature on identity has grown quite extensive also within the field of antiquity, especially in the course of the last three decades, influenced by trends in sociology, anthropology, and literary theory.² This ‘rise of identity’ has coincided with another scholarly development, namely the rejection of essentialist notions of ‘religion’.³ It has led to a dissolution of established assumptions about antique religion. Whereas older scholarship tended to take it as a given that religions were relatively uniform and sharply bounded, and the religious identities of their adherents correspondingly stable, modern scholarship has successfully challenged these assumptions. It has become common to emphasise the porosity of communal boundaries, and notions of situational and fluid identities have given scholars the tools to do so. Sharp boundaries are largely seen as reflecting authoritative discursive constructions rather than realities on the ground.⁴

This turn has received further impetus from an increase in attention to the everyday religious practices of non-specialists, the so-called ‘lived religion’ tradition within religious studies. Scholars of antique religion working within this paradigm have shifted attention away from abstractions, such as ‘Judaism’ or ‘Christianity’, to the specific communities or individuals that appropriated these traditions for their own use, blurring traditional boundaries in the process.⁵ Scholars have grappled with the problem of non-specialist religious

1 Brubaker and Cooper, ‘Beyond Identity’, 3–4.

2 The oft-cited starting point is Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak, eds., *Jews among Pagans and Christians* (London: Routledge, 1992). The literature on identity has become quite voluminous in the last three decades, and so a few examples have to suffice: Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Zellentin and Irincsi, ‘Making Selves and Marking Others’; Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*.

3 Smith, *Meaning and End*; Talal Asad, ‘The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category’, in *Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press).

4 See Boyarin, *Border Lines*; Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 98–146 (esp. 132–46); Sandwell, *Religious Identity*; Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities* (below).

5 Drawing on studies such as Hall, ed., *Lived Religion in America*; McGuire, *Lived Religion*. Examples within the field of ancient religion include Virginia Burrus and Rebecca Lyman, ‘Shifting the Focus of History’, in *Late Ancient Christianity. A People’s History of Christianity*, vol. 2, ed. Virginia Burrus (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); Jörg Rüpke, ed., *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Paul Lichtenman et al., ‘Grouping Together in Ancient Lived Religion’, in *Religion of the Roman*

practice in late antiquity by critically appraising the textual evidence, by paying close attention to archaeological material, and by drawing on new sociological trends. Recent studies have emphasised how non-specialists employed religious traditions in idiosyncratic ways, while authorities struggled to affect their behaviour. In his *Christians and their Many Identities in Late Antiquity* (2012), Eric Rebillard applies concepts drawn from the sociologist Rogers Brubaker to the works of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, in order to discern how laity acted, or more often refrained from acting, on their Christian identity (which he terms *Christianness*). He argues that while the clergy sought to impose a hierarchical view of identity, subordinating other identities to that of 'Christian', the laity preferred to arrange their Christianness laterally, i.e. as one of several identities whose saliency was considered on a situational basis.⁶ Christianness was primarily displayed (*activated*) in church and related contexts, within a distinct religious sphere of social life that only crystallised itself in late antiquity.⁷ On those occasions when Christianness was used successfully to mobilise for collective action, it was chiefly on the instigation of church leaders, and the sense of commonality (*groupness*) they engendered in the laity was temporary.⁸ For most lay people, religious identity played little role outside distinctly religious contexts. A similar approach has been taken by Mattias Brand for the Kellis material, in his dissertation 'The Manichaeans of Kellis' (2019). Building on Rebillard's study, and using Ann Swidler's notion of integrated and segregated cultural repertoires, he has argued that while the Elect could integrate Manichaean repertoires into their daily lives, the lay people of the documentary letters from House 1–3 kept their 'Manichaeanness' segregated from everyday experience.⁹

These studies show how the modern take on identity retains its relevance for antiquity. Even in antiquity, man was never a pure *homo religiosus*, but simultaneously an inhabitant of many roles. The specific contexts in and concerns with which individuals were engaged shaped their religious life in important ways, and the laity had a high degree of agency in shaping their religiosity. At the same time, it seems to me that these approaches put too much emphasis on the individualist, situationist aspect of identity. The term 'identity', as

Empire 3 (2017); David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); and the works of Rebillard and Brand considered below.

6 Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities*, 3–5.

7 *Ibid.*, 12–20, 69–70, 74–75; for the emergence of religion, see 93–94.

8 *Ibid.*, 92–93.

9 Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 342–44.

used among identity theorists, designate those role(s) an individual possesses within a collective that he or she actively appropriates.¹⁰ Any given identity therefore has a dual nature: it is both individually appropriated and collectively represented.¹¹ These two never overlap completely, and individual identities are certainly not immutable essences. But they are not entirely dependent on circumstance or devoid of coherence, either. Strong situationist frameworks, such as those advanced by Brubaker and Swidler, are not universally accepted in cultural sociology.¹² Research in the field of identity theory shows that even in modern societies, more extensively compartmentalised than ancient ones, identities as a rule co-mingle, coming into conflict or reinforcing each other, and that individuals arrange their identities hierarchically, giving more salience to some than to others.¹³ For late antique Egypt, David Frankfurter has recently shown that Christianness was appropriated and put into practice in different ways in different mundane spheres of life, what he terms 'social sites'.¹⁴ While not (for most people) a 'master identity' to which all others were subordinate, Christianness and other religious identities could and did 'spill over', affecting judgements and actions in other spheres of life, as well as being affected by them. As we shall see below, the Kellis material would seem to suggest that displays of 'Manichaeanness', too, were woven into everyday contexts.

10 In this sense, its usage goes back to Nelson Foote (1951). See Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, 38.

11 For a criticism, see Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', 6–9. Although I find the term 'identity' useful for designating the interface between individual appropriations and collective representations, the critics are right in that the two need to be kept analytically distinct. Below, 'individual identity' is used when emphasising individual appropriations; 'communal' or 'shared' identity when emphasising collective representations.

12 For a critique of Brubaker from within cultural sociology, arguing that he underestimates the role of culture in group-making, see Craig Calhoun, 'The Variability of Belonging: A Reply to Rogers Brubaker', *Ethnicities* 3 no.4 (2003). For a sustained critique of strong situationist frameworks, such as that of Swidler, from a cognitive angle, see Stephen Vaisey, 'Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action', in *American Journal of Sociology*, 114 no. 6.

13 For identity hierarchies, see Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, 53–55, 139ff.

14 Frankfurter employs the concept of *syncretism* in order to describe this process, arguing that the laity appropriated Christian tradition both by filtering it through pre-Christian, traditional modes of behaviour (which he terms *habitus*) and creatively combining it with other traditions (which he terms *bricolage*). This syncretism took different forms at different social sites, such as the home, the workplace, or the local shrine. See Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 15–31.

2 Signalling Identity: Religious Cues in Papyrus Letters

Identities are social phenomena, appropriated, reinforced, and disseminated by way of being displayed in social contexts. In order to describe such displays, we shall here employ the concept of 'cues'. This term is used to designate the displays of practical, 'insider' knowledge which allows individuals to manoeuvre social interaction in any given community.¹⁵ Cues may include bodily gestures, marks, or general appearance, as well as coded symbols, words, and phrases. It is these latter that are left to us in the papyri. The term 'religious cues' is here used to designate those religiously charged words and phrases that were recognised by members of a community and were used to signal religious affiliation.¹⁶ Some difficulties should be noted at the outset. For one, the same term could be used both as a religious cue and as a cue in other contexts. Thus, 'brother' might signify a co-adherent, even a monk, in some contexts; in others, a colleague or a close associate, as well as a familial brother. Secondly, many religious cues are shared and used in similar manners across different religious communities. This was certainly the case among the Manichaeans, as will be further discussed below. Finally, historians do not have direct access to individual minds. We cannot, for the most part, determine whether usage of religious language reflects internalised religious dispositions, or, for instance, the pressure of social expectations. However, we can seek to understand the rhetorical work that cues were put to. This allows us to analyse the role of shared religious identity within the social formation we are studying.

Ancient letters provide an intriguing arena for analysing religious cues. Letter writing in antiquity was a central activity for those wishing to sustain friendly relations and communal ties.¹⁷ Cues were used to signal a wide

15 I here draw on the study of Adam Schor, *Theodoret's People*, 10. An important source for the concept of 'cues' is Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 10–11. See also the notion of 'symbolic cues', found in Social Convergence Theory, and 'cultural cues', used in a wide range of studies within cultural sociology.

16 To be more specific, we here include self-appellations, names of divinities, metaphors, prayers, devotions, greetings, and scribal markers such as crosses or *nomina sacra*: words and symbols used more or less intentionally to invoke shared sentiment. This excludes some other features at times used to identify authors as belonging to a specific group, such as personal names, official titles, or festivals mentioned in passing. For discussion of these and other identity markers in the papyri, see Choat, *Belief and Cult*.

17 For general works on ancient letter writing, see John L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986); Stanley Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); and Hans-Josef Klauck and Daniel P. Bailey, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco:

spectre of identities, ranging from those widely shared to those shared only by tight-knit communities. Their usage was well understood by ancient letter writers. (Pseudo-)Demetrius, to whom the first known treatise on letter writing is attributed, maintained that proverbs should be employed to enhance the beauty of a letter, since they were widely known.¹⁸ Such ‘proverbial knowledge’ was shared by most literate Romans, and so a safe bet when wishing to emphasise common ground between writer and recipient. Less inclusive cues include quotations from, allusions to, or even especially archaic terms or modes of speech derived from ancient poets and writers – Homer in particular – which well-educated elites of the Roman Empire used to signal their shared educational background, their *paideia*, tying the dispersed elites of the Empire’s cities together through common culture.¹⁹ Christians employed scriptural quotations or allusions to signal shared identity, and bishops could even employ specific doctrinal terms in order to mark shared theological commitments.²⁰ These identities were certainly not mutually exclusive: Christian authorities from elite backgrounds would continue to signal their *paideia* well into late antiquity.²¹

Yet, not all letters needed distinct identity markers. The families of House 1–3 were not prominent figures writing for a public audience, and their letters were, for the most part, not carefully sculptured literary products. Most belong to the category of mundane communications that predominate in the papyrological material.²² As Malcolm Choat has shown, unambiguous displays of religious identity are far from ubiquitous in papyrus letters.²³ After all, such letters were largely written for contexts (familial, economic, or collegial) where religious affiliation could safely be ignored, taken for granted, or relegated to the backdrop. Even correspondences conducted by religious specialists, such as Christian monks, did not necessarily call for elaborate displays of religious

Baylor University Press, 2006). For their role in constructing communities, see Paola Ceccarelli et al., eds., *Letters and Communities: Studies in the Socio-Political Dimensions of Ancient Epistolography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

18 Klauck and Bailey, *Ancient Letters*, 186.

19 See, in particular, Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

20 Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 74–10; Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 36–85; Schor, *Theodoret’s People*, 22–25. See further below.

21 E.g. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 44–70.

22 To be sure, the division between ‘literary’ and ‘documentary’ letters should be understood as a matter of degree rather than kind; see e.g. Klauck and Bailey, *Ancient Letters*, 68–70.

23 Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 15–16, 152ff.

rhetoric.²⁴ Some cues, such as ‘greetings in the Lord’, became stock phrases, widespread in letters written by Christians regardless of topic, but more extensive usage was not generally considered appropriate or necessary. The instances in which more elaborate religious cues *were* employed should therefore draw our attention all the more, as they provide insight into those particular settings or social groupings in which religious identity was actively made to play a role.

3 Religious Cues in the Circles of House 3

In the following, we consider religious cues from some prominent lay authors of the House 3 circles and the contexts in which they occur. They serve to exemplify the religious language of the private letters, and as points of departure for discussing the role of religious identity for the authors. On a general level, we may note the comparative abundance of cues found in the House 1–3 letters. As pointed out above, usage of religious cues in private letters is by no means the norm in preserved papyri. Of the private letters from House 1–3, more than 60% contain religious cues.²⁵ Most are found in the letter openings, the initial part of a letter containing the inner address (the *prescript*) and other polite niceties, such as prayers for good health, remembrances, and other greetings (the *proem*), that preface the letter body, although a few letters also feature religious cues in the letter body and/or the letter closings.²⁶ They range from stock phrases (such as ‘greetings in the Lord’), to more distinct greetings, to elaborate performances that string together several cues. While the most distinctive ones occur in the Elect ‘Father letters’ (for which, see Chapter 8, Section 2.3), some lay letters also feature more elaborate performances.

As we saw, Rebillard has argued that Christianness did not, as a rule, have salience for the laity outside of specifically religious contexts, when dealing with rituals or prompted by religious authorities. If this is to hold for Manichaeanness among the laity at Kellis, we would expect such elaborate cues to be restricted to those letters concerned with religious subject matters. In order to determine this, we need to examine the relationship between religious cues and letter contents. This is not as straightforward as it may seem.

24 Malcolm Choat, ‘Monastic Letters on Papyrus from Late Antique Egypt’, in *Writing and Communication in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, ed. M. Choat and Maria Chiara Giorda (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 46–48.

25 C.75 out of 120, by my (rough) reckoning. The percentage of letters with religious cues was very likely higher, considering the loss of openings in several of the letters included in the total.

26 For an overview, see Klauck and Bailey, *Ancient Letters*, 9–42.

Our lack of knowledge of the specific thrust of an author's reasoning, as well as the lacunose nature of many letters, often present formidable obstacles to determining whether a topic is 'religious'. Another element that must be taken into account is the possibility of scribal influence. It was common for authors in antiquity – even literate ones – to make use of trained scribes. The authors of House 3 were no exceptions.²⁷ It could be that the cues found in the material tell us more about the training of the scribes than the intents of the authors, as stock greeting phrases, such as those employed in letter openings, were often dictated by scribal conventions.²⁸ We need, then, to consider several well-preserved letters by the same author, furnished with more distinctive or elaborate religious cues, with different hands evincing different scribes. Luckily, several authors do provide such material: Makarios, Horion, Pamour III, and Pekysis. Their letters allow us to compare cue usage both within an author's own dossier, and between different authors. They are examined here together with a single letter by Tekysis III.

3.1 *Religious Cues and Religious Matters: Horion and Makarios*

The lay letters that contain the most distinctive or elaborate examples of religious cues are those found in the circle of Maria/Makarios and of Tehat/Horion.²⁹ Starting with the letters by Makarios, religious cues are found in the openings of P.Kellis v Copt. 19, 20, and 22, i.e. about half of his preserved letters. Of the rest, P.Kellis v Copt. 21 restricts itself to a greeting 'in the Lord', while the openings of two others, P.Kellis v Copt. 24 and 52, are not preserved. All these letters feature Maria I as an addressee, although they include other addressees as well: Matthaïos is the primary recipient of P.Kellis v Copt. 19, while P.Kellis v Copt. 20, 21, and 22 feature the couple Psenpnouthes and Kyria as co-recipients.

The usage of cues in Makarios' letters is generally tied to religious affairs that he and his associates in the Nile Valley are engaged in. In P.Kellis v Copt. 19, Makarios' cues are used to praise the young Matthaïos. He opens with an

27 Herbert Youtie, 'ὑπογραφεύς: The Social Impact of Illiteracy in Graeco-Roman Egypt', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975). For the House 3 material, see *P.Kellis VII*, 11.

28 Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 23. For a (possible) example of scribal stylistic influence, see T. V. Evans, 'Linguistic Style and Variation in the Zenon Archive', in *Variation and Change in Greek and Latin: Problems and Methods*, ed. Martti Leiwo, Hilla Halla-aho, Marja Vierros (Helsinki: Suomen Ateenan-Instituutin säätiö, 2012), 25–40.

29 On the assumption that these are indeed laity. For a discussion of the case of Horion, see Choat, 'Monastic Letters', 55–56 n. 228.

elaborate address: ‘The child of righteousness; the one whose good reputation is in my mouth at every moment, whose witness is permanent in my heart; the name sweet in my mouth, my beloved son’ (ll.1–3). He continues with a remembrance, saying: ‘I remember your gentleness and your calm, and the example of your [...] propriety’ (ll.4–5), before invoking the Paraclete (i.e. Mani): ‘Now, be in worthy matters; just as the Paraclete has said: “The disciple of righteousness is found with the fear of his teacher upon him (even) while he is far from him, like (a) guardian (?)”’ (ll.8–11).³⁰ Finally, he exhorts Matthaïos to be mindful of his studies, and continue his readings and exercises dealing with religious literature. The letter body concerns more practical matters, addressed primarily to Maria I and mostly relating to a journey that Matthaïos is making to the Nile Valley. This stay in the Valley, also documented by Matthaïos’ own letters, involved copying religious books and associating with a Manichaean authority known as the Teacher. Makarios’ cues appear intended to reinforce Matthaïos’ identity as a dutiful and educated adherent (perhaps even as an aspiring Elect), in order to make sure he prepares properly for his stay in the Valley.

The letters addressing Psenpnouthes, Kyria, and Maria I are written by scribes.³¹ They display a wide range of religious cues, and it is likely that Makarios dictated them. As Malcolm Choat has observed, ‘such is the unusually deep religious tone and content of the greeting formulae, and their variation, that he almost certainly composes them himself.’³² P.Kellis v Copt. 21, introduced only with the formula ‘in the Lord’, is a rather short letter. It is concerned with other letters that Makarios has forwarded to Kellis by way of Apa Lysimachos, various objects he has (or should have) received, as well as requests for textiles and thread. The greeting would seem to fit the brevity of the content. P.Kellis v Copt. 20 and 22, on the other hand, are longer pieces. The former opens by addressing the addressees with the greeting: ‘my masters, my brethren, my loved ones who are honoured of my soul’, adding ‘in the Lord, I greet you’ (P.Kellis v Copt. 20, ll.1–5). It continues with a prayer: ‘This is my prayer at all times unto God: That freedom will come about for us, to come and see you again while we are in the body’ (ll.5–9). In the letter body, Makarios starts by criticising Maria for not assisting (‘remembering’) him and his companions, and by emphasising his own concerns. He wonders whether her negligence may be due to the absence of his children. Matthaïos is expected back (the text is fragmented and the reason for his absence unclear), while his brother

30 For this rendition, see Gardner, ‘Letter from the Teacher’, 321.

31 *P.Kellis V*, 156.

32 Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 26–27.

Piene is on the road, travelling with the Teacher. He also relates that a petition for getting the things of Matthaïos back from a certain Kleobolous is underway. In general, the events do not clearly pertain to religious matters. However, the opening prayer for ‘freedom’ may well relate to difficulties that Makarios is experiencing, as the editors carefully suggest.³³ Although not certain, it may well be that this should be seen in light of the problems of Matthaïos, and that the conflict had a religious component – as is the case in *P.Kellis v Copt. 22*, containing a similar opening prayer.

P.Kellis v Copt. 22 itself starts with a greeting to Psenpnouthes I, Kyria I, and Maria I in Greek, but shifts to Coptic mid-sentence when adding ‘mother’ Tamouïenia, and continues with a string of quite distinctive cues:

[Gr.] To my masters and most honourable brothers (and sisters): Psempnouthes and Kyria and Maria, [Copt.] and your children by name, and my mother Tamouïenia; you who are the good care-takers, zealous in every good thing, the children of the living race, the fruit of the flourishing tree and the blossoms of love. It is I, Makarios; in the Lord, – greetings. Before everything: I greet you warmly. Your ineffaceable memory is in my heart at all times; and I am praying to God that he may grant us freedom and we may greet you again in the body. (ll.1–11)

This opening is quite extraordinary. How does it relate to the letter content? In the first part of the letter (ll.11–60), Makarios describes various goods that he has received, and expresses reproach for others that he has not. He also berates them for negligence relating to a complex set of transactions, one relating to wages and economic loss, another to travel fares. Their context is hard to determine. A change of topic follows. Makarios turns to a new set of oblique difficulties, evidently tied to religious matters. One is a conflict relating to a book. In one passage, unfortunately preceded by several lacunose lines, Makarios berates either Kyria I or Maria I for failing to provide proper support in this conflict: ‘How many ... these or our sanctuary? Are not you yourself a catechumen? For we are not retaliating against anyone in this place for what they are doing to us’ (ll.60–62). The other involves problems that a family member was experiencing, in connection with which Makarios continues his criticism:

33 They note: ‘The wish for future *παρησία* might suggest that Makarios is at the moment of writing under some constraint. He expresses a similar wish in 22. Further evidence that he feels constrained might be the generally reproachful tone of the letter’ *P.Kellis V*, 169.

You had no pity on me. You had no pity for your brother's son, because he is under persecution (ΔΙΟΥΜΟΣ); though you know that I have spent two years without him. He has no one who can guide him but God, the one who repays [...] some clothes, for what has he done for him? (ll.72–76)

The implications of these passages for tensions between the community and the wider social world are treated in Chapter 6. Here it suffices to say that Makarios' language strongly suggests a religious context for these (related?) events: in particular, by using the term 'catechumen', Makarios invokes the set of obligations tied to this role within a (Manichaean) religious context.³⁴ In turn, the religious nature of the conflict, and the criticism that Makarios levels at the recipients for not providing enough support (along with the apparent urgency of his situation), probably explains the extra care that has been taken to furnish the opening with elaborate religious cues. By highlighting their shared religious identity, Makarios sought to spur the recipients into giving the help that he considered them obliged to provide as Auditors.

Turning to Horion, we find that he, too, often uses religious cues in the context of religious activity. Religious cues are primarily found in his three letters to Horos I (P.Kellis v Copt. 15–17). The most elaborate is the opening of P.Kellis v Copt. 15, quoted in the Prelude:

To my brother, my master; the loved one of my soul and my spirit. The child of righteousness, the good limb of the Light Mind. The name which is sweet in my mouth, my beloved brother Hor. It is I, Horion; in the Lord God, – greetings. (ll.1–5)

Horion further extols Horos' 'gentleness' and 'immutable, never changing love' (ll.12–13), and he closes the letter with a greeting to 'they who give you rest, the elect and the catechumens, each one by name' (ll.27–30). In the letter body, Horion reassures Horos that he has completed tasks that Horos has requested, including acquiring oil, buying wheat, and sending a *jlge* (cloth bag?), all as far as can be determined linked to organising something he calls the *agape*. It is clearly a form of religious charity, and there is to my mind good reasons for taking the *agape* to be Manichaean food-alms, given to the Elect for their meal (see Chapter 8, Section 2.4). It seems, then, that Horion's greetings are linked to this institution, serving to set what follows apart as pertaining to specifically religious

34 I here disagree with the interpretation offered by Brand ('Manichaeans of Kellis', 160); see the discussion of open and bounded identity in Chapter 6, Section 4.

matters. A related letter, P.Kellis v Copt. 16, is written by the same scribe.³⁵ It begins:

To my brother, [my] loved one who is precious to my spirit, and the beloved of all my limbs. The one for whom I wish with all my heart, my true guileless friend. My brother, my master, Hor. It is I, Horion, I greet you; in the Lord God, – greetings. (ll.1–9)

Despite being written by the same scribe, its opening is very different, lacking the conspicuous phrases ‘child of righteousness’ and ‘good limb of the Light Mind’. It does, however, feature the closing greeting ‘to the Elect [and the catechumen], all they who give rest to you’ (ll.40–41). The letter body is unfortunately very fragmentary. Horion seems to be agitated: he is ‘astonished’, ‘begs’, and ‘needs’ (ll.17–19), and the word ‘grief’ (ΛΥΠ[Η]) can be read (l.37). But without a clearer understanding of the matters at hand, the context for the opening cues cannot be established. Moving on to the third letter, P.Kellis v Copt. 17, it is written by a different scribe than the two previous.³⁶ Its opening reads:

To my brother, my master, precious to me. The sweet name in my mouth at all times, of whose gentleness I bear memory at every moment. My beloved brother Hor. It is I, Horion, I greet you warmly; in the Lord, – greeting. (ll.1–8)

While somewhat different from the others, Horos’ ‘gentleness’ is again emphasised (as in the body of P.Kellis v Copt. 15), the phrase ‘sweet in the mouth’ recurs, and its closing greeting features ‘the catechumens and they who give rest to you’ (ll.52–53). The fact that ‘gentleness’ (ΜΗΤΕΛΘΗΤ) occurs both in the body of P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and in the opening of P.Kellis v Copt. 17, written by different scribes, indicates that we here have a virtue that Horion himself wanted to stress when addressing Horos.³⁷ While the cues of this letter are less distinctive, the body of the letter again deals with preparations of agape, perhaps indicating that the subject matter influenced the choice of cues.

Conversely, the letters to Tehat and Hatres – P.Kellis v Copt. 18 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 58, both written in the same, coarse hand,³⁸ – do not contain

35 *P.Kellis V*, 140.

36 *P.Kellis V*, 140.

37 This virtue is also invoked in a few other Kellis letters, but is by no means common: it is used by Makarios (P.Kellis v Copt. 19, l.5), Matthaïos (P.Kellis v Copt. 26, l.11), and the Teacher (P.Kellis VII Copt. 61, l.7). See below.

38 *P.Kellis V*, 152; see also *P.Kellis VII*, 20.

elaborate religious cues, although admittedly only P.Kellis v Copt. 18 has preserved the opening. It reads simply: ‘to my loved brethren Tehat and Hatre. It is I, Horion, – in the Lord, greetings’ (ll.1–2). Perhaps the difference could be attributed to a difference between the scribes (these letters could be written in Horion’s own hand, in contrast to those to Horos I), but, as pointed out above, the internal variation in the letters to Horos are not dependent on scribal influence. Thus, the fact that P.Kellis v Copt. 18 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 58 mainly deal with textile transactions might suggest that while Horion considered the topic of the agape to demand elaborate religious cues, he thought his business letters did not. This would seem to support the findings from the letters of Makarios: that extensive use of religious cues was confined to letters explicitly concerned with religious matters.

However, at least some of the transactions in the letters to Tehat/Hatres do relate to religious matters. This is most evident in the case of the textile work that is ordered on behalf of Saren ‘the presbyter’, who feature in both letters, but possibly also other instances such as a donation to the ‘brothers’ (see Chapter 8, Section 2.4). These matters are perhaps more peripheral to the letters’ chief concerns than are the preparation of agape at the centre of P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and 17, but suggest that his cue usage is more complex than it would appear at first glance. Moreover, another explanatory factor can to my mind be adduced, in the status difference between the recipients. The letters to Horos I include expressions of gratefulness for letters he has received and discussion of family members, as well as greetings from mother Taese and son Aetios. Little can unfortunately be read of the closing greetings to Tehat and Hatres in either letter, but the tone of Horion’s letters to them, with their many orders, is markedly less personal. They give the impression that Tehat/Hatres are junior associates, or at least equals: figures less in need of flowery language than Horos I. Matters of status and personal relationships probably factored into Horion’s cue usage.

3.2 *Religious Cues in Everyday Correspondence: Pekysis, Pamour III, Tekysis II*

While providing the most distinctive instances, Makarios and Horion were by no means the only authors who employed more extensive religious cues in their letters. The chief protagonists in the circle around the Pamours present us with several examples. Let us start with the letters of one of the key figures in Chapter 3, Pekysis. His letters are, as remarked there, primarily concerned with business. Still, while two of his letters contain no religious cues at all (P.Kellis VII Copt. 75, P.Kellis I Gr. 76), most have at least one. In three letters, his usage is admittedly limited to fairly common and broadly ‘Christian’ cues,

such as ‘in the Lord’ (P.Kellis VII Copt. 73, 77; P.Kellis I Gr. 72), but three letters are also furnished with more elaborate cues, in the form of opening prayers: P.Kellis VII Copt. 76, 78, and 79.

In the following, we focus on the latter two, whose recipients and contents are very similar. Starting with P.Kellis VII Copt. 78, its opening reads: ‘I pray to God that he will keep you healthy at all times in your body, your soul and your spirit; until I see you again and my joy is complete’ (ll.6–12). This is a variation on the so-called ‘tripartite prayer’ attested in many other letters.³⁹ There is otherwise nothing in this particular letter that suggests a specifically religious context that explains the usage. The letter body deals with purchase of papyri, collection of a payment, shipments of goods, and textile work involving family members and business associates. What, then, may have prompted it? Perhaps it could be argued that the prayer was added by the scribe, having little to do with Pekysis’ intentions. However, the opening prayer here is very close to that found in P.Kellis VII Copt. 79 (although omitting ‘body’), written by a different scribe.⁴⁰ A more plausible explanation is to be found in the recipient himself. Among the letters of Pekysis, Horos I is main recipient in all those letters that also contain prayers. He was clearly a senior associate who commanded respect, and it would seem that displays of religious identity was particularly called for in letters addressed to him.⁴¹ The ‘religiousness’ of the letter contents did not factor into it. This is supported by the one letter of his that explicitly deals with matters of the Church: P.Kellis VII Copt. 73, addressed to Psais III. The subject here is a ‘service to the Church’ (ll.16–17), a matter relating to ‘life eternal’ (ll.23–24), probably the donation of two girls as Elect novices (see Chapter 8, Section 2.2). This pious act would certainly be seen as belonging to the specifically ‘religious’ sphere. Nonetheless, this letter features no cues beyond a standard greeting ‘in the Lord’.

Turning to the letters of Pamour III, they generally have a stronger element of piety than those of his brother. None of his well-preserved letters are devoid of some form of religious cue.⁴² Three of them provide longer prayers, namely

39 Including those of Mani himself. Its usage in Manichaean circles is highly likely to derive from him, although Mani himself, in turn, drew on Paul. See below.

40 *P.Kellis VII*, 112–13.

41 Similarly, all of Horion’s letters to ‘brother’ Horos are furnished with religious cues, strengthening the identification of this figure with Horos I (see above).

42 This statement needs some clarification, as several documents might be taken to the contrary: P.Kellis VII Copt. 64, 68, 69, and 70. However, these can be accounted for. P.Kellis VII Copt. 64 and 68 are fragmentary, both missing the openings where such cues would normally be placed. P.Kellis VII Copt. 69 is a contract rather than a private letter. Finally, P.Kellis VII Copt. 70 lacks clear-cut religious cues, but its authorship is not certain,

P.Kellis VII Copt. 65, 71, and 72. In contrast to those of Pekysis, the letters with prayers are addressed to different figures, all of whom are close relatives or junior associates of Pamour III. Two of them, P.Kellis VII Copt. 65 and 71, open with similar tripartite prayers to those of Pekysis', but are furnished with an extra prayer for protection against evil forces. Thus, the opening of P.Kellis VII Copt. 65, addressed primarily to Pekysis, reads:

[I] pray to the Father, [the God of truth], that you will live [for a long] time; being [healthy in the body], rejoicing [in the spirit], healthy in the [soul, safe] from the snares of the devil and the adversities of Satan (ll.7–15)⁴³

Its contents are wholly preoccupied with business, including criticism of father Psais (II) for wrongly trying to collect money from Pamour. The second letter, P.Kellis VII Copt. 71, is addressed to Pamour III's sister-in-law, Partheni II. She is greeted with her children, 'especially my son Andreas' (l.3). Thereupon follows:

Before everything: I pray to the Father, the God of Truth, that you will live for me a long time and a great period, being healthy in the body, flourishing in the soul and rejoicing in spirit, safe from all the temptations of Satan and the adversities of the evil place (ll.4–9)

The letter body deals with preparations for a journey that Partheni is about to make to the Nile valley, as well as an attempt to intervene in a quarrel that she and her associates in the Oasis had provoked. The background of the prayers in these letters, then, can be neither the status of the recipients nor the religious nature of the content, nor are they written by the same scribe. It could, perhaps, be significant that both contain rebukes. In both letters, Pamour criticises the recipients for bad conduct. The prayers may have been used to bolster Pamour's authority while striking up a more serious tone – particularly as both add warnings against sin ('snares of the devil' and 'temptations of Satan') to the tripartite formula.⁴⁴

Pamour III's most extensive prayer, found in P.Kellis VII Copt. 72, diverges substantially from the others surveyed so far, despite the fact that this letter was probably written by the same scribe as P.Kellis VII Copt. 71.⁴⁵ It is not

and it does contain the phrase 'whose name is sweet [in my mouth]'; which could be a Manichaean cue (see below).

43 For the reconstruction of the text, see *P.Kellis VII*, 50.

44 Such warnings were part of Mani's own style (see below), but could clearly be included or omitted based on the author's needs.

45 *P.Kellis VII*, 70–71.

tripartite, and has what seems to be a more personal touch. After greeting the primary recipients, Psais III and Theognostos, 'in God', Pamour adds:

I am praying to the Father, the God of Truth, for your health; your brotherhood in which there is no guile. For no one knows the love for you that pierces my heart, save God alone. He is the one who knows the love with which I am looking out for you and wanting to see you; but since you are far from me, I will not be able to see you. Instead, I am writing to you (sg.) with these obscure (ἄκμῆμῆ) (?)⁴⁶ letters, which carry greeting until the time when face greets face (ll.4–12)

In addition to sharing scribe, the content of this letter also has affinities with P.Kellis VII Copt. 71. It, too, contains a rebuke, criticising Psais III for unworthy behaviour and asking him to pay a debt. Yet, the opening is very different, and the more positive tone set by this prayer seems less suited to reinforce a reproach. Other possibilities are at hand, however. For one, the influence of his current company may have played a part. The letter ends with greetings: 'from those of Apa L(ysimachos?) and Hor: Greet my brother Pshai warmly. Jpnoute, the woman from Tanaietou; her two brothers; the deacon; they all greet you' (ll.35–36). The presence of Elect – Lysimachos and a deacon – may have prompted Pamour III to take a more pious approach. However, another, more personal reason likely provides a better fit. In a passage towards the end of the letter, Pamour III writes that he has just emerged from illness: 'I have been ill for five months; by the grace of God I have recovered. Live, and be of good health for me for a long time' (ll.33–34). Clearly, Pamour had not seen Psais III and Theognostos for quite a while.⁴⁷ His sickness could have provided the background for the strong expressions of longing, and the initial emphasis on health and brotherhood, in this prayer.

Our final example is P.Kellis VII Copt. 115. This letter is addressed to Psais III, and so grouped together with other letters of the Psais/Andreas circle, but it is written by Tekysis – probably Tekysis III, sister of Pamour III, Pekysis, and probably Psais III himself. Psais III is recipient of several letters with religious language by different authors.⁴⁸ The letter of Tekysis III is one of a few in

46 For a discussion, see *P.Kellis VII*, 80.

47 Pamour does relate (in an unfortunately fragmentary part) that he is sick also in P.Kellis VII Copt. 71. However, this letter has a different set of recipients. See *P.Kellis VII*, 71–72.

48 See e.g. the above-examined P.Kellis VII Copt. 72, Ouales' P.Kellis V Copt. 35, and Ammon's P.Kellis V Copt. 37.

the archive with female authorship. Unfortunately, it is the only one preserved by her, so no comparison of cue usage in other letters by her can be made. Still, the letter remains interesting in light of its contents. Its opening runs:

To my master, my loved brother who is greatly honoured by me: The one whose name is sweet in my mouth at all times; while I am praying to embrace him in the body, and my joy will be complete. My brother Pshai: I, your sister Tegoshe, am writing to you in the Lord; – greetings (ll.1–8)

In addition to this opening, employing the embrace-formula elsewhere often combined with the tripartite prayer, her letter features a closing greeting to ‘everyone who gives rest to you’ (ll.41–42), which is likely to be a distinctly Manichaean greeting (see below). The letter body contains a sorrowful complaint about different ills that have befallen her: the death of ‘the children of Nonna’, her own inability to travel due to having developed pus, and, not least, the distressing death of a close relative (daughter?) referred to as ‘the little girl’ (ll.13–30). She ends with a dramatic closing greeting: ‘And my son Andreas will bear witness to you (sg.) of all the news and the state I am in, and he will tell you about my life’s course’ (l.44tr).

Scribal influence is here possible, although the scribe uses the third person in the opening (‘I am praying to embrace him’, εἰῶληλ λουαουτφ), perhaps suggesting that he was taking down Tekysis’ spoken words.⁴⁹ To be sure, the cues that frame her complaints are not as elaborate as some of those employed by her brothers. Nor do they seem to be tailored to her specific situation. However, they do furnish the letter with a more solemn tone than an ordinary greeting ‘in the Lord’ would have done. It seems reasonable to suggest that religious cues were used in order to set the letter apart, adding emphasis to the gravity of the news it carried.

3.3 *Summary*

In conclusion, we have found that while the religious cues in these letters clearly belong to a specific repertoire, with many recurring words and phrases, they were not simply stock scribal formulae, with no relation to the content, nor were they reserved institutional, ‘religious’ matters. Rather, the authors themselves had much agency in adapting them to the purpose of their letter.

49 Presumably, Tekysis spoke of Psais in the third person while relating the content of the letter to the scribe. A similar feature can be found in P.Kellis VII Copt. 71; see *P.Kellis VII*, 76. Admittedly, Tekysis phrasing here is relatively common.

As we might have expected based on Rebillard's argument, the lay letters that most explicitly deal with religious matters also contain the most elaborate examples of religious cues, namely the letters of Makarios. However, religious matters did not always require cues, as seen in letters by Horion and Pekysis. Not least, religious cues were clearly not restricted to religious contexts. We find distinctive cues and even elaborate performances used in more mundane contexts: to signal respect for specific individuals, to give emphasis to longing for distant family members, to bolster one's gravitas when chastising misconduct, and to frame expressions of sorrow. It is clear that the authors of House 3 saw their religious identities as something that could be activated outside of specifically religious contexts.

4 Manichaean Cues

Up until now we have bracketed the question of the religious repertoire that the above-examined cues are drawn from. Religious cues are, as pointed out above, not very common in the papyri, but even where they are in evidence, assigning the author to one or the other religious tradition is a difficult task. Scholarly work on religious affiliation in the papyri has, unsurprisingly, been dominated by the hunt for markers that identify distinctly 'Christian' documents. An important study was Guiseppe Ghedini's *Lettere cristiane* (1923), which attempted to establish criteria for what constituted Christian markers. His list included phrases expressing monotheistic belief, certain epistolary formulae, use of *nomina sacra*, and the presence of ecclesiastical titles. However, these criteria have long been contested, and debate concerning how to interpret specific terms and phrases is still ongoing.⁵⁰ In particular, Malcolm Choat's work on fourth-century papyri has shown the difficulties in attempts to infer adherence to a specific religious tradition from these criteria.⁵¹ Still, certain phrases, such as 'greetings in the Lord (God)', remain widely acknowledged to represent distinctly Christian markers.⁵²

50 For a discussion of the historiography, see Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 32–36. So, for instance, taking monotheistic 'formulae of belief' as a Christian marker has been strongly criticised, among others by Choat and Nobbs, 'Monotheistic Formulae', 50–51.

51 See Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 12–15. As Blumell notes: 'The upshot of Choat's work is that it shows how devotees of different traditions typically employed the same, or in many cases similar language, to express religiosity in documentary texts, thus disposing of the view that by the fourth century Christians had effectively created a unique discourse that allows their literature to be easily distinguished and identified.' *Lettered Christians*, 36.

52 Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 102–4. He also notes the Manichaean usage of this expression.

Regarding Manichaean letter writing, work has only recently gotten under way, much thanks to the discoveries at Ismant el-Kharab. Here, uncertainty has been expressed concerning the extent to which these lay letters actually indicate a distinctly 'Manichaean' affinity.⁵³ The language of the letters is infused with epistolary conventions that suggest rather a mainstream Christian background. The phrase 'greetings in the Lord' is a commonplace at Kellis, two letters not examined above invoke Christ explicitly, and several speak of the 'church' (ἐκκλησία), both in the sense of abstract communality – the 'Holy Church' – and of a concrete congregation or place.⁵⁴ It is clear that the authors drew on terminology from the broad Christian tradition to conceptualise their religious community. Yet, do they show that Manichaean identity at Kellis 'in reality' was Christian?

It may initially be noted that whether – and if so, to what extent – the term 'Christian' was used internally remains unclear.⁵⁵ This term is not found as a self-designation in the private letters of the Pamour family, nor in that of any of their close associates. There is only one occurrence of a man self-identifying as a Christian: in P.Kellis I Gr. 48, dated 355, a certain Valerios son of Sarapion released a female slave named Hilaria through a contract of manumission, because of his 'exceptional Christianity'. This Valerios' relationship to the House 1–3 circles is unclear. The name Valerios occurs in a Greek letter, perhaps as a business partner or patron of Philammon II.⁵⁶ He could, perhaps, be the father of Pausanias son of Valerios, the Oasis magistrate active in the 320s–30s and recipient of the 'Father' letter P.Kellis I Gr. 63 – although he would in that case have been quite elderly by the time of this manumission. It is possible that the presbyter who serves as a witness for the manumission could be identified as an Elect official (see Chapter 8, Section 3.4). If it is indeed Manichaean affiliation that Valerios here frames in terms of 'Christianness', he is still signalling it to a public audience (including officials who might use the document in a future legal dispute) rather than private associates. Self-identification as 'Christians' in primarily public displays are similarly found for Augustine's Manichaean opponents.⁵⁷ Even so, given the terms and invocations already adduced, it remains likely that the Pamour family

53 See the discussion of the literary remains in Chapter 7.

54 For the invocation of Christ, see P.Kellis v Copt. 25, P.Kellis VII Copt. 61; for church in the abstract, P.Kellis v Copt. 31, 32, and P.Kellis VII Copt. 73; and for a specific church congregation, P.Kellis v Copt. 25.

55 For a discussion, see Pedersen, 'Manichaean Self-Designations'.

56 P.Kellis I Gr. 64; note also the recipient of the underlying text of Tehat's letter P.Kellis v Copt. 43.

57 For them, see Pedersen, 'Manichaean Self-Designations', 182–88.

considered themselves to be practicing some form of ‘exceptional Christianity’, even if they did not normally phrase it in such terms.

Yet, as argued in Chapter 1, a self-understanding as ‘Christian’ does not imply absence of ‘Manichaeanness’. Christian concepts and terms such as ‘Holy Church’ are common in Manichaean literature. The issue of contention is rather to what extent these lay authors saw their Christian affiliation through a Manichaean lens. To this point, it has been pointed out that the private letters do not refer to Manichaean doctrinal terms or mythology. In the introduction to the first volume of documentary texts, the editors commented that:

... it is noteworthy that the complicated details of cosmology, and the various series of emanated gods, hardly intrude into the daily writings as represented here. This is hardly surprising, if one is dealing with the incidental documents of catechumens. It would appear that the more esoteric elements of Mani’s gnosis were of most concern to the elect and the heresiologists; and this should not mislead us in a study of the actual faith of these villagers, for whom Manichaeism is perhaps best described as a superior and more effective kind of Christianity.⁵⁸

Similarly, Timothy Pettipiece has contrasted the elaborate rhetorics of the Berlin *Kephalaia* with that of the laity at Kellis, noting that ‘the Manichaean documents recently discovered at Kellis from the so-called “Makarios family” (who are thought to be catechumens) display little awareness or even interest in such erudition.’⁵⁹ The implications seem to be that since such knowledge was the preserve of the Elect, the laity did not have much in the way of distinct Manichaeanness.

It is true that such technical language is largely – but, as we shall see, not completely – absent from the Kellis letters. However, I do not think that this view can be maintained. In part, it rests on mistaken expectations. As pointed out above, even where one finds religious cues in the documentary papyri, they seldom constitute elaborate performances. One would certainly not expect to find the level of ‘lore’ preserved in the *Kephalaia* literature in mundane communications. At the same time, while doctrinal terms and myths are

58 *P.Kellis V*, 79.

59 Timothy Pettipiece, ‘Rhetorica Manichaica: A Rhetorical Analysis of *Kephalaia* Chapter 38: “On the Light Mind and the Apostles and the Saints” (Ke 89.19–102.12)’, in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, ed. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier (Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval/Peeters, 2006), 740.

(in general) absent, many of the above-examined cues can, in fact, be shown to derive from a specifically Manichaean literary tradition. As Iain Gardner has argued more recently, based on comparisons between the Kellis letters and the preserved fragments of Mani's *Epistles*, it is possible to discern a Manichaean epistolary tradition in these texts – one building on a Christian one, to be sure, but representing a distinctive development inaugurated by Mani himself.⁶⁰ In a preliminary article from 2006, on the 'letter of the Teacher' (now P.Kellis VII Copt. 61), Gardner argued that 'Mani's own *Epistles* acted as something of a model, which was mediated down through conscious imitation by members of the hierarchy'.⁶¹ In another article from 2013, he restated this argument.⁶² He showed that prayers found in the Kellis letters echo prayers known from the *Epistles* of Mani, pointed to how the Biblical terms, allusions, and citations found there reflect Manichaean interpretations of Christian concepts, and noted continuities between the Manichaean letters from Turfan and Kellis. He concluded:

60 A recent discussion highlights both the shared background of Manichaean and Christian cues, as well as Manichaean distinctiveness. One concerns a papyrus letter, P. Harr. 107, initially dated to the first half of the third century and considered one of the earliest Christian letters. In 2000, Gardner, Alanna Nobbs, and Malcolm Choat pointed to distinctive elements this letter shared with Kellis letters, which point rather to a Manichaean context (and so a re-dating to the late third/early fourth century). Iain Gardner, Alanna Nobbs, and Malcolm Choat, 'P. Harr. 107: Is This Another Greek Manichaean Letter?', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 131 (2000). Their argument was criticised by David G. Martinez, who pointed to parallels to (ps.-)Serapion's *Prayer-book*. Martinez did not dispute the distinctiveness of the letter, concluding rather: 'This modest rebuttal to the evidence of Gardner, Nobbs, and Choat (ibid.) does not refute their claim, but it does at least suggest for P. Harris 107 and the Kellis Manichaean texts that the phrases common to both could have their ultimate source in the language of liturgy and protective magic.' (David G. Martinez, 'The Papyri and Early Christianity', in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 602). Gardner recently restated the original argument and, adducing more evidence, further argued that the source of the phrases should be sought in Mani's letters. He also made some (tentative) remarks concerning a possible link between Serapion's prayers and the anti-Manichaean polemic ascribed to him ('Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 309–10). For a similar case, see the discussion surrounding a Kellis text, P.Kellis VI Gr. 98, which largely lacks Manichaean – or even Christian – terminology, but which has since been shown to be the 'daily prayer' attributed to Mani. We return to it in Chapter 7.

61 Iain Gardner, 'A Letter from the Teacher: Some Comments on Letter-Writing and the Manichaean Community of IVth Century Egypt', in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, ed. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 2006), 322.

62 Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 299–308.

Manichaean letter-writers in late antique Egypt exhibited their allegiance to that community through terminology, turns of phrase, allusions and interpretations that derived from Mani's own scriptures, together with the practice and usage of their teachers in that church. The pre-eminent source of authority was naturally Mani's own *Epistles*, which acted as a model that on occasion can be shown to have been directly acknowledged by these later authors.⁶³

Such characteristic turns of phrase, allusions, and interpretations (i.e. 'cues') include:

- Invocations of divinities with a particular Manichaean significance, such as the Paraclete and the Light Mind (see below).
- Allusions to Manichaean doctrine, such as the functions of the sun and the moon.
- The 'tripartite prayer' formula, as a rule directed to the 'God of Truth', for health in or protection of soul, spirit, and body, representing Mani's reworking of 1 Thess. 5:23,⁶⁴ often combined with a prayer for protection from evil and/or Satan.⁶⁵
- The 'elect and catechumen' formula, greeting 'those who give rest to you, both elect and catechumen'.⁶⁶

These, then, are the most secure markers of 'Manichaeanness'. Other stylistic features that are less distinctively Manichaean, but that are frequently used in the corpus of Manichaean letters and so potentially in imitation of Mani's *Epistles*, include:

- The 'embrace' formula, a prayer for a future embrace 'in the body', often with the addendum: 'so that (our/my) joy will be complete'.⁶⁷

63 Ibid., 308.

64 Gardner, Nobbs, and Choat, 'P. Harr. 107', 122–23 n.7–12; Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 299–300.

65 Iain Gardner, 'Mani's Letter to Marcellus: Fact and Fiction in the *Acta Archelai* Revisited', in *Frontiers of Faith. The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus*, ed. Jason D. BeDuhn and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 41; id., 'Some Comments on the Remnants of the Codex of Mani's *Epistles* in Middle Persian as Edited by W. Sundermann', in *Zur lichten Heimat: Studien zu Manichäismus, Iranistik und Zentralasienkunde im Gedenken an Werner Sundermann.*, ed. Team Turfanforschung (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 176.

66 'Rest' (Gr. ἀνάπαυσις, C. 𐭌𐭕𐭎𐭓) in the first part of the phrase could allude to Elect asceticism, for which, see e.g. BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 37. However, cf. the notes in *P.Kellis V*, 53.

67 See *P.Kellis VII*, 109–10.

- The ‘far but near’ formula, an expression of emotional closeness despite physical distance (‘every time I am far away, it is as if I am near’).
- Praises or ‘remembrances’ of good conduct, good reputation, and other virtues known from Manichaean discourse.⁶⁸

To these we can add two more. First, a reference to people belonging to this/our ‘word’ is found twice: in Matthaïos’ letter P.Kellis v Copt. 25 and Ammon’s P.Kellis v. Copt. 37. It is clear that this phrase is used to refer to the shared religious community in these instances, although to what degree it was derived from a distinctly Manichaean literary tradition awaits further investigation. Secondly, the phrase ‘whose name is sweet in my mouth’, which is frequently conferred by House 1–3 authors on their addressees. It may well be a distinctly Manichaean expression, as it could reflect the relationship between virtuous acts and sensory wellness found in Manichaean discourse (exemplified at Kellis in a word play found in the letter from the Teacher).⁶⁹ A dialectal feature, perhaps peculiar to the L4 variety of Coptic, cannot be excluded, although it has recently been argued that the L4 dialect itself could be peculiar to the Manichaean scribal tradition.⁷⁰ A supporting argument is that the expression occurs with a very high frequency in letters that contain other specifically Manichaean cues.⁷¹ It may be premature to categorise it as a typically Manichaean expression without an example from a

68 Gardner, ‘Once More on Mani’s *Epistles*’, 300–1. The editors of *P.Kellis V* list 21 terms for virtues and values found in the Coptic letters, such as love (ἀγάπη), righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), and peacefulness (ἡρεσῆ), virtues not restricted to the Manichaeans. *P.Kellis V*, 80; also *P.Kellis VII*, 35 n.2. The Coptic House 3 letters show some distinct features in the structure of their inner address, such as the placement of the recipient first without an object marker, but nothing suggests that this can be attributed to Mani. See Malcolm Choat, ‘Epistolary Formulae in Early Coptic Letters’, in *Actes du huitième congrès international d’études coptes*, ed. Nathalie Bosson and Anne Boud’hors (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 670.

69 The Teacher plays on the similarity between the words ⲥⲧⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ, ‘fragrance’, and ⲥⲧⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ, ‘good conduct’, *P.Kellis VII*, 33. For the bodily transformation ostensibly produced by the Manichaean regime, see e.g. keph. 104 (1 Ke. 258.4–25). For the connection between ‘fragrance’ and the divine Light, traceable to Syriac Manichaean texts, see Nils A. Pedersen and John M. Larsen, *Manichaean Texts in Syriac: First Editions, New Editions, and Studies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 226–29.

70 Choat note its possible origin as a dialectal expression, see Malcolm Choat, review of *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis Volume 2*, by Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, eds., *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2016). For the Coptic L* dialect as specific to a (Manichaean) scribal tradition, see Ewa D. Zakrzewska, ‘L* as a Secret Language: Social Functions of Early Coptic’, in *Christianity and Monasticism in Middle Egypt: Al-Minya and Asyut*, ed. Gabra Gawdat and Hany N. Takla (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2015).

71 P.Kellis v Copt. 15, 17, 19, 26, 37; P.Kellis VII Copt. 79, 82, 115. For its occurrence in letters without (legible) Manichaean cues, see P.Kellis VII 70, 93, 105, 112, 122.

Manichaean authority (e.g. one of Mani's *Epistles*). The well-preserved 'Father letters', attributable to Elect, do not employ it. However, it should probably be restored in a fragmented Coptic text which seems to belong to the same group, P.Kellis VII Copt. 63 (ll.2–3).

It remains true that the most explicit cues, those that invoke Manichaean ideas and divinities, are found in the chief above-mentioned Father letters, i.e. P.Kellis V Copt. 31–33 and P.Kellis I Gr. 63. Their cues include references to the Light Soul, the Light Mind, and the role of the sun and the moon as 'storehouses' of Light. However, in at least three of the letters, the authors are writing to Auditors.⁷² Conversely, the two most readily identifiable Elect in the archive, the Teacher and Apa Lysimachos, do not use easily identifiable Manichaean cues at all in their preserved letters.⁷³ An important caveat is that parts of these letters, notably the opening of Lysimachos' P.Kellis V Copt. 30, are lost or very fragmentary. However, the opening of the Teacher's letter is preserved, and reads:

The Teacher, and the brothers who are with me: To all the presbyters, my children, my loved ones; Ploutogenios and Pebo and all the others [...] according to their names; in the Lord, – greetings. [Now, every] time I am afar it is as if I am near. [I remember] the gentleness of your (pl.) sonship and the strength of your faith. I pray always to Jesus Christ: That he will guard you for me with this fragrance ((excellent conduct)) as you are [honoured] by everyone corresponding to [your] conduct [...]

P.Kellis VII Copt. 61, ll.1–13

Certainly, this passage contains a wealth of religious cues, including the 'far but near' formula and the virtues valued by the community (such as 'gentleness'). There is little reason to doubt that the Teacher was an important religious official, likely the highest Manichaean authority in Egypt; furthermore, Elect presbyters are chief among his recipients. Yet, there is no trace of the most explicit cues: of specifically Manichaean divinities or doctrines, of the 'elect and catechumen' formula, or of the tripartite prayer.

Finally, as evident from the discussion above, allusions to the specifically Manichaean literary tradition was not restricted to the letters of the Elect. In *P.Kellis VII*, the editors reckoned that, of the 110 Coptic documentary letters published, 23 have: 'reasonably explicit expressions of Manichaean faith, by

72 In P.Kellis V Copt. 31, 32, and P.Kellis I Gr. 63.

73 I.e. the Teacher's P.Kellis VII Copt. 61; Lysimachos' P.Kellis V Copt. 30 and P.Kellis I Gr. 67.

which we mean reference to “the Paraclete” or the “Light Mind” or suchlike.⁷⁴ In other words, about a fifth of the published Coptic letters from House 1–3 contain distinctly Manichaean cues.⁷⁵ That includes the letters of Elect, to be sure, but ‘reasonably explicit expressions’ are also found in all the different social circles of House 1–3, excluding only the Petros letters. Certain authors, such as Makarios and Horion, put on rather more elaborate displays than others. These two authors appear particularly engaged with religious affairs and with Elect authorities. However, also authors who are not known to have had such strong links utilise distinctly Manichaean cues. As we have seen in the analysis above, both Pamour III and Pekysis use the tripartite greeting formula, while Tekysis III employed a prayer for ‘to embrace him in the body, and my joy will be complete’, and closed with a rest-formula. Admittedly, their cues do not use direct references to Manichaean myths or beliefs.⁷⁶ Still, religious cues do not necessitate explication. They make allusion a virtue, and derive their impact on group identity from calling to mind the implicit, shared knowledge of a symbolic repertoire – in this case, one ascribed to Mani. The cue usage of the lay authors of House 3 clearly suffice to suggest a distinctly Manichaean identity.

74 *P.Kellis VII*, 13.

75 By my count, there are 24 letters – 23 Coptic (presumably the 23 noted by the editors, although they do not list them) and one Greek: *P.Kellis V* Copt. 14–17, 19, 22, 25, 29, 31–36; *P.Kellis VII* Copt. 61–62, 65, 71–72, 78, 85, 89, 115, and *P.Kellis I* Gr. 63. The expressions I count as ‘reasonably explicit’ are the ‘tripartite prayer’, references to ‘giving rest’ by Elect and/or Catechumen, invocations of the God of Truth, the Paraclete, the Light Mind, or the Light Soul, labels such as ‘children of righteousness’ or ‘fruit of the good tree’, and the ‘far but near’ formula. Several other letters deploy phrases that could, perhaps, be derived from the Manichaean epistolary tradition, but have not been proved as such, as discussed above. These include the expression ‘whose name is sweet in my mouth’, prayers for protection against Satan or ‘evil’, longing to ‘embrace each other in the body’, and perhaps the exclamation ‘service of God!’ (for the latter, see *P.Kellis V*, 80).

76 As noted by Brand. While acknowledging their likely debt to Mani, he writes in relation to the prayer formulas that they ‘hardly contain explicit and exclusive Manichaean language ... it is noteworthy that most of the explicit Manichaean terminology came from either the elect or from those who travelled with them.’ Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 152. Still, while the latter assertion is true for the Elect with regards to the ‘Father letters’, it does not hold for those of Apa Lysimachos or the Teacher. Nor can we know that the lay figures who use the most explicit Manichaean cues, Makarios and Horion, travelled with Elect, although they were clearly in close touch. On the other hand, Philammon II, travelling with Lysimachos in *P.Kellis VII* Copt. 82, employs less explicit cues.

5 The Light Mind at Kellis

One might still reasonably ask whether, or to what extent, the lay people were aware of more specifically ‘Manichaean’ traditions. It could, perhaps, be argued that the Auditors simply imitated Elect usage, without necessarily being conscious of the cues’ derivation. Direct imitation of Elect letters by the Auditors cannot be shown on present evidence, as Brand’s analysis of religious language in the Kellis letters has demonstrated,⁷⁷ but is not necessarily implausible. We may therefore consider whether the letters evince more ‘conscious’ engagement with Manichaean notions, as far as this can be determined from the evidence. Below, we therefore examine two cues – ‘the Light Mind’ and ‘the flourishing tree’ – used by lay adherents in order to throw light on this question.

Let us start with the Light Mind. In the ‘theology’ of the authoritative Manichaean tradition, this figure was considered a crucial divinity, responsible for some of the most important work of the forces of Light on earth.⁷⁸ It was he who, when invited by the soul, entered human bodies, chained the demons inhabiting them, and transformed ‘old humans’ into ‘new humans’. This process is described in detail in one of the longest chapters of the Berlin *Kephalaia*, keph. 38. In turn, this chapter shares numerous features with a text entitled *The Sermon on the Light Mind*, found in various languages at Turfan. Both keph. 38 and the *Sermon* must have drawn on material from a canonical work of Mani, probably his *Book of Giants*,⁷⁹ and so the importance of the Light Mind clearly goes back to the earliest period of the movement. In keph.

77 Brand includes a wider range of religious cues in his analysis, not limited to specifically ‘Manichaean’ ones, but finds no pattern indicating direct Elect-Auditor transmission. See Brand, ‘Speech Patterns’, 114, 118.

78 For a survey of its occurrences in the Medinet Madi texts, see Lindt, *Mythological Figures*, 154–69.

79 Werner Sundermann, *Der Sermon vom Licht-Nous: Eine Lehrschrift des östlichen Manichäismus Edition der parthischen und soghdischen Version* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992), 13–15. Mani’s *Picture-book* is said to have contained a painting of this divinity, and its iconography has been reconstructed from Uighur and Chinese art in Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, *Mani’s Pictures. The Didactic Images of the Manichaeans from Sasanian Mesopotamia to Uygur Central Asia and Tang-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 356–74. All these different traditions are concerned with evil – pre-eminently the supposedly perfect Elect. ‘The vexing experience that the powers of darkness keep rebelling against the New Man must have been of great concern for everyday life in Manichaean communities.’ Werner Sundermann, ‘Mani’s Book of the Giants and the Jewish Books of Enoch. A Case of Terminological Difference and What It Implies’, in *Manichaica Iranica. Ausgewählte Schriften von Werner Sundermann*, ed. Christiane Reck, et al. (Rome: Istituto italiano per l’Agricoltura e l’Oriente, 2001), 705.

38, the Light Mind is depicted as suppressing five evil qualities and inserting five good virtues into the five 'soul limbs' of the human body. By this work, the Light Mind 'shall set right the members of the soul; form and purify them, and construct a new man of them, a child of righteousness' (1 Ke. 96.25–27). The presence of the Light Mind, then, produces children of righteousness: Elect who, through their bodily discipline, themselves assist in freeing divine light from the earth. Another chapter, keph. 7, presents the Light Mind also as a soteriological divinity, saving souls through an emanation of his own called the 'Light Form', which met the soul on its release, fought off demons, and brought it safely to the other divinities of redemption (1 Ke. 36.9–11).

The Light Mind was, in other words, of great importance for the individual, helping to free their souls and transform their bodies into vehicles of salvation for themselves and others. At the same time, it played an analogous role for the social body of the Church. Keph. 7 describes the Light Mind as 'the father of the apostles, the eldest of all the Churches' (1 Ke. 35.21–22). This role it played through its emanation of the 'Apostle of Light', a spirit that inhabited human Apostles, who in turn chose the 'Church of the flesh' (1 Ke. 36.4–5).⁸⁰ The last of the Apostles, Mani, had chosen a 'good election, the Holy Church' (1 Ke. 16.3–4), which was to be the truly last Church.⁸¹ The Light Mind came to dwell in and guide this Church, binding it together. This communal function of the Light Mind goes back to Mani himself: in a letter-fragment preserved from the Medinet Madi *Epistle Codex*, given in preliminary translation by Gardner, Mani states that: 'He (Jesus Christ) is the one who can bless you all, my children, my loved ones: For he can place his love in your [... which] is the Light Mind'.⁸² Certainly, according to later authorities, it was Mani who placed the Light Mind in the Church.⁸³ Keph. 63 even states that the Light Mind had

80 For a different interpretation of the prophetology described in this passage, maintaining that 'Apostle' only applies to Mani, see de Albert de Jong, "A quodam persa exstiterunt": Re-Orienting Manichaean Origins, in *Empsychoi Logoi. Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst*, ed. Alberdina Houtman, Albert de Jong, and Magda Misset-van de Weg (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 97–98. However, Mani also speaks of previous 'Apostles' elsewhere, e.g. in keph. 122 (1 Ke. 295.5), and see also keph. 143 (1 Ke. 346–347), which relates explicitly that a single 'power' is behind all the Apostles.

81 See also keph. 151 (1 Ke. 371.31–372.10).

82 Provisional translation in Iain Gardner, "The Reconstruction of Mani's *Epistles* from Three Coptic Codices (Ismant el-Kharab and Medinet Madi)", in *The Light and the Darkness*, ed. Paul Mirecki and Jason D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 100. For 'love' as an injunction laid upon the hierarchy of the Church, see the epistle of Mani found at Kellis and preserved in P.Kellis v1 Copt. 54 (cited in Chapter 7).

83 A tradition found in the Medinet Madi *Acts Codex* stated that Mani had, on his deathbed, reassured a woman named Nushak that his 'Mind' would remain in the Church.

become the Church, the two having united through Mani's love and sacrifice.⁸⁴ Since salvation depended on the assistance of the Light Mind, and as the Light Mind and the Holy Church were one, rituals had to be performed within the Holy Church in order to be able to free souls.⁸⁵ In this way, Manichaean authorities depicted the Church they represented as the only locus of salvation.

This is the Light Mind as elaborated by church authorities. How does it relate to the divinity found in the letters at Kellis? While the evidence is sparse, there is to my mind good reasons to suspect that the Kellites knew some of the important characteristics of this divinity. The Light Mind occurs twice in the documentary texts. As already cited, Horion greets his 'brother' Horos as 'the son of righteousness, the good limb of the Light Mind' in P.Kellis v Copt. 15. His usage of 'limb of the Light Mind' as an identity label is, to my knowledge, not directly paralleled in the Medinet Madi corpus. And yet, his usage sits remarkably well with the identification of the Light Mind and the Church described above. Adherents are at times presented as 'limbs' of the Church.⁸⁶ When united, the Church and the Light Mind represented an extension of Mani himself, who is often found addressing his followers as 'my limbs' in the Berlin *Kephalaia*.⁸⁷ Members of the Church could therefore easily be considered limbs of the Light Mind. The association of the two labels, 'child of righteousness' and 'limb of the Light Mind', is, moreover, strongly reminiscent of the passage from keph. 38, where becoming a 'child of righteousness' is the result of being freed by the Light Mind. Horion's phrasing would seem to allude to a particular Manichaean conception of the relationship between 'child of righteousness', Light Mind, and membership of the 'Church'. This is supported by a similar expression used in P.Kellis v Copt. 31, written by an anonymous Elect, 'your Father who is in Egypt', to a group of lay women whom he describes as 'members (μελος) of the Holy Church, [daughters] of the Light

See Polotsky, Schmidt, and Ibscher, 'Ein Mani-Fund', 26–27. See also e.g. 1 Ke. 148.7–15; 2 Ps. 171.22, and CMC 17.2–7. It seems to represent a reworking of the union of Christ and Church in *Eph*.5.26–32, applied to Mani.

84 'These two, the Mind and the Church, a single body is also their likeness; because, again, the apostle too shall give his own self for his church. And again, due to this, the church too calls him "love"' (1 Ke. 156.10–14).

85 See keph. 38 (1 Ke. 79.13–81.20), keph. 87 (1 Ke. 217.6–11), and BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 206–7. The role of the Light Mind in making ritual effective is made explicit in keph. 75. See also Psalm 227, where the singers request to 'receive the Holy Seal (ϕραγισ ετογαβε) from the Mind of the Church' (2 Ps. 22.11).

86 By entering the Church, believers became 'consolidated limbs' (μελος εγτηκ), as a passage from keph. 149 (1 Ke. 357.9) puts it. See also SNC (Hom. 85.26).

87 E.g. 1 Ke. 34.6, 213.3, and 285.21.

Mind' (ll.2–4). This greeting provides an even more explicit allusion to the unity between Holy Church and Light Mind, if in this case by an Elect.

Next, let us consider the image of the 'good tree', which is also employed in two letters: P.Kellis v Copt. 22, by Makarios, and P.Kellis v Copt. 32, by a 'Father'. Makarios greets his addressees Maria, Psenpnouthes, and Kyria, as (amongst others): 'fruits of the flourishing tree, blossoms of love' (P.Kellis v Copt. 22, ll. 5–6). While ultimately derived from Jesus' parable of the two trees (e.g. Matt. 7.15–20), the tree was a malleable symbol within the Manichaean tradition, used for instance in connection with the Kingdom of Light or with cosmic wisdom. It also specifically related to the Church and its members. This usage is found already in Mani's own exposition of Jesus' parable, at least as presented in the second chapter of the Berlin *Kephalaia*. Mani here equates the 'good tree' with the God of Truth, his emanations, and the Land of Light, the 'bad tree' with Matter, Satan, and their realm, and describes the Churches established by the Apostles (Buddha, Zarathustra, Jesus, Paul, Mani) as fruits of the 'good tree' (1. Ke. 19.30–22; also e.g. 13.35–14.2).⁸⁸ Makarios' phrase resonates with, but is not directly comparable to, this notion: rather than Churches, he depicts fellow adherents as 'fruits'. However, his mode of expression finds its direct counterpart in certain psalms, such as Psalm 249, where the Church is called the 'good tree' and the individual believer its 'fruit' (2 Ps. 58.9–10). To this we can compare the use made of this expression by the Elect Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 32, writing to the Auditor Eirene. His usage is not directly derived from Mani's exposition of the parable either, but represents a different adaption again: he likens Eirene herself to the 'good tree' and her good deeds to 'fruits', a metaphor that is also found in the Manichaean psalmody.⁸⁹ Makarios' use of the 'good tree' metaphor, then, is clearly firmly rooted in the Manichaean symbolic repertoire. Still, he does not transmit it mechanically, but has selected a particular metaphor that suited his purpose, emphasising their shared Manichaean identity.

88 The metaphor likening the two trees to the two realms probably goes back to Mani; it is found in Severus of Antioch's 123rd *Cathedral Homily* (150.7–14), see Samuel N. C. Lieu, et al., eds., *CFM Series Subsidia: Greek and Latin Sources on Manichaean Cosmogony and Ethics* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 29. I owe this reference to one of my anonymous reviewers. For recent work on the source of Severus' citations, thought to be one of Mani's own works (perhaps *The Living Gospel*), see John C. Reeves, 'Further Textual Evidence Pertaining to the Enigmatic "Mani-Citations" of Severus of Antioch', in *Open Theology* 1 (2015).

89 For instance, 2 Ps. 40.2–3, 91.8–13, 175.8–9. Eirene's 'good deeds' are in turn linked with almsgiving; see the analysis in Chapter 8, Section 2.3.

Perhaps it could be objected that the cues can only be taken to reflect the engagement of their authors. We do not know with certainty what Horos I, Maria I, or the women addressed in P.Kellis v Copt. 31 and 32 read into labels such as 'limbs of the Light Mind' or 'child of righteousness'. Authors addressing such audiences often engage in scripting identities both for themselves and the recipients, and it is not a given that the latter accepted or understood such scripts on the same terms as the authors.⁹⁰ At the same time, it is highly unlikely that the addressees were unfamiliar with or disapproved of these scripts in the present instances. Horos I himself shared in organising the agape, clearly a religious obligation. Maria I's co-recipient, Kyria I, was in possession of religious books (Mani's *Epistles* likely among them), and Makarios' appeal to Maria I's (or Kyria I's) status as 'catechumen', discussed above, shows that he took it for granted that she shared in a broadly similar understanding of this role. The women who received P.Kellis v Copt. 31–32 were extolled for previous services to the Church, and the 'Fathers' who wrote to them clearly had reasonable expectations that they would respond positively to these cues.

The above analysis is intended to show that, while rooted in Christian texts and traditions, the religious cues of the Kellites have a more immediate background in a distinct Manichaean symbolic repertoire, which they adapt consciously in their own writings. Furthermore, they are tied to clusters of metaphors associated with the community itself, the 'Holy Church', and strongly suggest that the writers are signalling affiliation with the same authoritative tradition that produced the Medinet Madi texts: the 'Holy Church of the Paraclete', as it is called in Medinet Madi Psalm 222. This psalm has, in fact, been partly preserved at Kellis. As we shall see in Chapter 7, the Pamour family had access to explicitly Manichaean literature, which was embedded in the ritual life of the community and which could well have served as pools from which these authors drew to formulate their cues. We cannot, of course, take this to mean that they were familiar with the whole scheme of Manichaean myths and divinities, with the detailed depiction of the Light Mind's role or with Mani's exposition on the 'good tree' as found in the *Kephalaia*. Nonetheless, the cues do show conscious engagement with a distinctly Manichaean tradition, on which the lay people at Kellis drew to articulate their religious identity.

90 See Rebillard, 'Late Antique Limits', 294–95.

6 Conclusions

To conclude, in the course of this chapter we have seen how the people of House 1–3 considered their religious identity to be salient beyond what we may term specifically religious settings. The cues which they used to invoke this shared identity drew on a distinctly Manichaean symbolic repertoire, and their usage should lead us to conclude that a distinctly Manichaean identity played a role – even a comparatively important role – in the everyday lives of the House 3 families. Certainly, this is not to say that Manichaean identity was their ‘primary’ identity. It was neither uniform nor all-encompassing. There would have remained many occasions on which it would not have intruded, and, on those occasions it did, the extent to which it was given saliency would have varied, both on the individual level and between different subgroups.⁹¹ We may catch a glimpse of such internal variation in the letters from House 3: although the family grouping of Pamour/Pekysis did utilise religious cues in a variety of settings, and clearly considered their Manichaean affiliation important, they were less immersed in its vocabulary than the family grouping of Maria/Makarios.⁹² However, these points do not negate the conclusion above. By putting too much stress on individualised appropriation, we risk losing sight of the significance, and, indeed, attraction, that shared identity could hold, also among the laity.

91 BeDuhn's recent study on Augustine's and his mentor Faustus' different approaches to Manichaean identity provides a good example of individualised adaptations. See Jason D. BeDuhn, 'Am I a Christian? The Individual at the Manichaean-Christian Interface', in *Group Identity and Religious Individuality in Late Antiquity*, ed. Éric Rebillard and Jörg Rüpke (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015).

92 For a brief discussion of this variation between family circles, see Chapter 6, Section 2.1.

Manichaeism Networks: The Social Networks of the Laity

In this chapter, we turn from individual expressions of religious identity to the question of the social groups in which Manichaean affiliation can be traced. The previous chapter has already given some indications as to in what circles we find it, as we considered Manichaean identity within the Pamour family, whose members were traders, camel drivers, and weavers. However, the overlap between the religious network and the family's other networks remains to be explored. Was Manichaean affiliation restricted to certain social contacts or contexts, or did it permeate different networks and types of social relations? At what other 'social sites', to use the vocabulary of David Frankfurter, do we find Manichaeans? And how widespread was it within Kellis? Below, we examine Manichaean affiliation within several different networks tied to the Pamour family: within the family, between neighbours and colleagues, and in patron – client relationships. We also go beyond the Pamour family, attempting to see how widespread it was in the village at large. Finally, we consider the nature of the network: how Manichaean affiliation may – or may not – have affected it in relation to adherents' interaction with their social surroundings.

1 The Social Composition of Manichaeism

Before turning to these questions, we need to look at previous scholarship on the movement's social character. Scholars have often proposed hypotheses, or made assumptions, concerning Manichaeism's size and composition in the course of explaining its success – and failure – in the Roman Empire. In contrast to the early Jesus movement, which is usually presented as originating in the countryside but achieving lasting success in the cities,¹ Manichaeism was at home in the cities from its inception. Mani preached in several of the urban

1 A recent work discussing (and challenging) this 'urban thesis' of Christianity's success is Thomas A. Robinson, *Who Were the First Christians? Dismantling the Urban Thesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

centres of the Sasanian Empire, not least in the capital, Ctesiphon itself.² Among the social groups that his mission is assumed to have appealed to, three have long been considered key to the movement's success – all, at least in the Roman Empire, linked to life in the cities: political elites, merchants, and intellectuals.

Regarding political elites, Manichaean accounts themselves often hail the support of influential backers at important moments in the history of the Church, depicting Mani and his disciples converting nobles and potentates in the Sasanian realm. In turn, this has been taken to indicate a conscious missionary strategy by modern scholars.³ Zooming in on the Roman orbit, the only patron the Manichaeans are known to have claimed for their Church was queen Zenobia of Palmyra.⁴ Tardieu argued that the support of Zenobia might account for the arrival of the mission of Adda in Egypt, which he dated to c.270, when the short-lived Palmyrene Empire brought this area under its control.⁵ However, the argument has not won general acceptance.⁶ Otherwise, no supporter of major political influence is known with certainty from the Roman Empire.⁷

The importance of merchants, on the other hand, is well established. It has even been claimed, with some exaggeration, that 'merchant and Manichaean must for some time have been practically synonymous'.⁸ Merchants, too, figure in literary depictions, both Manichaean and anti-Manichaean ones,⁹ and

2 Although it should be pointed out that one of the first locations where we meet him after his break with the baptists, according to the CMC (11), is Naser, a village on the outskirts of the capital.

3 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 58–59; Paul C. Dilley, 'Religious Intercrossing in Late Antique Eurasia: Loss, Corruption, and Canon Formation', *Journal of World History* 24, no. 1 (2013): 62ff.

4 In particular, see the leaf of the *Acts Codex* (P 15997) provisionally published in Nils A. Pedersen, 'A Manichaean Historical Text', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 119 (1997).

5 Tardieu, 'Les manichéens en Égypte', 10.

6 A more indirect role of the Palmyrenes is suggested by Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 35.

7 A possible exception is Sebastianus, *dux* of Egypt (356–358) and a general who fought with Valens at Adrianopolis, whom Athanasius accused of being a Manichaean. The truth value of this accusation is doubted by many scholars, and strongly rejected by Tardieu, 'Sebastianus étiqueté comme manichéen', *Klio* 70, no. 2 (1988).

8 Maenchen-Helfen (1951), cited in Peter Brown, 'The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 59, no. 1/2 (1969): 102.

9 For Manichaean texts, see CMC 144–45, and P 15997 (pl.99, l.14) in Pedersen, 'A Manichaean Historical Text'. For anti-Manichaean texts, see e.g. the portrayal by Epiphanius of Mani as recipient of all his ideas from the 'Saracen' merchant Scythianus (*Panarion* 3.66.1.8–4.1); Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 227–31).

mercantile metaphors were a staple of Manichaean poetical imagery.¹⁰ Sogdian traders were central for the spread of the religion in Central Asia, and Syrian merchants have been suggested as facilitating its spread to Egypt.¹¹ Peter Brown took the fifth-century decline in Rome's eastern trade as one important factor in the simultaneous decline of Manichaeism.¹² Anecdotal evidence is supplied by Augustine's biographer, Possidius, who relates that Augustine once converted a Manichaean merchant, Firmus, through a providentially side-tracked sermon.¹³ However, Manichaeism is certainly not the only religious group whose dissemination can be connected to trade routes and merchant activity, and so one may question the extent to which Manichaeism presented a special case in this regard.¹⁴

Finally, the somewhat nebulous group of 'urban intellectuals' has been seen as an important source of Roman adherents. The chief example is the circle of Augustine, but the philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, who wrote not long after the movement had arrived in Roman Egypt, relates that fellow-philosophers had taken an interest in the teachings. Émile G. de Stoop even described Manichaeism as primarily influential among intellectuals, while Lim argued that 'Manichaeans' so-called may be better seen as philosophically inclined Christians, sharing an interest in Mani's books and ideas.¹⁵

Alongside appealing to these mostly urban-based elites, it has been widely assumed that Manichaeism mainly made inroads in previously Christianised environments, among adherents of (some form of) Christianity. Already Ephrem the Syrian claimed that Mani took his adherents from Marcion, who in turn had seduced people from the 'Catholic' Church.¹⁶ Adolf von Harnack, writing of gnostic movements in general, asserted that '[t]he principles and doctrines of these Gnostic communities were such that it was not easy for them to gain any adherents except where some Christianity had gone before them. This is true of the Manichaean movement in the fourth century.'¹⁷ Similarly, Brown

10 See Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*, 82–95.

11 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 69–78; Guy G. Stroumsa, 'Monachisme et marianisme chez les Manichéens d'Égypte', *Numen* 29, no. 2 (1982), 186.

12 Brown, 'Diffusion of Manichaeism', 102.

13 *Vita Augustini* 15, cited and translated in Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 142–43.

14 See for instance Christianity's spread through merchant networks on the Red Sea. Eivind H. Seland, 'Early Christianity in East Africa and Red Sea/Indian Ocean Commerce', *African Archaeological Review* 31, no. 4 (2014).

15 Émile G. de Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion du manichéisme dans l'empire romain* (Ghent: Université de Gand, 1909), 6–7, 42–51; Lim, 'nomen manichaeorum', 160.

16 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 44.

17 Adolf von Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries. Vol. 2*, trans. James Moffatt, 2nd ed. (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 307–8.

claimed that ‘traditional pagans seem always to have regarded the Manichees with horror; but the Christians were less certain.’¹⁸ He took the majority of the movement’s Auditors to have come from the ‘fringe’ of Christian communities (at least by the later period). Still, this view has seen criticism, and does not capture all the available evidence.¹⁹ Furthermore, while Manichaeans have been seen as mainly appealing to Christians, it has conversely been assumed that they did not gain much ground in areas that were ‘orthodox’. Harnack, as we saw above, emphasised recruitment from (other) Gnostic groups. De Stoop opined that while Christians influenced by Greek or ‘Oriental’ ideas, and some pagans, found Manichaeism attractive, Catholics were impervious.²⁰ In part, the difficulties of Manichaean missionaries have been associated with the growth of Christian ecclesiastical power.²¹ At times, however, it has also been linked to the notion that Manichaean teachings were too complex – or ‘strange’ – to make headways among non-elite groups, or groups not already familiar with Christian thought. William H. C. Frend noted how Manichaean asceticism and fervour attracted members from different classes, but that its overly complicated doctrines held it back from becoming a mass movement, ‘especially when compared to the simplicity of orthodox Christianity’.²² Similarly, parts of its doctrinal tenets could be seen as a limiting factor. Farmers made up the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, and would (one might assume) have little interest in Manichaeism, considering its hostile view of their occupation – as opposed to for instance merchants, who could be drawn to the status the movement allotted them.

This elitist mission, combined with difficult doctrines, have been taken to signify that the Manichaeans were unable to appeal to the general populace whose support would have been necessary to build a broad movement. It is further argued that, as a consequence of their small following, local Manichaean

18 Brown, ‘Diffusion of Manichaeism’, 98.

19 Jason D. BeDuhn (*Augustine’s Manichaean Dilemma I*, 107) has noted that several of Augustine’s Manichaean associates – Honoratius, Nebridius, and Faustus himself – had all been ‘pagan’ before they converted to Manichaeism. Pedersen (*Demonstrative Proof*, 158–71) has pointed out that Titus of Bostra’s treatise against the Manichaeans was addressed to both a Christian and a ‘pagan’ audience.

20 De Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion*, 32. The view of Manichaeism as a ‘parasite’ on Christian or gnostic hosts has been criticised in Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 93–94.

21 So for instance Brown, ‘Diffusion of Manichaeism’, 101.

22 W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 456 (and see 568–69). Robin Lane Fox, on the other hand, questioned how Mani’s ‘bizarre “myth” could ever appeal to people in very high society’, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London: Viking, 1986), 570.

communities were largely organised into small, tight-knit units, or ‘cells’ (translating the Latin *conventicula*), of lay believers who serviced the itinerant Elect.²³ We return to the question of the movement’s organisation in Kellis in Chapters 8 and 9; in the following, we focus on size and social composition, although it should be noted that the two questions are related. If the community in Kellis was restricted to a particular household or occupational group – for instance the extended Pamour family, – such a cell organisation would be the only option available to them. But as we shall see, the Kellis evidence challenges the depiction of Manichaeism as a movement of limited appeal. Here, at least, the group had a more diversified and widespread dissemination than is often allowed for.

2 Manichaean Social Networks

Considering the emphasis on urban elites and environments, it comes as something of a surprise to find Manichaeans settling in a provincial village at Empire’s edge. Their presence in this remote location has at times been explained by persecution. Samuel N. C. Lieu suggested that the first Manichaeans at Kellis were missionaries who had fled Diocletian’s persecution in 302, arguing that ‘[t]he Dakhleh oasis offered more shelter for the sect, probably because it was less overseen by imperial administrators and also less Christianised.’²⁴ He noted that House 3 could have functioned as a safe house and centre for proselytising for the beleaguered group. This might receive support from the Syriac texts and translation tools found at the site, which could imply that Syrian missionaries were present here. However, as Franzmann has shown, the bilingual texts found at Kellis were not the products of native Syriac speakers but rather tools for Egyptians learning to write Syriac.²⁵ To this it might be added that the use of Syriac was not restricted to the community’s earliest phase: a letter from the mid-fourth century mentions a ‘brother’ Ison who had been taught to read Syriac (P.Kellis I Gr. 67). Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 2, a Roman military unit had its home in the Oasis, based just

23 See e.g. de Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion*, 34ff; Brown, ‘Diffusion of Manichaeism’, 97; Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 661; Lieu, ‘Precept and Practices’, 78–79; BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 260. For a criticism of the term ‘cell’ (but not the underlying ‘cell behaviour’), see Lim, ‘Unity and Diversity’, 231.

24 Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 98.

25 Majella Franzmann, ‘The Syriac-Coptic Bilinguals from Ismant el-Kharab (Roman Kellis): Translation Process and Manichaean Missionary Practice’, in *Il Manicheismo. Nuove prospettive della ricerca*, ed. A. van Tongerloo and L. Cirillo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 120–22.

outside of Trimithis; there was no lack of Roman power there. Other explanations for its dissemination in Kellis and in the Oasis must be sought.

The Pamour family must necessarily be our starting point for exploring both the spread and social character of the Kellis community. Below, we examine the role of Manichaean affiliation in four different social sites – family, neighbourhood, trade, and patronage, each with an associated network. When considering the religious affiliation of actors in these networks, we should be careful not to take a ‘guilt by association’ approach. Presence in the family’s network alone is not enough to establish an actor as co-adherent, and so each context has to be examined carefully.

2.1 *Familial Networks*

If Manichaeans arrived as refugees they certainly did not remain so: by the mid-fourth century they were firmly entrenched in local society. The households of local families would have been particularly important sites of religious activity. In a recent study drawing on the Kellis papyri, BeDuhn has situated the day-to-day forms of Manichaean ritual in the domestic, familial setting.²⁶ Individual lay practices, such as daily prayers and religious study, would have been centred in the domestic sphere. BeDuhn also argues that the Kellis evidence attests to a domestic context also for activities such as psalm singing and readings of scripture, and the receiving of itinerant Elect into lay homes. Yet the domestic character of Manichaeism should not be exaggerated. BeDuhn himself notes that the situation in Kellis may have been more complex.²⁷ As we shall see in Chapters 8–9, there is strong evidence for more institutionalised forms of worship in the village, including the existence of a communal gathering place.

Rodney Stark has suggested that religious affiliation primarily moves through pre-existing social networks; a ‘structure of direct and intimate interpersonal attachments’.²⁸ In light of this proposition, it is likely that familial ties also provided a primary locus for the spread of adherence, especially considering the density of the Pamour family network we saw in Chapter 4. The evidence from the letter contents confirms this supposition. As we saw in the last chapter, distinctly Manichaean cues can be found in all the House 3 circles, barring only the Petros letters, in letters by key members such as the siblings Pekysis, Pamour III, and Tekysis III, and Pamour’s father-in-law, Makarios. Most of the other family members were certainly also adherents. Psais III, Maria I and II, Partheni II, Psenpnouthes I, Kyria I, Philammon II, Horos I, Tehat,

26 BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’.

27 Ibid., 261.

28 Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 20. See also Harland, *Associations*, 38–44.

Theognostos, and Andreas are all greeted with distinctly Manichaean cues, and those of whom we have preserved letters invoke shared religious affiliation, even if mostly using less explicit cues.

Naturally, adherence could vary between family members and between family groups. The strongest expressions of Manichaean identity are found in the circle of Pamour III's in-laws, Maria/Makarios.²⁹ The difference between this circle and the Pamour/Pekysis circle has recently been attributed to a lessening of faith in the later generation,³⁰ but this hypothesis is not, to my mind, tenable. The brothers Matthaios and Piene, who used elaborate cues and were closely affiliated with the Elect, were of the same generation as Pamour III and Pekysis. Moreover, the latter's younger brother, Psais III, is found copying religious texts on behalf of the community in a letter dated c.370 (see Chapter 7, Section 3.2). We might, moreover, contrast the only preserved letter of 'father' Psais II, P.Kellis VII Copt. 110, which does not utilise Manichaean or other religious cues at all – on the basis of which one might argue that Manichaean faith became *more* important in the succeeding generation of his sons. Linguistic variation between familial circles, whether due to differences in educational level, priorities, or opportunities to engage, provides a more likely explanation than generational differences.

The importance of family bonds is not least seen in the crucial role that women played in Kellis. While most – but not all – of the authors using religious cues were men, as were the majority of authors more generally, a large percentage of the recipients (especially of Coptic letters) are women.³¹ The importance of women in economic terms has already been explored for figures such as Tehat, Partheni II, and Tekysis III. These and other women are also found to have played

29 As it is possible that Pamour's wife originated in the Nile Valley (P.Kellis I Gr. 30, see Chapter 3, Section 1.1), one might speculate that their marriage was meant to strengthen bonds between Manichaeans in the Oasis and the Valley.

30 The editors of *P.Kellis VII* noted: 'Manichaean faith is vitally alive and a central concern for Makarios and his sons; in contrast, whilst there is still evidence for it in the Pamour documents, it is rarely so overt. Whether this is a result of increased circumspection, or a diminishing of faith, we simply cannot say.' *P.Kellis VII*, 41. More strongly, Mattias Brand has argued: 'When we compare the letters of Makarios and Pamour III, despite all shortcomings of such a comparison, it seems that the younger generation used less elements from a Manichaean repertoire, indicating that they might have been less deeply involved in the community.' Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 164.

31 The editors reckon that the total Coptic letters where a woman is either author (including co-authorship) or primary recipient constitute, roughly, more than 40% (the majority being recipients). See *P.Kellis VII*, 13–14.

a vital part in the religious life of the community.³² Tehat was closely involved in organising almsgiving to the Elect, as we will explore in Chapter 8. Maria I was responsible for practical arrangements surrounding the religious education of Matthaios before he went to the Valley, as well as for supporting Makarios and Piene there. While Maria I's support was mediated by Makarios, other women, such as Eirene, were addressed directly by the Elect for contributions (P.Kellis v Copt. 32). One Elect author even addressed the women of Kellis as a collective, praising their great piety while at the same time requesting alms (P.Kellis v Copt. 31). Women were not restricted to practical arrangements: they also had leading roles in religious contexts. In P.Kellis v Copt. 25, Matthaios laments the death of his 'great mother' in the Valley who had died without receiving a proper gathering by the 'brotherhood'; she had clearly been a woman of high regard. Mother Kyria I kept a large copy of the *Epistles* (likely those of Mani, see Chapter 7), which Makarios requests Maria I to retrieve and send in P.Kellis V Copt. 19. It is unlikely that Kyria would have kept the book and, as Makarios implies, been unwilling to part with it, if she did not have use for it, and so she may well have been literate. Religious affiliation was clearly deeply embedded in the whole extended family.

2.2 *Neighbourhood Networks*

In Chapter 4, we were introduced to the neighbours visible in texts found in House 2 of the House 1–3 complex: the carpenters Tithoes I son of Petesis and Ploutogenes son of Pataias. The finds of a Manichaean literary text in House 2, P.Kellis I Copt. 8, should itself alert us to the likelihood that the circles of Tithoes I and Ploutogenes shared in the religious community of the Pamour family. To this it should be added that many of the Manichaean literary texts found in House 3 were written on wooden boards, a fact that may well have had something to do with these two men's background as carpenters.³³ Furthermore, for Tithoes I, evidence from the letters can be adduced in support. Tithoes I relayed greetings to his son Samoun from 'brother' Psenpnouthes and 'sister' Kyria in P.Kellis v Copt. 12; a couple who were clearly Manichaean Auditors. Although not certain, a religious context could well have framed Tithoes I's use

32 For more extensive treatments of the role of women at Kellis and in Manichaeism in general, see the studies of Majella Franzmann, 'Tehat the Weaver: Women's Experience of Manichaeism in Fourth-Century Roman Kellis', *Australian Religion Studies Review* 20, no. 1 (2007); ead., 'Manichaean Almsgiving'; Scopello, *Femme, gnose et manichéisme*; J. Kevin Coyle, 'Prolegomena to a Study of Women in Manichaeism', in *Manichaeism and its legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Johannes van Oort, 'Manichaean Women in Augustine's Life and Works', in *Vigiliae Christianae* 69 no. 3 (2015).

33 For Manichaean texts on wooden boards, see T.Kellis II Copt. 1–7.

of kinship terms here. More revealing is the relationship between his ‘daughter’ Tapsais II and the Pamour family. P.Kellis VII Copt. 116, a letter she authored to Psais III – where she also greets her father Tithoes I – invokes shared religious belief, using what might, albeit uncertainly, even be a distinctly Manichaean expression.³⁴ Tapsais II is greeted in letters with distinct Manichaean cues; for instance in P.Kellis VII Copt. 65, where Pamour III employed the tripartite prayer. Similarly, in P.Kellis VII Copt. 86, whose distinctively Manichaean opening is partly preserved,³⁵ the legible part of the greeting section reads: ‘greet the neighbourhood (ΤΡΑΟΥΗ) for me [...] Tapshai’ (ll.8–9).

Considering this evidence, the Tithoes family can, with a fair amount of certainty, be taken to have shared the religious affiliation of their next-door neighbours. Their level of commitment may, moreover, have been high. In P.Kellis I Gr. 12, Samoun requests his father to send his son, Tithoes II, to a monastery in order to learn linen weaving – and in his response in P.Kellis V Copt. 12, his father affirmed that the boy has indeed been sent with ‘father’ Pebok. It is likely that Tithoes II’s apprenticeship at the monastery should be seen within a Manichaean framework, a point to which we return in Chapter 9.

2.3 *Occupational Networks*

Given the strong links often assumed between Manichaeism and merchants, the Pamour family’s involvement in textile trade is perhaps not particularly surprising, but how trading and religious affiliation intertwined needs further explication. Communication networks certainly played a part. In the early fourth century, Pamour I sent tunics to Hermopolis, while his neighbour Horos son of Mersis drove his camels to the same city. A few decades later, Pamour III, Pekysis, and Philammon II are all found travelling to Hermopolis and neighbouring Antinoopolis in order to trade, showing continuity in the family’s dealings. Hermopolis featured a pluralistic religious landscape in this period: the ancient temple of Thoth (Hermes) was still active, the city hosted a vibrant pagan intellectual scene³⁶ and a Jewish quarter. A Christian tradition preserves the story of a Manichaean Elect active in this city, around the end of

34 The exclamation ‘the service of God!’ (ΤΟΥΘΟΥΤΕ ΉΠΠΟΥΤΕ). See *P.Kellis V*, 80.

35 For some remarks, see *P.Kellis VII*, 145.

36 Although less so than in previous centuries; see Matthews, *Journey of Theophanes*, 15–30. It has been suggested, based on finds of literary papyri, that Hellenic literature remained in use here longer than for instance at Oxyrhynchus; see Peter van Minnen and Klaas A. Worp, ‘The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Hermopolis’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 34, no. 2 (1993): 182–83. Such statistics are difficult to evaluate, however; see in general Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

the fourth century.³⁷ Antinoopolis was for a time the seat of the Pamour family's best documented Elect associate, Apa Lysimachos, and the Teacher seems to have visited this city regularly.³⁸ They also had contacts further south, in and from Lycopolis – the city of the Neoplatonist Alexander, who wrote against Mani about three-quarters of a century earlier, and the area in which the CMC appears to have been found.³⁹

The traders thus had long-standing ties to important centres in Upper Egypt where Manichaeism had arrived at an early date. Still, the religious affiliation of the earliest generation of traders, Pamour I and Philammon I, is unknown. Pamour I does not use religious cues at all in his only preserved letter, P.Kellis I Gr. 66. A letter that may be ascribed to Philammon I, P.Kellis I Gr. 65, contains a broadly monotheistic, possibly Christian invocation: 'And if God bids you to save us from trouble and we survive, I shall repay your favour in full. And even if God does not, I shall do you the favour' (ll.10–15). Even if the ascription of this letter to Philammon I is correct (concerning which doubts remain), it would still not prove a Manichaean affiliation: a mainstream Christian context is possible, and would be in line with the common assumption that Manichaeism first spread among Christians.⁴⁰ At the same time, an encounter with the movement in the period c.300–325 is in itself not unlikely, in light of the family's strong affiliation by the mid-fourth century.

As we saw in Chapter 4, the Pamour family of the mid-fourth century were part of a larger network of traders and caravan-drivers, which included figures such as Horion, Psenpnouthes I, Papnouthes, Lammon, Psais Tryphanes, Loudon II and Timotheos son of Loudon I, and Ammon the storehouse-owner. The affiliation of Horion and Psenpnouthes I with Manichaeism is certain. Ammon, too, can confidently be identified as an adherent: in P.Kellis v Copt. 37, he expresses sorrow because someone has mistreated 'those of this word' (ll.19–20) – a clear invocation of shared religious sentiment, to which can be compared Matthaios' similar expression in P.Kellis v Copt. 25 (see below). He also adds an appeal to God for an improvement of their situation. Papnouthes and Lammon are greeted in Makarios' P.Kellis v Copt. 19, and the former adds his own greetings to Pekysis' P.Kellis VII Copt. 78, which features a

37 *Historia monachorum* 10.30–35, cited and translated in Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 121.

38 See P.Kellis v Copt. 21, 25, 29, and see *P.Kellis V*, 193.

39 P.Kellis v Copt. 19, P.Kellis VII Copt. 81. It should be noted that we cannot be sure that Alexander was actually based there when he wrote his treatise. For the CMC's origin, see Koenen, 'Zur Herkunft', 240–41.

40 Even a 'pagan' context cannot be entirely excluded, see Choat and Nobbs, 'Monotheistic Formulae'.

Manichaean prayer. As for Psais Tryphanes, his letter P.Kellis I Gr. 73 contains no overt religious cues, although he does speak of ‘the season of the new wine’ (τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ γλεύκος) and praises Pamour’s ‘zeal’ (οἶδα γὰρ τὴν σὴν σπουδὴν) (ll.22–24) – both of which may have religious undertones, but which could simply relate to industriousness in business.⁴¹ Yet he is also respectfully styled ‘father’ in Pekysis’ pious letter P.Kellis VII Copt. 78, and probably authored P.Kellis VII Copt. 112, which contains both the broadly Christian expression ‘in the Lord’ and the more peculiar ‘whose name is sweet in my mouth’. It is more likely than not that Psais Tryphanes and his family shared the Pamour family’s religious affiliation.

The above should suffice to indicate that Manichaean affiliation was widespread in these trading circles. How it spread remains unknown. Concrete evidence is unfortunately absent. Yet, some hypotheses may be broached. In Chapter 4, it was proposed that the traders constituted an informal association or a ‘trust network’, giving rise to strong interpersonal attachments. Occupational associations in the Roman period were, as a rule, also cultic associations, and there was in general a close relationship between religious observance and economic cooperation. Recent scholarship of the ancient economy has stressed how informal institutions, such as shared mental models, help to facilitate trade.⁴² This may have made it more difficult for new religious practices to gain entry to such networks, but could also have given added impetus for spread once initial ‘converts’ had been made.

The precise venue for this initial spread is hard to gauge. Did an intrigued member of the trading community take colleagues to a Manichaean gathering? Were Elect preachers involved, or did they only appear later? Did the traders meet business associates in the Valley who in turn introduced them to the movement? The Pagan philosopher Celsus, writing about two centuries earlier, accused Christians of luring gullible people ‘to the wooldresser’s shop, or to the cobbler’s or the washerwoman’s shop, that they may learn perfection.’⁴³ Despite Celsus’ disparaging and polemical intent, it should not be ruled out that for instance textile workshops may have functioned as venues for religious dissemination, and that women such as Tehat, or her counterparts in the Nile Valley, played an important role in introducing colleagues and clientele

41 It is unlikely, however, that it refers to new wine exported from Oasis to Valley, as suggested in *P.Kellis I*, 192.

42 Wim Broekaert, ‘Going Mental: Culture, Exchange and Compromise in Rome’s Trade with the East’, in *Sinews of Empire: Networks in the Roman Near East and Beyond*, ed. Håkon F. Teigen and Eivind H. Seland (Oxbow: Oxbow, 2017), 9–13.

43 *C. Cels.* 3.55, trans. Chadwick, cited in Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 51.

to the movement, although this begs the question of their affiliation in turn. One of Stark's axioms, that the religiously inactive are often susceptible to new religious movements, may be considered.⁴⁴ Certainly, it must not be taken to mean that native cultic practice in general was deficient, dominated by unsatisfied 'consumers', as Stark posited,⁴⁵ but zealous Manichaean adherents, such as Makarios, may well have appeared persuasive to people who were less religiously engaged. This may well have led them to follow suit – especially if he or she could depend on the arguments and authority of 'holy men', such as Apa Lysimachos.

At the same time, while trade concerns are prominent in the letters, it should not blind us to the fact that Manichaean affiliation was not restricted to traders. It is unlikely that all the households greeted by Makarios and Matthaïos (for which, see below) were trading families. The community included weavers and camel drivers, roles that admittedly overlapped with trading in the case of the Pamour family; it extended to the neighbouring carpenters, and to local farmers, such as the tenant farmer Kome (see below). Elias, an agent for a landlord, may well have been an affiliate, although the evidence is circumstantial.⁴⁶ The influential figures of Pebos and his brother Horion, sons of Tithoes, may be identifiable with co-adherents found in the Coptic material, although again the evidence is not conclusive, as we saw in Chapter 4. We can add that Matthaïos, writing from Antinoopolis in P.Kellis v Copt. 25, counted doctors (ἰατροὶ) among his friends (l.40). The city housed a medical school, and so Matthaïos – if we take his assertion at face value – had gained friends in what one may loosely term intellectual circles.⁴⁷ The Elect Apa Lysimachos, too, was based here, and Matthaïos otherwise reports on the doings of him and the religious community in this letter. It is therefore tempting to suggest that he could have come to know these doctors through shared Manichaean affiliation. Going by the account of Alexander of Lycopolis, the

44 Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 19.

45 For a critique, see Leif E. Vaage, *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and The Rise of Christianity* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006). See also Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack, and Rodney Stark* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2010), 47–63.

46 His interlocutor Psais, who invokes shared religious affiliation in P.Kellis I Gr. 68, could well be one of the Psais' of the Pamour family. Furthermore, the name of 'lord father' Bemophanes in P.Kellis I Gr. 75 could contain an allusion to the Manichaean Bema festival, where a raised platform (βήμα) was built to celebrate the appearance (φάνης) and future return of Mani. The name is to my knowledge unknown elsewhere in Egypt; a search in Trismegistos gave no other occurrences (5/2/2017), and see *P.Kellis I*, 197.

47 See C. H. Roberts, *The Antinoopolis Papyri. Part I*. (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1950), 70.

religion had piqued the interest of the literati of Upper Egypt at an early date. Doctors were not in the upper elite of Roman society, but many would have been literate, and medical professionals may well have been drawn to the movement, perhaps intrigued by its dietetic theories.⁴⁸ To be sure, this remains a hypothesis that cannot be conclusively proven. It remains at any rate the case that Manichaeism at Kellis was not restricted to traders.

2.4 *A Notable's Patronage Network*

Another social site where religious affiliation can be detected is the network of the influential local notable Pausanias. Along with his associate Pisistratos, he is in fact the earliest identifiable actor of Manichaean persuasion in the Kellis material. It has already been argued that he should be identified with the ex-magistrate Pausanias son of Valerios, active in Kellis c.320–340. Evidence for Pausanias' religious affiliation comes in the form of P.Kellis I Gr. 63, a letter he and Pisistratos received from a certain 'father' N.N. It contains elaborate phrasings and Manichaean cues, in response to gifts they had provided for the author, his brothers, and a certain 'lord [...]ryllos', an act of charity that should be understood within the framework of Manichaean almsgiving (see Chapter 8, Section 2.3).

The rest of Pausanias' preserved documents do not display any particular religious leanings, nor can we assume that Pausanias ever used his office in order to promote the movement. However, the material does illustrate that he was well-positioned to facilitate dissemination of the religion in the Oasis. His importance in the village at large has already been pointed out in Chapter 4. The image provided below (Chart 4) is an outtake – a so-called ego network – of the village network chart from that chapter (Chart 1). It has one in depth, displaying the immediate connections of Pausanias himself. It presents Pausanias' known affiliates and illustrates his different roles: as a Roman official, through the petition from Sozomene and an order from the council-president Heron, and as a local grandee, through orders to the landowner Kome and the carpenter Ploutogenes son of Pataias.

It is unlikely to be a coincidence that we find Manichaean affiliates among Pausanias' associates, such as Psais II. Although we do not have letters by Psais II, son of Pamour I, employing Manichaean cues, his affiliation with the movement is overwhelmingly likely (and he is greeted by Matthaïos in

48 For literacy among doctors, Harland, *Associations*, 42; for the relationship between Manichaean etiology and ancient medical discourse, see Jason D. BeDuhn, 'A Regimen for Salvation: Medical Models in Manichaean Asceticism', *Semeia* 58 (1992).

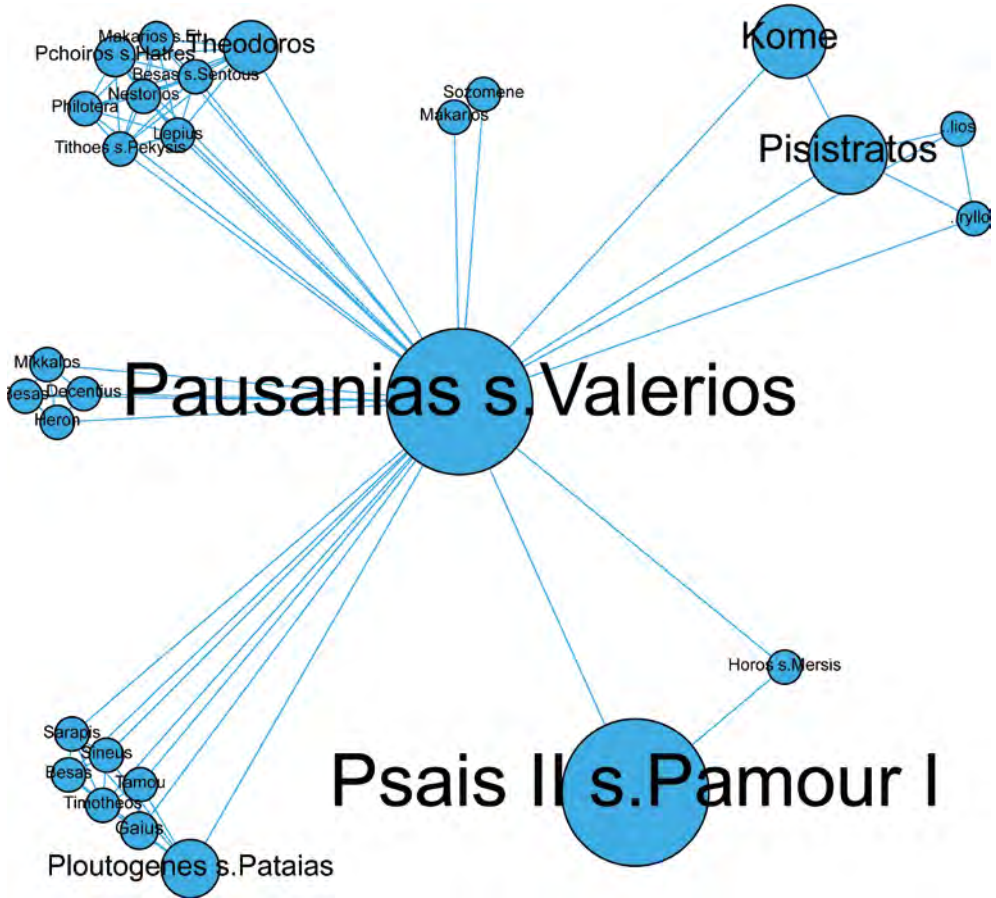


CHART 4 The ego network of Pausanias

P.Kellis v Copt. 25, see below). The text that documents their relationship is a gift donation from Pausanias to Psais, whose opening passage reads:⁴⁹

Aurelius Pausanias son of Valerius, former magistrate of the city of the Mothites, to Aurelius [Psai]tos son of Pamour, from the village of Kellis belonging to the same city of the Mothites. I acknowledge that I have granted to you as a perpetual gift (χάρῃ αἰωνίᾳ [καὶ ἀναφαιρέτῳ]) which cannot be withdrawn, from now onwards for ever, from the plots of land belonging to me in the Eastern part of the village of Kellis a plot for

49 The document was found in two copies, P.Kellis I Gr. 38a and b, which complement each other, and provide certainty to some of the reconstructions.

building, at the South and the North being fifteen carpenter's cubits long, at the East and at the West being twenty-five cubits.

P.Kellis I Gr. 38a, ll.1–9

The recipient, Psais II, gains full right of usage of the property previously held by Pausanias. The specific background for the transaction cannot be known. The two men did own (other) properties in close proximity to each other, and so would presumably have been familiar from before. Furthermore, in a majority of other preserved examples of grants of an 'irrevocable gift' (χάρις ἀναφαίρετος), the property changed hands between family members, i.e. between people with intimate ties.⁵⁰ No pre-existing kinship tie between Psais II and Pausanias is known to us, nor does one seem likely to have existed. Another type of strong tie must form the background for the transaction, and shared Manichaean affiliation is an obvious candidate.

In addition, we can adduce Kome, who acts as an agent on behalf of Pausanias and Pisistratos in the potsherd O.Kellis I 85. As we saw in Chapter 4, he can be identified with an important landowner in the KAB. One of his associates in that document is Timotheos the monk. This Timotheos can, in turn, be identified as an Elect, active in House 1–3 circles (see Chapter 8, Section 1). If so, an affiliation between Kome and Manichaean circles was maintained into the later fourth century, involving some sort of economic cooperation with the Elect, and even a donation of a child to the Church – if, as Bagnall thinks, Timotheos the monk should be identified as son of Kome. Bagnall proposed that the support of Kome may have been instrumental in gaining a lease of land for a *topos Mani* in the area Kellis.⁵¹ In turn, Kome's own affiliation with the group could well have been influenced by Pausanias.

Pausanias was clearly a central figure in Kellis in the 330s, and may well have acted as a patron for the local Manichaean community. Patronage was a core feature of the Roman social order, tying the landowning but largely city-based elite both to the urban plebs and to the rural hinterland.⁵² Religion was often

50 See the introduction to P.Col. 274 in Roger S. Bagnall and Dirk D. Obbink, eds., *Colombia Papyri X* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 107.

51 Concerning whether the monk Timotheos, agent and perhaps son of Kome, belonged to the *topos Mani* of the monk Petros, Bagnall writes: 'It is not, of course, necessary to assume that the two monks were part of the same monastic establishment. But if they were, the fact that Nos' father Kome was the largest single tenant in the KAB might help to explain how the monastery of Mani came to hold some orchard land as tenant.' *P.Kellis IV*, 82.

52 The fourth century saw some changes in the social organisation of patronage, as peasants of this period could appeal to different, competing elite groups. Peter Garnsey and Greg

woven into ties of patronage. Roman officials and local notables acted as patrons for religious associations, and drew dependents and others into religious associations in which they themselves participated.⁵³ Wallace-Hadrill, based on the work of Richard Saller, has defined patronage as a 'social relationship which is essentially (i) reciprocal, involving exchanges of services over time between two parties, (ii) personal as opposed to e.g. commercial, and (iii) asymmetrical, i.e. between parties of different status.'⁵⁴ Unfortunately, our evidence only allows us glimpses of these relationships. Pausanias' tie with Kome is only documented in O.Kellis I 85, and can only be shown to fulfil the last criterion, i.e. being asymmetrical. Pausanias' tie with Psais II is only documented in P.Kellis I Gr. 38, and is both personal, asymmetric, and probably long-lasting: although we cannot be entirely sure of its temporal extent, or what types of services Psais II provided in return, the appearance of other documents pertaining to Pausanias in House 3, as well as the intimacy implicit in the gift, suggest an ongoing, underlying relationship. We cannot know the specific background for these relationships, yet it is likely that Manichaean affiliation would have come to play an important role over time. It may, then, well be that Pausanias' clients had emulated him in adapting his religious allegiance, whether out of respect, persuasion, or to gain favours.

In this context, we may broach the possibility that Pausanias had furnished the local community with a church building; specifically, the West Church. There are several ostraka which link Pausanias and Pisistratos directly to this building.⁵⁵ Other documents belonging to Pausanias (for which, see below) were found in structure D/8, located close by. Moreover, numerous other links to the circles of House 3 are found in the ostraka here.⁵⁶ These finds are unlikely

Wolf, 'Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World', in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989), 164–66.

53 A notable example is a Dionysian association led by the high priestess Pompeia Agrippinilla. Her husband was M. Gavius Squilla Gallicanus, consul in 150 CE and proconsul of Asia in 165 CE. The association drew many of its more than 400 members from the network of Agrippinilla and her husband's family in the province of Asia. Harland, *Associations*, 30. More generally, see *ibid.*, 138–55.

54 Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, 'Introduction', in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989), 3.

55 Both occur in O.Kellis I 85, Pausanias recurs in O.Kellis I 137, Pisistratos in O.Kellis I 58.

56 O.Kellis I 137, mentioning Pausanias, features Nestorios, a name that only occurs once elsewhere at Kellis, in Pekysis' letter P.Kellis I Gr. 72. The same potsherd features Makarios, Theodoros, and Lepius, to which can be compared the trio Makarios, Theodoros, and Leporius in Tehat's letter P.Kellis V Copt. 43 (for 'Lepius' as short for Leporius, see *O.Kellis I*, 123). Other names that link the West Church to the House 1–3 network include, among others, Petros in e.g. O.Kellis I 114, Syros son of Psais (a lodger of the Pamour family, see P.Kellis I Gr. 45) in O.Kellis I 84 and 111, Makarios and Aionianos in O.Kellis I 288, Paulos

to be a coincidence. The church was built 'probably not much later than the middle of the century'.⁵⁷ Could Pausanias or Pisistratos have been involved in funding its construction? And if so, was it built specifically for the Manichaean community? To be sure, without direct evidence, a Manichaean context for the West Church remains hypothetical, yet the existence of a building set apart for religious activities and belonging to the community in Kellis is highly plausible (see Chapter 9, Section 3.3).

At any rate, Pausanias likely played an important role for the community on a more general level. As we saw in Chapter 2, the Dakhleh Oasis had a fairly narrow administrative and economic elite. As a magistrate of the Great Oasis, i.e. of both Dakhleh and Khargeh, Pausanias' influence was far-flung, as also confirmed by the petition P.Gascou 69, sent by Sozomene, daughter of an ex-magistrate of Hibis. The Manichaean network of House 1–3 extended to communities in Hibis (see P.Kellis VII Copt. 111, 118). Pausanias may have been central in providing a link between the disparate communities of the two oases, at least for the duration of his office(s) and before direct links were established. It is perhaps unlikely that he mediated the initial contact between the local traders and the Manichaean community in the Nile Valley: considering the long-standing ties of the traders to Upper Egypt, and the close ties between Elect and traders in the Valley, it is perhaps more likely that they first came into direct contact with Manichaean circles there. Another possible route of connection between Pausanias and Manichaeism could be the circles of local notables. Manichaeism had, already by the fourth century, gained some adherents in segments of the curial class that filled political office. This is shown by Diocletian's edict of 302 issued at Alexandria: it ordered Manichaean leaders (Elect) to be burned, and their followers (Auditors) to receive capital punishment, but explicitly excluded those of high birth and public office, who were only to lose their property and be put to hard, manual labour in the mines.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, we do not know the religious affiliation of contemporary notables such as Gelasios, Harpokration, or Faustianos. Whether Pausanias was a lone swallow, or part of a larger, elite Manichaean network, remains unknown.

Much remains uncertain concerning Pausanias affiliation and his role within the community. There are, however, strong reasons to think that he cultivated ties of patronage with local adherents, and he would have provided the

(see P.Kellis v Copt. 42) in O.Kellis I 79, Dorotheos (see P.Kellis VII Copt. 107) in O.Kellis I 118, and perhaps Mour son of Psais (for Pamour 111?) in O.Kellis I 94.

57 Gillian E. Bowen, 'The Coins from the 4th Century Churches and Christian Cemetery at Ismant el-Kharab', *The Numismatic Chronicle* 170 (2010): 482.

58 See Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 118.

community with local legitimacy, resources, and support vis-à-vis the Roman administration, aiding the recruitment of adherents from circles beyond those of the traders.

2.5 *Beyond House 1–3*

This leads us to another question, namely: how common was Manichaean affiliation in Kellis, outside of what can be gleaned from the House 1–3 material itself? Finds of literary texts from other fourth-century locations have so far been sparse. Yet, as we shall see, several finds do support a picture of widespread Manichaean presence in Kellis.

First, we may note the discovery of a fragment of a Syriac text, P.Kellis VI Syr. 2, in the domestic structure D/8, north of the Main Temple and a good distance away from House 1–3. The text is largely illegible, but, as Franzmann, points out, all other Syriac texts from Kellis are found in House 1–3, and probably of Manichaean provenance.⁵⁹ The usage of Syriac by the Manichaean community provides the most likely explanation in this instance as well. D/8 also yielded two Sahidic Coptic letters, a wooden board with a non-Sahidic Coptic text, magical texts, and Greek papyri relating to the Roman administration.⁶⁰ Two texts in the last group, P.Gascou 69 and 71, are addressed to Pausanias son of Valerios and found in two separate rooms. They provide a direct link to Manichaean circles, and suggest that Pausanias made use of the structure at some point. In the same room as P.Kellis VI Syr. 2 were found three letters belonging to an official named Petechon, probably identifiable with an official by that name in a House 3 letter.⁶¹ This structure, then, may have been used by local officials, and the finds suggest that Manichaeism was spreading in their circles. On the other hand, Petechon's letters contain nothing else to identify him as an adherent. A Sahidic letter also found in D/8, P.Kellis VII Copt. 128, seems to belong to a mainstream Christian context, insofar as its religious content can be placed.⁶² This should caution against a simple association between finds, find-site, and religious identity, and further comments will have to await full publication of the site. Yet it does indicate that Manichaean literature reached beyond House 1–3.

The other site from where Manichaean material has been recovered in Kellis is House 4. As we shall see below, here we have stronger indices that

59 *P.Kellis VI*, 136–37.

60 See, respectively, P.Kellis VII Copt. 127–128, P.Kellis VII Copt. 131, and Worp, 'Miscellaneous New Papyri', 3

61 P.Gascou 72, 80, 81 (D/8, Room 1); and P.Kellis I Gr. 69 (House 3). His office goes unmentioned, unfortunately.

62 *P.Kellis VI*, 295–96.

we are dealing with another local circle of Manichaeans. House 4 is a domestic complex in the western part of Area A, again at some distance away from House 1–3, close to Area D and the Main Temple. The structure is architecturally quite different from the House 1–3 complex: it is larger, and the inhabitants may have been wealthier. It, too, probably housed several families.⁶³ One part of the complex contained two Sahidic Coptic letters, P.Kellis VII Copt. 123 and 124. Both dialect and content contrast markedly with the House 1–3 letters, for instance in their use of Old Testament allusions, and they may well belong to mainstream Christian circles.⁶⁴ Another part, however, produced a Manichaean hymn on a wooden board, T.Kellis II Copt. 7.⁶⁵ It is of unambiguously Manichaean extraction; most notably in its praise of Mani himself, but also, for instance, in its reference to the suffering Light Elements and in its praise of the sun and moon (see Chapter 7, Section 2.1.1).

Other documents from the house may clue us into the people who owned this prayer; most prominently the Coptic letter P.Kellis VII Copt. 122. It was found in the same room and deposit level as the hymn-board, Room 1B (dep. 2), and is written in the same L* dialect used in House 1–3 texts – a peculiar version of this dialect most closely related to that found in the Coptic accounts and a letter attributable to Tehat (P.Kellis V Copt. 50).⁶⁶ The letter is authored by the ‘sons’ Psais and Masi, to their ‘father’ Sarapas, with greetings to a ‘brother’ Sarapis and a little girl. The brothers had left Kellis and were now located elsewhere. While these figures are not easily identifiable with actors in the Coptic House 1–3 material, the recipients can be related to individuals featuring in the KAB: a storehouse-owner named Sarapas, an agent named Sarapis, and his unnamed daughter.⁶⁷ Other ties to the KAB, as well as the Pamour family, are in evidence. A Papnouthes is greeted as a ‘brother’; this was the name of the most important agent of the KAB manager, as well as of an important Pamour associate. The rest of the names are Pakous, Chares, and Philammon (Lammon), caravan drivers acting as intermediaries between the brothers and the father, likely related to associates of the Pamour family of these names

63 See the ‘Appendix’ in Bagnall and Worp, ‘Two 4th Century Accounts’, 508–9.

64 As argued in *P.Kellis VII*, 263–64.

65 Originally designated A/6/14. See *P.Kellis II*, 50–54.

66 *P.Kellis VII*, 265–66.

67 See *P.Kellis IV*, 72. The name Sarapas, clearly distinguished from ‘Sarapis’, only occurs in this letter and for the manager in the KAB. For Sarapis, see perhaps P.Kellis I Gr. 76, where Pekysis writes to ‘brother’ Sarapis, and note that a Sarapis worked with a Pekysis in the KAB (1691).

similarly engaged with camel driving and freight.⁶⁸ As to religious cues in the letter, Psais and Masi greet Sarapas with the expression ‘in the Lord’, as well as the more distinct phrase ‘whose name is sweet in my mouth’ (P.Kellis VII Copt. 122, ll.1–4) and add a prayer for God to guard him: pieties often found in the House 1–3 texts, as discussed in Chapter 7, although neither can be definitely described as specifically Manichaean.

The editors carefully point out that the Manichaean hymn-board was found near the surface level, and that although it cannot have blown in, it could have been discarded later and not belonged to the inhabitants of House 4.⁶⁹ Fragments of a prayer in Sahidic was found (partly) in the same room, its contents seem to be largely ‘mainstream’ Christian.⁷⁰ Yet, that P.Kellis VII Copt. 122, found in the same room and deposit level, is written in a dialect similar to, furnished with some of the same cues as, and probably featuring some of the same people as the House 3 letters, makes it unlikely that the presence of the hymn should be interpreted as a chance occurrence. It rather suggests the existence of a wider L*-writing community in Kellis closely linked with Manichaean adherence.

A Greek account from the same room, P.Bingen 120, seem to pertain to this circle. It should probably be dated 366/7, and so is contemporary with the KAB. Agents of the KAB manager are found among the business associates of its author.⁷¹ The combination of shared find-site and ties to the estate of the KAB speaks to the large probability that these two documents belonged to the same circle: that of Sarapas. It, too, features a Papnouthes, who may represent a direct link to P.Kellis VII Copt. 122 (and House 3), as well as the name Pisistratos, perhaps providing a link to the circle of Pausanias.

A final document needs to be seen in conjunction with the above. In 2018, a letter in Greek from a different part of the House 4 complex was published.⁷² It was sent from a person of religious authority named Theodoros, addressing three figures: father Psais, ‘*katholikos* and priest’ (καθολικῶ κ[α] π[ε]ρ[ε]σ[β] υπέρω), another (unnamed) priest, and father Psais, ‘the manager’ (προνοητής).

68 For the status of these figures as camel drivers in P.Kellis VII Copt. 122, cp. ll.25–26 and ll.32–35. For House 3; Philammon 11 the camel-driver in P.Kellis I Gr. 79; Chares in P.Kellis VII Copt. 66, 76; Pakous in P.Kellis VII Copt. 77.

69 P.Kellis VII, 263.

70 P.Kellis VII Copt. 126; see P.Kellis VII, 284–85.

71 Korau and Papnouthes, both names of agents of the KAB manager. The former name is rare, and should almost certainly be identified with this agent. Bagnall and Worp, ‘Two 4th Century Accounts’, 506.

72 Inv. P93.103 (Room 13, dep. 2). Iain Gardner and Klaas A. Worp, ‘A Most Remarkable Fourth Century Letter in Greek, Recovered from House 4 at Ismant el-Kharab’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 205 (2018).

Theodoros uses elaborate and peculiar religious cues. Some features are seemingly at odds with Manichaean provenance – an apocryphal citation attributed to the prophet Jeremiah,⁷³ and the absence of distinct Manichaean opening and closing greetings. At the same time, there are several strongly Manichaean notions present: the partial truth of all human religious writings, the sobering up from ‘forgetfulness’ ([ἀνα]γῆψαι ἐκ τῆς λήθης, l.29), and not least the writer’s self-depiction as a crucified, ‘shining element’ ([... ἐσ]ταύρωμαι καὶ τὸ ἔμαυ-τ[ο]ῦ φω[τε]ῖ[νο]ν, l.30). The same room and deposit contained P.Bingen 119, an account similar to P.Bingen 120, showing ties to the KAB and perhaps to House 1–3.⁷⁴

Again, proper evaluation of the House 4 material will have to await full publication of the site, but a hypothesis may be broached. The documents from Room 1B belonged to the family of Sarapas, a storehouse-owner in the KAB and recipient of P.Kellis VI Copt. 122. Sarapas’ circle did business with associates of the Pamour family, and perhaps had ties to Pisistratos. While other families in the same housing complex may have had more ‘mainstream’ Christian affiliation, the circle of Sarapas were Manichaeans: part of the same network of adherents to which the Pamour family and Pausanias belonged. Certainly, the find of Manichaean literature from House 4, and the Syriac fragment from D/8, show that the religious community extended much beyond the immediate circles of the Pamour family.

3 Counting Manichaeans

3.1 *The Letters of Makarios and Matthaios*

Above, we have seen that Manichaean affiliation extended through several different networks and circles in Kellis. In the following, we shall attempt a rough calculation of the number of Manichaeans in the village, using two letters found in House 3 as our starting point: Makarios’ P.Kellis V Copt. 19 and Matthaios’ P.Kellis V Copt. 25. They contain greetings to extensive lists of

73 It should be mentioned that the Manichaean hostility to Jewish writings is often overstated; see Funk, ‘Mani’s Account’, 122–24.

74 Such links include: the actors Pharites (agent in P.Bingen 120), Hermesias (manager in the KAB), Elias (a Pamour contact and agent of a landowner, dealing with Mesobe), and an Ammon travelling to Hibis (see P.Kellis VI Copt. 118?), and two place names, Mesobe (see above) and Thio (a village where we find a Manichaean family, see P.Kellis V Copt. 19, below).

neighbours and associates, who were, as we shall see, considered part of the local Manichaean community. Jean-Daniel DuBois has previously suggested that Matthaïos' letter would be a good place to start for such an undertaking.⁷⁵ Its greetings provide the most complete snapshot we have of the Pamour family's social circles at any one time. It can be compared to the roughly contemporary letter of his 'father' Makarios, which also greets a substantial number of people. Both letters contain several names that are lost in lacunae, and a substantial number of people that are mentioned indirectly. In each case, we shall present both a 'minimum' and a 'maximum' estimate of the number of people implied in the collective greetings and lacunae.

The greetings in Makarios' P.Kellis v Copt. 19 are primarily to individuals, of whom about 23–24 names are well preserved (including the recipients themselves, Maria 1 and Matthaïos). Some individuals are greeted together with unnamed relatives, by familial terms such as 'his father' or 'her children'. In the first estimate, I count every instance of a familial term in the plural at a minimum of two. For the 'maximum', I reckon one extra person in each plural term (i.e. altogether three). One group is specified as located outside of Kellis: a greeting to 'Partheni and Pena, and all in Thio' (ll.76–77).⁷⁶ The number of people implied by 'all in Thio' cannot be known; I here estimate a 'minimum' of five, including the named women (one 'small' household: Partheni, Pena, and two family members), and a 'maximum' of ten (two 'large' households, one of Partheni and one of Pena).⁷⁷ This gives a number somewhere between 40 and 49 people (see below, Table 4). The majority of known addressees are women: about 20 out of 26 cases where gender can be determined. The strong prevalence of women greeted suggests that many of the men are absent. The number of people belonging to Makarios' intended audience, but not mentioned, is thus probably much higher.

Turning to the closing greetings of Matthaïos' letter P.Kellis v Copt. 25 (below, Table 5), about 19 names are preserved. Naturally, there is much overlap

75 Jean-Daniel Dubois, 'Une lettre du manichéen Matthaïos (P. Kell. Copt. 25)', in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, ed. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirer (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval (éditions Peeters), 2006), 236.

76 For the location of Thio, a hamlet in the vicinity of Kellis, see *P.Kellis IV*, 73–76. It is notable that Kapiton son of Kapiton is described as residing in Thio at a later date (P.Kellis I Gr. 45, dating to 386).

77 For the (rough) household size used in the estimate for these two, see Bagnall and Frier, cited below.

between the two letters. Of those that do not recur, we find that [...]fnoute, Mo[...], Drousiane, Kyria (daughter), Kame (I and II), Lammon, Pion, Pena, and [...]aeis appear only in Makarios' letter; Andreas, Pekysis, Phila, and Marsa only in Matthaios' letter. However, Makarios certainly knew Andreas, Psais II, Pamour III, and Pekysis, all of whom occur in other letters by him; Matthaios would likewise have known most or all the people named by Makarios. Space, absence, or other factors may have caused them to omit certain names. Furthermore, whereas Makarios mainly greets people individually, Matthaios also greets some collectives: in addition to spouses, siblings, and children, he greets four separate 'houses'. Some of the people he omits, then, may be covered by the general term 'house' (εἶ). In two cases, there could be some overlap between named individuals and collective greetings. Matthaios greets both 'my father Pshai and his wife and children', and immediately afterwards 'Pakosh and Pamour and their children and their brothers, each by name' (ll.60–61).⁷⁸ Presumably, these are Psais II and his sons Pekysis and Pamour III, the latter two greeted both as part of Psais' household (children), and separately, with their own siblings and children. In a similar vein, it might be that Hatres and Tsemnouthes are among the 'sons and daughters' of Philammon II and Charis, greeted in the line above (ll.62–64), although there is no corroborating evidence for such a familial tie. However, it may also be that Psais II's other children, such as Tekysis III and perhaps Psais III, are intended in the first instance, and that Pamour III and Pekysis' 'siblings' include in-laws and colleagues such as Kapiton I or Theognostos.

All the other greetings are clearly to separate groups. Counting every occurrence of the plural 'children', 'brothers', etc. at two, adding another person for each 'house', and taking Hatres and Tsemnouthes to be among the 'sons and daughters' of Philammon and Charis, gives a minimum of 53 of people. Adding another person per house as well as another child per plural occurrence (i.e. assuming three children on average), adding two children to Psais II in addition to Pamour III and Pekysis (e.g. Tekysis III and Psais III), and separating Hatres and Tsemnouthes from Philammon/Charis, gives a 'maximum' of 76 people.

78 Maria (I) and Partheni (II) are mentioned in the passage immediately before this group of greetings, providing additional evidence that these two should be taken as the spouses of Pamour III and Pekysis, respectively.

TABLE 4 Makarios' greetings (P.Kellis v Copt. 19)

Line	Term	Name	Greeted with	Minimum	Extended	Note
l.46	Mother	Tamougenia		1	1	
ll.46–47	Brother	[..]fnoute		1	1	
l.52	Sister	N.N		1	1	
l.53	Daughter	E ...		1	1	
l.53	Daughter	Tshsemnoute		1	1	
l.62	Daughter	Drousiane		1	1	
l.62	Daughter	Tshsemnoute		1	1	
l.63	Daughter	Kame		1	1	
l.63	Sister	Isi		1	1	
l.63	Sister	Mo[...]		1	1	
l.64	Sister	Kame		1	1	
l.64	Mother	Talaphanti	children	3	4	
l.65	Woman within	N.N	children	3	4	
l.70	Sister	Charis		1	1	
l.71	Sister	N.N	children	3	4	
l.71	Brother	Philammon		1	1	
l.72		N.N		1	1	
l.72		Pion		1	1	
l.72	Mother	Tshmshai		1	1	
l.73	Daughter	Kyria		1	1	
l.75		Lamou	mother, father	3	3	
ll.75–76		Tapsais		1	1	
l.76	Mother	Partheni		1	1	
ll.76–77	Mother	Pena	all in Thio	4	10	
add; l.87	Brother	Matthaios		1	1	By Piene
add; l.88	Mother	Maria		1	1	By Piene
l.88	Brother	Hatres		1	1	By Piene
l.88	Brother	A..e s.Hermeh		1	1	By Piene
l.89	Brother	[..]jaeis		1	1	By Piene
Total				40	49	

TABLE 5 Matthaïos' greetings (P.Kellis v Copt. 25)

Line	Description	Preserved name	Greeted with	Minimum	Maximum
l.60	Sister	Tsenpsais		1	1
l.60	Father	Pshai	wife, children	2	4
l.61		Pekosh, Pamour	children, brothers	6	8
l.62	Father, mother	Philammon, Charis	sons, daughters	4	6
l.63		Hatres	wife, children	4	5
l.64		Tsemnouthes	children, husband	4	5
l.65		Phila	husband	2	2
ll.65–66	Father, mother	Psemnouthes, Kyria	N.N.	2	4
ll.66–67		Tsemnouthes	N.N., son/children	2	4
l.67	Mother	Tamougenia		1	1
l.68		A ...	mother, N.N	3	3
l.69		Isi	N.N	2	3
l.69		Marsa	brothers, children, whole house	5	8
ll.70–71	Mother	Tapsais	children	3	4
l.71	Mother	Talaphanti	children, whole house	4	6
l.72	Mother	Louiapshai	children, whole house	4	6
l.73	Brother	Andreas	whole house, people	4	6
Total				53	76
Average				3.1	4.47

3.2 *Kellis Households and Egyptian Demographics*

In order to examine the plausibility of this range for the size of the 'houses', we can again draw on Bagnall and Frier's study of Egyptian demographics. They reckoned that 'the average attested size of Egyptian families is about 4.4 persons.'⁷⁹ The average size of conjugal family households they calculated at 3.43 in villages (4.86 for cities), and that of extended families at 4.47 in the villages (6.13 for cities). Extended families were more common in villages than in the cities, and probably made up the majority of families there. The average for the number of persons per family unit derived from the minimum count of Matthaïos' letter, 3.12, is below that found by Bagnall and Frier for households of conjugal families, and much below that for extended families. The average derived from the 'maximum' count, 4.47, is identical with Bagnall and Frier's average for extended village families. One should be careful not to put

⁷⁹ Bagnall and Frier, *Demography*, 68

too much weight on extrapolation from these (uncertain) averages to the concrete case of House 1–3. Still, as extended families do appear to have been more common in the countryside, the ‘maximum’ estimate of 76 people (with three children on average) seems more likely to be accurate.

This number must be seen in light of the suggested population of the village. It has been estimated that Kellis had a population of c.500 at its nadir to c.1500 at its zenith, and perhaps c.1000 in the fourth century.⁸⁰ The former seems small in light of the number of people listed in the KAB alone, while the highest estimate may be somewhat large considering the abandonment of the settlement around 400 CE. Using the simple estimate of c.1000 individuals for the mid-fourth century given by Bagnall in *P.Kellis IV*, and taking Matthaïos’ greetings as a complete enumeration of Manichaeans in Kellis, the ‘minimum’ estimate of 53 people constitutes around 5% of Kellis inhabitants, the ‘maximum’ of 76 people almost 8%.⁸¹ As we saw, the latter is the more likely. Furthermore, it is unlikely that Matthaïos’ greetings exhausted the Manichaeans in the village: the general greeting at the end suggests that there were others he had not named. As we have seen, Manichaean affiliation was also found outside the immediate circles of the Pamour family.

3.3 *Shared Religious Affiliation*

Before drawing this conclusion, however, an urgent question needs to be addressed: can we, in fact, take the people greeted in these letters as co-adherents? Although we cannot reach absolute certainty, some observations based on the letter contents strongly suggest that we can. Most tellingly are the instances where the authors address and explicitly include them within a shared religious community. Thus, in the middle of a string of greetings to about eight women, including Talaphanti and ‘the woman within’ (ΤΡῩΝῚΘΟΥΝ), both with children, Makarios adds:

Tell them that I myself am very grateful to them, and God is my witness that [...] all in my prayers and my supplications. I [remember] you (*pl.*) very very much (ΤΟΝΟΥ ΤΟΝΟΥ), praying for your health [...] night and day; just as I see you are zealous, whether I am far [from you] or near to you

P.Kellis v Copt. 19, ll.65–70

80 For the population estimates, see the section on population in Chapter 1.

81 Assuming most of them were Kellis inhabitants. The greeting from Makarios to those in Thio indicates that some lived in a nearby smaller village, but this is the only location outside Kellis mentioned explicitly.

This heartfelt and pious expression of gratefulness, addressed to some or all of these women, include what seems to be a variant of the ‘far but near’ formula. Perhaps his thanks are for assistance of a specifically religious nature; at any rate, it indicates that he took their shared religious affiliation for granted. More directly, Matthaïos ends letter P.Kellis v Copt. 25 by bidding Maria to greet – in extension of the other greetings listed previously – to everyone ‘who wishes our word (εφογωω π̄νωεχεε)’ (l.74).⁸²

To this, we may note that both Makarios and Matthaïos use elaborate cues and discuss religious affairs at some length in these letters. Makarios describes, for instance, a quarrel he has had with a deacon during his ‘practice’ ([με]ελετα, l.49), while Matthaïos discusses the travels of the Teacher. Relating such affairs would primarily make sense if the authors thought the recipients, Maria I, Psenpnouthes I, and Kyria I, but also the people to whom they were to extend their greetings and presumably relate the letter contents, were interested in them. Not least, the lavish use of kinship terms in an extended sense – the numerous greetings to ‘mothers’, ‘daughters’, and so on – could well be anchored in shared religious affiliation, a notion of the community as a spiritual family: the ‘living race/family (τρεῖτε ετανε̄)’ that Makarios invokes in P.Kellis v Copt. 22 (l.5).⁸³ There are, then, good reasons to think that Makarios and Matthaïos took most or all the people they greet to be fellow-adherents. To be sure, we cannot know how many confined their affiliation to expressions of sympathy, contra how many were enthusiastically engaged in communal life and actively appropriated Manichaean notions and symbols. This is, however, irrelevant to whether they were in some sense fellow-adherents.

Finally, to prefigure later discussions somewhat, we can already note here that these estimates should make us sceptical of the notion that Manichaeans at Kellis were confined to domestic settings or intimate cells for their religious activities. The movement’s repertoire of practices involved communal ritual, for which – as will be seen in the next chapters – there is indeed evidence at Kellis. As discussed above, it should not be excluded that one of the churches excavated in the village may have belonged to the Manichaean community. The size is also relevant when re-examining the common idea that Manichaeism did not appeal to people in the countryside. It is unlikely that all these families were traders, and if the group arrived in Kellis only around 300 (or later), its growth would seem to have been quite rapid. This suggests an ability to attract

82 A similar formulation is found in Ammon’s letter P.Kellis v Copt. 37. See below.

83 Cf. Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 169–75. For the conspicuousness of such language in Christian contra ‘pagan’ circles, see e.g. Jan N. Bremmer, ‘The Social and Religious Capital of the Early Christians’, in *Hephaistos* 24 (2007): 274–75.

adherents in a wider segment of the population than previously assumed, including in the countryside.⁸⁴

4 'Open' or 'Bounded' Network?

Having gotten a rough sense of the scale of Manichaean presence in the village, it may well be asked what the relationship between this comparatively large group and their social surroundings was. In this context, we need to address the degree to which this religious affiliation created tension with surrounding society. Within the sociology of religion, tension between a group and its social surroundings has often been expressed in terms of 'sectarianism', where the degree of tension is used to delineate between 'churches' and 'sects' (on a sliding scale).⁸⁵ Tension has also been a central concept for differentiating religious groups in antiquity, used to distinguish 'open' Graeco-Roman cultic associations from 'exclusivist' synagogues and churches.⁸⁶

There is little reason to doubt that Manichaeism, as traditionally perceived by previous generations of scholars, was a 'sect' on the level of religious organisation – in the non-normative, sociological sense of a group with a high degree of tension to surrounding society. The persecutions of Bahram II in the Sasanian Empire and of Diocletian in the Roman Empire demonstrate this. It is echoed by their enmity towards (hostile) political authorities, as well as towards some dominant social practices, such as blood sacrifices and meat consumption, in the authoritative Manichaean tradition. But again, as with identity more generally, it may be questioned whether such sectarianism was

84 In fact, Robinson (*Who Were the First*, 78) did note Manichaean missions to the villages, based on the evidence of the *Acta Archelai*. This text has long been considered largely fictional, and while new research indicates that the author likely had some knowledge of the biography of Mani (see Gardner, 'Mani's Last Days', 161, 96–205), the reliability of this information remains hard to judge.

85 As for instance in the work of Stark and Bainbridge, who conceptualise 'churches' as religious institutions largely integrated into the social fabric, and 'sects' as break-away groups from churches, with a high degree of tension to dominant social norms and institutions. Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 22ff.

86 See e.g. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 78–80; Keith Hopkins, 'Christian Number and its Implications', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1998): 217–18; J. B. Rives, 'Christian Expansion and Christian Ideology', in *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries*, ed. W. V. Harris (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 17–23; Mary Beard, John A. North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 307–11 and 211–44.

reproduced by the laity on the level of everyday interaction. The dichotomy between ‘open’ and ‘bounded’ groups has been challenged by recent scholarship. On the one hand, scholars have pointed to exclusivist tendencies among Greco-Roman cultic associations.⁸⁷ On the other, they have emphasised that boundedness and tension as a rule were products of the discourse of religious authorities, rather than experienced by adherents.⁸⁸ Most people, it is argued, only rarely activated religious identity in mundane contexts. We cannot, then, take a high tension as a given. At the same time, as we saw in the foregoing chapter, we should not underestimate the degree to which the laity themselves could actively appropriate authoritative discourses and institutions. To resolve the issue, we need to assess the Kellis evidence itself.

Yet, there has been some difference in scholarly views on the level of tension on display also here. Gardner first noted that the laity displayed ‘exclusionist’ tendencies in *P.Kellis II*, stating: ‘there are some of those communal characteristics to be found here as are known from the typology of sectarian movements, particularly in their earlier, world-denying stages’.⁸⁹ In *P.Kellis V*, the editors adduced the use of prayers for protection from an evil world, and allusions to or even explicit mentions of persecution, as evidence for this sectarian characteristic.⁹⁰ This has now been criticised by Mattias Brand, who strongly rejects the label ‘sectarian’. In particular, he criticises the idea that the community experienced strong tensions with surrounding society, arguing:

[w]hile it is possible that some Manichaeans experienced maltreatment on the basis of their religious affiliation, there is no evidence for full religious persecution. Instead, just like modern minorities in Egypt, they may have suffered from petty acts of discrimination or a subordinated position in relation to other people.⁹¹

Below, we examine evidence for both participation in wider society (‘positive’ interaction) and ‘world rejection’ and tensions (‘negative’ interaction), and discuss some of the points made by Brand, in order to review this issue.⁹²

87 Harland, *Associations*, 191ff.

88 See the literature cited in Chapter 5.

89 *P.Kellis II*, viii.

90 *P.Kellis V*, 81.

91 Brand, ‘Manichaeans at Kellis’, 162.

92 For the categories of ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ interaction, see Harland, *Associations*, 137–60.

4.1 *Positive Interaction*

There is no doubt that many adherents participated in the political and economic life of the village, and we have already surveyed much of the evidence for such engagement. As we saw in Chapter 4, Horos III son of Pamour III undertook a liturgy. The family's associate Pausanias was himself both a Manichaean and an active participant in nome administration. No open hostility towards the Roman political order can be detected in the private letters, although it should be emphasised that liturgical service was compulsory, and is certainly not a sign of support for this system, either.

More interesting are signs of cross-denominational interaction, which may be evinced by the occurrence of certain 'catholic priests' in the House 3 material. A dichotomy between a (Manichaean) 'Holy' Church, to which the most of the House 3 authors belonged, and a dominant 'Catholic' Church, with which they interacted, could be implied by these texts. Still, it may be premature to take it as a given that the term 'catholic' (καθολική) is used to designate a specific (mainstream) church organisation, as against other, competing churches. In the papyri, the term could simply refer to the main church in a village.⁹³ The Manichaeans, too, considered their message universal, and may at any rate have preferred to use the dominant terminology in official documents. This must be kept in mind when we examine the evidence below.

One 'catholic presbyter' is found in the oft-discussed P.Kellis I Gr. 24 (352), pertaining to Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis. The term is associated with the patronym 'son of Ouonsis' (Οὐώνσιο[ς] πρεσβυ[τ]έρου καθ[ο]λικῆς ἐκκλησίας, l.3). Unfortunately, the preceding words are lost. The term could either be taken to relate to Ouonsis or to a lost preceding name.⁹⁴ It seems somewhat unlikely that it relates to Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis himself: the petition sent by Ploutogenes the subsequent year, P.Kellis I Gr. 23 (353), makes no mention of any religious office for him; there, he is simply one of the local komarchs. If he had been a presbyter this would presumably have emphasised. Still, it could well relate to his father, or to an unknown brother. The context for the document is one of wider village concerns, and so it does not necessarily show

93 For the argument that this term was also used among for instance the Meletians, and could simply indicate the largest church in a town, see Wipszycka, 'Katholiké'. A distinction between 'Manichaean' and 'Catholic' Christians does appear to have been recognised by Manichaeans in the Latin west, at any rate: Augustine criticises the Manichaeans for attacking 'Christians who bear the name "Catholic"' (*De mor.* 2.20.75, trans. Roland J. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate* (New York: New City Press, 2006), 103).

94 The title agrees with the genitive of Ouonsis (Οὐώνσιο[ς] πρεσβυ[τ]έρου καθ[ο]λικῆς), but this is not decisive. Apart from as patronym, Ouonsis is only known from P.Gascou 18–19, two contracts dating to 319 and 320, respectively.

close interaction with the House 1–3 people.⁹⁵ But as we saw in Chapter 4, Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis does appear to have had some kind of link to the Pamour family. If the title belonged to Ploutogenes or one of his family members, it suggests that this ‘catholic’ family had no trouble associating with Manichaeans or vice versa – but how and in what capacity remains obscure. Another document involving a catholic priest could pertain to the same man. It is a highly fragmented contract involving a certain Ploutogenes, dating to 337 (P.Kellis I Gr. 58). The ‘catholic priest’ is named [Harp]okrates, and witnesses on behalf of Ploutogenes. An identification with the son of Ouonsis is possible, but given that the name Ploutogenes is common, and that no patronymic is preserved, it remains tentative. The name is not known from elsewhere in the House 1–3 material, or even in the village at large, and so Harpokrates’ role vis-à-vis the family is unknown.

The last instance is found in P.Kellis I Gr. 32 (364), and pertains to a Jakob, son of Basis, ‘first(?) reader (πρ(ωτο?) ἀναγνώστης) of the catholic church’ (l.21).⁹⁶ It is more directly tied to the Pamour family, as this Jacob writes on behalf of an Aurelia Marsa from Kellis, who rents a room in Aphrodito from Psais (II) son of Pamour (I). In addition to the term ‘catholic’, the name ‘Jacob’ is suggestive of mainstream Christian affiliation. The name does not recur in the House 1–3 letters, and there is as such no reason to assume that he was closely affiliated with the Pamour family.⁹⁷ Marsa, on the other hand, could be identifiable with Marsha, a woman greeted among the other members of the community in the above-examined letters of Makarios and Matthaïos. Admittedly, in those two letters she is located in Kellis, and so the identification is not certain. If she is to be identified with this Marsha, it may well be that we can here see how certain members of the community had a pragmatic view of boundaries between different groups. Conversely, it may be that she did not consider herself part of the Manichaean community, despite the attempt of Matthaïos to include her in the fold. Finally, her employment of Jacob could simply have been an act of necessity, based on a need for a literate

95 There is the question of the clergy who occur first in the list, in the same group as Psenpnouthes I, Psais Tryphanes, Loudon II, and Timotheos: Pamiris the presbyter, and Pkour[.]s and Cholos the deacons. No patronymics are given, and it cannot be known whether Pamiris should be identified with the ‘catholic’ presbyter earlier in the document, as ‘son of Ouonsis’, or whether he represents a different church grouping in the village. That these were Manichaean clergy certainly cannot be shown on present evidence either.

96 See *P.Kellis V*, 343.

97 Although it should be mentioned that a Jacob ‘the potter’ features in an account, P.Kellis I Gr. 61.

witness. There are in other words multiple ways in which this interaction can be interpreted.

That participation in larger economic and political structures, and interaction with people identifying with other communities, would be the norm for Auditors is not particularly striking. At any rate, it tells us little about their attitudes to them. More interesting are the activities of the monk Petros on behalf of the *topos Mani*, likely showing a Manichaean monastic institution dealing directly with the estate of Faustianos (see Chapter 9, Section 3.3). The religious affiliation of this landlord is unknown, although some evidence – if highly uncertain – may suggest that the local estate manager considered himself a ‘mainstream’ Christian.⁹⁸ At any rate, if the identification of the *topos* with a Manichaean monastery is correct, it shows it operating as an economic entity, much like other cultic associations of antiquity, and that a depiction of the Elect simply as world-denying renouncers is too simple.

4.2 *Negative Interaction*

Alongside these signs of engagement with wider society, there are signs of anti-worldly sentiments and evidence for a high degree of tensions with surrounding society (‘negative’ interaction). Let us first look at the lay religious cues. Several authors utilised prayers addressed to the God of Truth for health, which in some cases were combined with another prayer for protection against ‘evil’ (πῆθαι) or ‘temptation’ (παρασμευς), in line with similar use by Mani.⁹⁹ Thus, Pamour III prays for his recipients being protected against ‘the snares of the devil and the adversities of Satan’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 65 (ll.12–15), and again against ‘temptations of Satan and the adversities of the evil place’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 71 (ll.8–9).¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Matthaïos prays for Maria to be ‘free from any evil and temptation of Satan’ in P.Kellis V Copt. 25 (ll.19–22), and the lost author of P.Kellis V Copt. 34 prays for his recipient to be ‘free from every evil of Satan’ (ll.11–12). Makarios and Matthaïos include appeals for ‘freedom’ (παρρησια) in several letters (P.Kellis V Copt. 20, 22, 25). At the very least, these passages suggest that the Manichaean view of the world as in some sense an ‘evil’ place was widely shared by adherents in Kellis. This view

98 Perhaps evinced by the Greek letters ΓΜΧ etched into the KAB codex. For their possible significance, see *P.Kellis IV*, 83–84.

99 Gardner, ‘Mani’s Letter to Marcellus’, 36 and 41; id., ‘Some Comments on Mani’s *Epistles*’, 175–77.

100 For other instances of Manichaean usage of the imagery of ‘snares of the devil’, see Gunnar Mikkelsen, ‘Augustine and his Sources: “The Devil’s Snares and Birdlime” in the Mouths of Manichaeans in East and West’, in *In Search of Truth*, ed. Jacob A. van den Berg, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 419–25.

was not, of course, restricted to the Manichaeans, and its social significance is indeterminable – Manichaeans could certainly express positive views of the world, as well. Perhaps it might imply that the community was somewhat austere, but this cannot be measured.

In addition to prayers against cosmic evil, several references to evils taking place in this world can be detected, however, indicating social tensions. We may start with the letters of Matthaïos and Makarios, whose calls for freedom may be connected to events in the Valley. These latter appeals are, perhaps, comparable to Mani's own calls for *parrhesia* found in the Berlin *Kephalaia*, as noted by the editors, who comment: 'We wonder if it is more than the tyranny of distance that keeps the family away from the oasis.'¹⁰¹ Matthaïos' prayer in P.Kellis v Copt. 25 continues with implying a degree of anxiety, alluding to hope for a meeting in the afterlife. It reads:

And furthermore I pray that this great day of joy should happen to us, the day for which we pray indeed every hour, and God grant us that we may see the image of each other in freedom and with a smiling face. Or indeed: whether they are dreams (?) or whether it is the sphere [...];¹⁰² or else again: perhaps they change and cast us once again towards you, and we will be satisfied with the face of all our beloveds. Would therefore that this may happen to us! (ll.22–30)

Considering the mundane tone concerning travel in other letters, attributing his concerns here to separation caused by physical distance between Oasis and Nile Valley alone seems insufficient. On the other hand, there is no mention of hardships or persecutions in this letter. Perhaps his heartfelt prayer could rather be seen in light of his expression of sorrow for the death of his 'great mother' found in the same letter.

The calls for freedom in Makarios' letters P.Kellis v Copt. 20 and 22 provide stronger indications of social tensions, as they relate certain events that suggest that the family was experiencing troubles. They presume current knowledge on the part of the recipients that we no longer possess, and so we should proceed with care. In P.Kellis V Copt. 20, Makarios reports that Matthaïos had experienced some problems, reporting to Maria that: 'Let it be you know

¹⁰¹ P.Kellis V, 82.

¹⁰² The editors reject a restoration of this lacuna as 'stars' (ἄστροι). Ibid., 192. Still, an alternate plural form of 'star' is ἀστροί, which could perhaps be read by replacing epsilon for sigma. At any rate, we are dealing with some kind of astrological allusion, based on the presence of the 'sphere', and one should in this context note the Manichaean notion of astrological influence on the fate of individuals, where both demonic and divine elements played a part.

that brother Sarmate has petitioned Pkonaes (?). He ordered Kleoboulos to return, and cause to be given back the things of Mathaios that had been taken' (ll.40–42). This seems to relate to the confiscation of Matthaïos' 'things' by a Roman official.¹⁰³ In another letter, P.Kellis v Copt. 22, Makarios provides a more detailed (if still obscure) description of hardships, writing: 'How many [...] these or our sanctuary? Are not you yourself a catechumen? For we are not retaliating against anyone in this place for what they are doing to us' (ll.60–62). He further mentions someone pursuing a man (or a book), and 'the fire that burns in my heart on account of the book which they took' (ll.65–66). In the following, fragmented part of this passage can be read references to 'weakness', 'toil', and 'by body, by spirit' (ll.67–69), for which the context remains obscure. In the next passage, whose connection to the former is somewhat unclear, he complains to either Maria I or Kyria I that: 'You had no pity for your brother's son, because he is under persecution (ΔΙΩΓΜΟΣ); though you know that I have spent two years without him. He has no one who can guide him but God, the one who repays' (ll.73–75).

A religious context for these incidents is, however, rejected by Brand. Regarding the confiscation in P.Kellis v Copt. 20, he argues that: '[i]f Matthaïos or his father Makarios indeed petitioned a Roman official after a theft or assault, it is most unlikely that they would have been afraid of maltreatment by the Roman authorities for their religious affiliation.'¹⁰⁴ However, while such a petition indeed shows that they had some hope of being given redress by the governor – and as we have seen, they may well have had influential contacts, – it does not imply that the religious community was on good terms with the Roman administration in general.¹⁰⁵ Religious conflict could have flared with local officials such as Kleoboulos, who may well have been logistes of the Great Oasis.¹⁰⁶ Regarding the event(s) in P.Kellis v Copt. 22, Brand comments that the incident concerning the book 'could have been about a failed business transaction (including books?), for which Makarios blames Maria (or Kyria); and, regarding the matter of persecution, that 'the Coptic term

103 The editors note that the verb 'petition' (σῆμ) suggests that *Pkonaes should be understood as 'the *komes*' (ibid., 171), i.e. the *praeses* or civil governor of Upper Egypt (not a military official, as per Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 156).

104 Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 156–57.

105 As suggested at ibid., 156.

106 A fragmented letter or order to a logistes of the Great Oasis named Kleoboulos was found in House 3, P.Kellis I Gr. 25, unfortunately lacking a date. An Oasis official by this name occurs in M.Chr. 78 (c.376–78), travelling to Dakhleh and reporting to the *praeses*, and a late fourth-century landowner by this name is known from several ostraka from Khargeh Oasis. See P.Kellis I, 77.

persecution (ΔΙΩΓΜΟΣ) was also used in military or legal settings. Without further context, it remains unclear whether religious persecution was meant.¹⁰⁷ But here he neglects to discuss the passage concerning retaliation for hostile acts at the 'sanctuary', as well as the other religious markers both in the opening and in the same passage. As argued in Chapter 5, it is especially significant that Makarios invokes Maria I's (or Kyria I's) role as catechumen while beseeching help in these matters. These indices make a religious context highly likely.

That the community experienced such hardship is supported by an explicit reference to religious tensions in a letter pertaining to the younger generation, that of Psais/Andreas. In *P.Kellis v Copt. 37*, Psais III's associate Ammon writes:

Now, great was the grief that overcame me, and the heartbreak that seized me, when I heard about what happened; namely that they shook those of this word (ΔΥΚΙΜ ΔΝΑΠΙΣΕΞΕ). For it is possible for God to thwart their designs. In fact, I wanted to come to you, but I was told that it was not allowed. (ll.13–25)

The 'shaking' of 'those of this word' clearly describes a violent act against fellow-adherents.¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, no further details are given. Questions concerning where it took place, who the perpetrators were, what prevented Ammon from going to Psais III, or why that is relevant are all unanswerable. Ammon takes this information as already known to Psais III. It is perhaps possible that it was Psais III himself who had informed him in a previous letter.

A specifically religious disruption is again likely to form the background of a letter by an Elect who styles himself 'your father who is in Egypt'. In his letter, *P.Kellis v Copt. 31*, he justifies his request for goods addressed to a plurality of female catechumens in Kellis by writing, in a passage that unfortunately is very lacunose, that he and his companions are 'afflicted' (Τῆ[λ]ΔΞΞ, l.34)¹⁰⁹ and that 'the place is very difficult' (ΠΜΔ ΜΔΧΞ [ΤΟΝΟΥ], ll.47–48). The letter ends with a mysterious instruction:

[...] this letter to you (*pl.*). When you have finished reading it, send it to my son with certainty. Do not let it stay with you, it may fall into somebody's hands. Indeed, what is even this constraint (†ΚΕΑΝΔΓ`ΚΗ)! (ll.52–55)

¹⁰⁷ Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 160; but cf. also the remarks on 179.

¹⁰⁸ See the comments of the editors regarding the word ΚΙΜ ('shake'). *P.Kellis V*, 233.

¹⁰⁹ Crum (151a) also lists 'be crushed', 'effaced' (as a noun 'anguish', 'oppression').

The mix of ‘being afflicted’, a sense for urgency, and a need for secrecy strongly suggests that the author and his associates are under outside pressure.¹¹⁰ Perhaps some exaggeration of the troubles should be allowed for, considering the letter’s purpose of acquiring alms (see Chapter 8, Section 2.3), and the nature of the affliction remains obscure. But whatever the exact troubles, there is little doubt that they pertain to a specifically religious context.

There are other letters from the generation of Pamour III that contain very similar allusions to what might, potentially, be religious troubles. Pamour III alludes to difficulties in one letter, writing: ‘You wrote to me: “When the place is quiet, then write to me”’ (P.Kellis VII Copt. 72, ll.26–27). The significance of ‘quiet’ (ΜΑΤῚ) is most unclear, however, and he might simply be referring to conditions pertaining to trade, as suggested by the editors.¹¹¹ In a passage from a letter addressing Partheni II, Theognostos writes:

God is witness that your (*pl.*) memory is in our heart at all times, as we wish to come and see you. But what can we do? For the place is disturbed now and we are afraid. Let nothing evil happen whilst the place remains disturbed.

P.Kellis VII Copt. 83, ll.5–8

The disruption of the ‘place’ (ΠΜΑ ΤΗϚ), the restriction on movement (comparable to that of Ammon), the fear that Theognostos and his associates have experienced, and the potential for further ‘evil’ (ΠΘΑΥ), suggests a serious tumult. But again, the events may not relate to religious difficulties, and could pertain to broader conditions in the Oasis or the Valley.

Of the above-considered passages, we may reasonably see religious tension as forming the backdrop in the letters of Makarios (at least P.Kellis V Copt. 22), Ammon, and the Elect Father. Certainly, it is unlikely that we are dealing with full-scale persecutions. As far as can be determined, Makarios’ letter belong to the mid – late 350s and the letter of Ammon to around 370. The former, at least, is situated before the time of the edict of Valens and Valentinian against Manichaeism in 373, and both were written before the harsher measures undertaken by Theodosius I.¹¹² Singular incidents of hostility from, for

110 See P.Kellis V, 213. Cf. the interpretation of Brand, ‘Manichaeism of Kellis’, 160.

111 P.Kellis VII, 81, 75–76.

112 For these edicts, see Per Beskow, ‘The Theodosian Laws against Manichaeism’, in *Manichaeism Studies, vol. 1. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manichaeism, August 5–7, 1987*, ed. Peter Bryder (Lund: Plus Ultra, 1988); for a broader discussion of late-Roman law and Manichaeism, see Caroline Humfress, *Roman Law and the Prosecution of Heresy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 243–55.

instance, a specific Roman official (as perhaps in *P.Kellis v Copt. 20*) do not on their own prove a high degree of tension with society in general. At the same time, there is ample reason to see the accumulation of evidence as indicating a high level of tension. At least in Ammon's letter we are dealing with actual violence towards a plurality of adherents. The fact that they relate to different incidents, spread out over a long period and probably a wide geographical area show that difficulties were recurrent.¹¹³ Not least, that the community experienced trouble even before official sanctions began indicates that tensions were not only the product of authorities on the imperial level. These factors point to widespread and persistent tensions that, at certain points, could erupt in violence.

Brand is right in that we are not dealing with persecutions, in the sense of a deliberate program for the suppression of the group. But his argument that the problems were restricted to 'petty acts of discrimination' (cited above) is unpersuasive, insofar as it downplays the social consequences of such tensions. Even if violent eruptions were not regular, and mainly caused by small groups of 'extremists', they would have served to spread fear among other members of the group – especially if such acts had some level of acceptance in broader society or among state officials. Violence does not have to happen on a daily basis (or even be realised) in order to be effective: threats and abuse are enough to create an atmosphere of persecution, and strengthen in/out group dynamics.

5 Networks, Dissemination, and Tensions

In this chapter, then, we have found that the Manichaean community extended through several, interconnected circles in the village: within households, between neighbouring families, and among traders, and received additional support and legitimacy through an Oasis notable. The movement may have arrived in the village through the networks of the traders, although a (separate?) dissemination through the curial class cannot be excluded. However, ties of neighbourhood, kinship, and patronage would have allowed it to spread through the village at large and to include local farmers and other artisans. In this way, it came to embrace a large percentage of the village population. Moreover, the Manichaeans at Kellis did not shy away from participation

¹¹³ They may have been spread geographically as well: Ammon and his correspondent are in the Oasis, the Elect of *P.Kellis v Copt. 31* are in the Nile Valley, while Makarios seems to be somewhere in between at the time of the difficulties (see *P.Kellis v Copt. 22, l.69*).

in broader social structures, and likely had relations with people affiliated with other religious communities. This should lead us to conclude that Manichaeism was not inherently a 'secretive' religion, reserved for elite members or small cells.

Yet, evidence for religious tension and violence, found in randomly preserved material spread and spread out in time, does strongly suggest that this network experienced persistent pressure. As long as the community was not too severely hit, and able to recover from such incidents, the pressure may have strengthened their sense of shared identity, and contributed to solidify a sense of distinct 'groupness' within the network – perhaps evinced by the extensive use of kinship terms by Makarios and Matthaïos. At the same time, hardened group identities on both sides would have made it more difficult to reach groups beyond those already part of the network. Finally, in the long term, and as official pressure also mounted, it would have become difficult to maintain religious institutions. As a consequence, the network may well have begun to disintegrate.

Manichaean Books: Literary Texts and Textual Community

You do not lack anything from [the] mysteries of the wisdom of God. Much is [... the] wisdom that I have proclaimed to [...], that which I have written [for] you in [my holy books?]. You do [not lack] anything from the wisdom. There is only this one thing: devote yourself to what is written.

P.Kellis VI Copt. 54, ll.12–17

The above citation is taken from a letter fragment discovered in House 3, alongside the other documentary papyri of the Pamour family. It is clearly a very different type of letter than those of Pamour III, Pekysis, or even Makarios, however, and should probably be assigned to one of Mani's 'canonical' letters, deriving from a small collection of his *Epistles* of which a few codex leaves have been discovered in House 1–3. It demonstrates the importance of the written word, and not least of the books he produced, to Mani's sense of mission and self-conception. Yet, the importance of Manichean texts, even those of Mani, to his lay followers has been a matter of some controversy among scholars. The present chapter examines the remains of the *Epistles*, as well as other Manichaean literary texts from House 1–3, in order to illuminate this question and integrate them into the analysis of religious practice and identity at Kellis.

The investigation is conducted in two steps. First, we continue the discussion from Chapter 5 concerning the 'Manichaeanness' of lay identity at Kellis, now looking at what the literary papyri tell us. It was argued in that chapter that the documentary letters contain cues that indicate the authors' participation in a consciously Manichaean community. Yet it was also seen that, apart from some notable exceptions, most of these cues do not draw on specifically Manichaean myths or concepts, which has been taken to imply an absence of a distinctive 'Manichaeanness' among the laity. Scholars have taken the literary texts to point in the same direction. It has been proposed (although not argued *in extensio*) that the literary finds indicate that Manichaean ideas were of little interest to or even unknown to the people of House 1–3, supporting a depiction of the laity as adhering to a 'superior Christianity' rather than what is taken to be 'Manichaeism proper'. The current chapter examines these texts in order to consider the presence or absence of Manichaean ideas more closely.

Second, and in extension of this, we examine the role texts played in the reproduction of identity among the laity. In and of itself, the presence of Manichaean ideas in these texts is not sufficient to establish that they were appropriated by the laity. Rather, we have to grasp how the literary texts functioned – what they *did* – in the network. How were religious texts used? And how did the interplay between texts and practices impact the shared religious identity discussed previously? The second part of this chapter employs the concept of *textual community* in order to shed light on these issues, and examines the textual practices in which the literary papyri were embedded, as attested to by both the documentary and the literary papyri themselves.

1 A Manichaean World

Literary texts were widely dispersed among the other papyri found at House 1–3.¹ Texts were found both in Greek and Coptic. In addition, bilingual lists with religious vocabulary have also been found, such as the Syriac-to-Coptic and Syriac-to-Greek translations of, or tools for translating, religious texts (T.Kellis II Syr./Copt. 1, 2; P.Kellis II Syr./Gr. 1). These are not treated here, but are important evidence for the translation of Manichaean texts from Syriac and directly into Coptic by non-Syriac speakers.² Not all the literary texts were religious – as the find of a codex with speeches by the Athenian rhetor Isocrates in House 2 shows, – but the vast majority were. They consisted of psalm collections, prayers, literary ‘epistles’, and other works. What do they tell us about the nature of the community that utilised them? Gardner posed this question in the first volume of literary papyri from House 1–3.³ He noted the prevalence of devotional material, such as hymns and prayers, which – in conjunction with the documentary and archaeological remains – provided the basis for identifying the community as composed of Auditors. These Auditors were, in Gardner’s view, characterised by little engagement with the more

1 The term ‘literary’ is certainly not unproblematic, and the distinction literary – documentary must be seen as fleeting. For the purpose of my analysis here, I exclude the astrological calendars, horoscopes, and magical invocations published in *P.Kellis I* (Gr. 82–90), although constituting important evidence for magical practices side-by-side (and perhaps integrated) with Manichaean ones, for which see Chapter 8, Section 3.4. For similar material (mostly from other parts of Kellis, see de Jong and Worp, ‘A Greek Horoscope’; de Jong and Worp, ‘More Greek Horoscopes’; and Worp, ‘Miscellaneous New Papyri’.

2 Franzmann, ‘Syriac-Coptic Bilinguals’.

3 *P.Kellis II*, vi.

intricate teachings of Mani, and he proposed that the literary texts indicate that they primarily saw their religiosity as a higher form of Christianity:

The amazing detail of Mani's teachings as regards the various worlds of gods and demons, although a feature emphasized by the heresiologists for polemical purposes, would seem in some senses to have been restricted knowledge into which the elect might only gradually draw the convert. The concerns of the mass of believers were necessarily more matter-of-fact, for whom Manichaeism would have been a kind of higher and more effective Christianity.⁴

He furthermore maintained that the discovery of fragments of codices containing Mani's *Epistles* supported the reconstruction of a group whose members were primarily oriented towards ethical and practical concerns, and Christian Gospel exegesis – they 'evidence little interest in (and perhaps knowledge of) the fantastic worlds described in a text such as the *Kephalaia*.'⁵ In the introduction to *P.Kellis VI*, he again stressed that the texts evince 'a vibrant faith focused on praise and conversion'.⁶ Assessment of the evidence along these lines were also put forward elsewhere. In their important collection of Manichaean texts from the Roman Empire in translation, Gardner and Lieu asserted that:

For the lay faithful in the Roman Empire it was a kind of superior Christianity, and the metaphysical details that attract the attention of scholars (and the higher echelons of the elect) had little profile.... The textual material derived from Kellis (modern Ismant el-Kharab) evidences how carefully the hierarchy attempted to draw adherents further into the church and the knowledge of truth.⁷

The view that the laity at Kellis were in some sense shielded from 'proper' Manichaean teachings, and that 'pure' Manichaean doctrines were only imparted to lay people through gradual (individual?) initiation, or reserved for the Elect, has been accepted by many scholars.⁸

4 Ibid., ix–x.

5 Ibid., x.

6 *P.Kellis VI*, 6.

7 Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 9.

8 See e.g. Nongbri, *Before Religion*, 72; Pettipiece, 'Rhetorica Manichaica'; and Gábor Kósa, 'The Protagonist-Catalogues of the Apocryphal *Acts of Apostles* in the Coptic Manichaica – A Re-Assessment of the Evidence', in *From Illahun to Djeme. Papers Presented in Honour of Ulrich Luft*, ed. Eszter Bechtold, András Gulyás, and Andrea Hasznos (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 113.

One problem with this depiction is that there has, as of yet, not been any attempts to define exactly what is meant by such ‘metaphysical details’. Presumably, they include the diverse lists of emanations, detailed mythological drama, and intricate workings of demonic and divine forces in human bodies, found in the *Kephalaia* literature. But Manichaean metaphysics entailed much more central ideas that also depart drastically from mainstream (and, in some cases, non-mainstream) currents of Christian thought. They include:

- The central conflict between two primeval principles.
- The existence of a world soul divided and dispersed in all living beings, and its imprisonment through transmigration.
- The ability of conditioned human bodies to liberate souls (both their own and others’).
- Liberated souls’ ascent through the natural world, through the workings of divine forces such as the sun and the moon.
- Mani’s role as the founder of a new ‘Church’ through which salvation is achieved.

It is not clear from previous scholarly literature whether (or which of) these ideas are to be considered among the ‘metaphysical details’ of the Elect, or the ‘superior Christianity’ of the laity.

Rather than seeing these ideas as part of a superior Christianity, we shall here propose to conceptualise them as key ‘Manichaean notions’, a set of ideas that together constituted a specifically ‘Manichaean world’. Individually, most of them (bar the last) can be found in other religious or philosophical traditions, including other Christian frameworks of worship. Where all are present, however, they shaped a distinctively Manichaean world-view: one that made Manichaean rituals ‘work’ in the cosmos, constituting the logic that underpinned Elect practice. If they were indeed disseminated among the laity, those adherents who chose to appropriate them could use them as justifications (or *rationales*) for the Manichaean institutions in which they were asked to participate, a point to which we return towards the end of this chapter.⁹ While we should be careful not to privilege ideas over practice, as anthropologists and scholars of religion have long recognised, and while it is true that we cannot know whether ‘belief’ was present in the minds of specific individuals at Kellis, shared ideas cannot be neglected completely when considering religious identity.¹⁰

9 For the concept of justifications, see Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 110–22; for rationales as employed in the context of Manichaeism, see BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 22–23.

10 For the traditional criticism of ‘belief’, see e.g. McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 39–44. For recent trends, which have seen a resurgence of interest in the topic, see Bosco B. Bae, ‘Believing

We start by treating the various types of literary texts found in House 1–3, presenting their content and evaluating their engagement with Manichaean ideas. We survey the contents of the psalms, the prayers, and the *Epistles*, examining the way they present the notions of ‘dualism’, divine emanations, the imprisoned world soul, the ascent of individual souls, and the role of Mani and his Church.¹¹

2 Manichaean Literature

2.1 *The Psalms*

The main body of religious texts retrieved from House 1–3 were psalms and prayers. Psalms formed an important component of Manichaean ritual practice and literary works, often sung at church gatherings and festivals. Mani himself composed *Psalms* and *Prayers* for the community, which were counted among his canonical books – usually together, as a single work,¹² although they could be separated: in one passage from a Medinet Madi psalm, Mani’s works are likened to different remedies, the two last being: ‘[...] that is hot, the two *Psalms*, the weeping [...] there is a cure also that is cool, his *Prayers* and all his lessons.’¹³ This passage, moreover, indicates that Mani wrote two Psalms. Their contents have long been unknown,¹⁴ but recent work has provided new insight. A body of psalms from Turfan, reconstructed from multiple manuscripts and languages, does in fact include two psalms ascribed to Mani, called *The Praise of the Small Ones* and *The Praise of the Great Ones*.¹⁵ That these are Mani’s own *Psalms* may be supported by the identification of a prayer that accompanied them with the so-called ‘daily-prayer’, also attributable to him (see below).

For the most part, the psalms found at Kellis were not authored by Mani.¹⁶ They belong to the later body of literary productions found in the *Psalm-book* from Medinet Madi: several Kellis psalms can be identified with counterparts

Selves and Cognitive Dissonance: Connecting Individual and Society via “Belief”, in *Religions* 2016 7 no. 7.

11 The division between psalms and prayers here is for organisational purposes; the boundaries between these categories may have been fluid.

12 Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 153.

13 2 Ps. 47.3–4, trans. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 164.

14 Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 163–64.

15 Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst and Enrico Morano, eds., *Mani’s Psalms. Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian Texts in the Turfan Collection* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

16 Exceptions may be P.Kellis I Gr. 91 and 92, where echoes of Mani’s *The Praise of the Great Ones* are in evidence, as noted by Mattias Brand in his forthcoming study of Manichaean songs, which he has kindly shared. See Mattias Brand, ‘Making Manicheism Real: Group

in this codex. With its 672 pages, the *Psalm-book* is the largest known ancient papyrus codex, although it was split into two parts (1 Ps and 2 Ps) in modern times.¹⁷ It contained a large body of psalms, numbering at least 362, subdivided into different psalm groups composed by different authors and for different occasions; compiled, edited, and translated into Coptic from Syriac and/or Greek.¹⁸ It included psalm groups intended for specific ritual gatherings, such as Sunday Psalms.¹⁹

Turning to the Kellis texts, about 23 texts in Coptic and two in Greek have been identified as psalms; about half of these are contained in the remains of two codices, T.Kellis II Copt. 2 and P.Kellis II Copt. 2. Many are very fragmented, and the six or so psalms in T.Kellis II Copt. 2 are all abbreviated (giving only the first lines of each stanza), so the number whose contents can be made out is lower. Still, Gardner identified six of the psalms from the Kellis corpus with psalms known from the Medinet Madi *Psalm-book*.²⁰ A further identification was later made by Gregor Wurst.²¹ The Kellis psalms are local products, copied up by adherents in Kellis for their own liturgical needs, unlike the edited compendium of the Medinet Madi codex. For the psalms in T.Kellis II Copt. 2, a folio-board from a wooden codex, only the first words of each strophe were written out, suggesting that they were used as memory-aides for singers who already knew the texts.²² While text A2 is paralleled by Medinet Madi Psalm 68, Gardner noted an impression 'that the Kellis text is a more fluid and oral rendition', which 'reinforces the sense of the overall structure of T. Kell.

Formation through Song', in *Resonant Faith in Late Antiquity*, ed. Arkadiy Avdokhin (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

- 17 Only the second has been translated and published. A facsimile edition of 1 Ps was published by Søren Giversen in 1988. For more recent work, see Richter, 'Arbeiten'.
- 18 Of these, 289 were enumerated, in turn edited together with several other collections. For its editorial history, see Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, xix; Wurst, *Die Bêma-Psalmen*, 1–4; Richter, *Die Herakleides-Psalmen*, 1–7.
- 19 Gregor Wurst, 'Die Bedeutung der manichäischen Sonntagsfeier (Manichäischen Psalmenbuch I, 127)'. In *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit*, ed. Stephen Emmel, Martin Krause, Siegfried G. Richter, and Sofia Schaten (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 1999).
- 20 T.Kellis II Copt. 2 A2 (Psalm 68), 4a (Psalm 222), 4b (Psalm 108), 6 (Psalm 261), P.Kellis II Copt. 1A (Psalm 246), and 2 C1 (1 Ps 277–78). Of these, Psalms 222, 246, and 261 are found in 2 Ps, published by Allberry, while Gardner included transcriptions and translations from Giversen's facsimile-edition of 1 Ps in his extensive apparatus for Psalms 68, 108, and the unsorted and unnumbered leaves 277–278. See *P.Kellis II*, 18–24, 33, 42, 55, 64–72.
- 21 Wurst showed that P.Kellis II Copt. 2C2 parallels Psalm 126, also from 1 Ps., as noted in *P.Kellis VI*, 173.
- 22 Gardner notes that similar texts are known from Central Asian material. *P.Kellis II*, 9 n.57.

Copt. 2 as a subsidiary document; and derived from an “authorised” version.’²³ Not all of them were, perhaps, intended for singing. For P.Kellis II Copt. 1, a codex leaf with two psalms, Gardner described its production as coarse, notes that the pieces ‘are best termed a “scrap-book” of Manichaean Psalms’, and comments:

I suggest that it is the product of local catechumens, probably family members living in House 3, who undertook to copy out psalms as part of their spiritual praxis. Such are the evident errors that it can hardly be regarded as a professional production; and it is also doubtful whether it was actually used for liturgy.²⁴

He further proposed that the Kellis texts pertained to a second stage of redactional work, after an initial stage of translation from Greek and Syriac (likely in Middle Egypt), but predating ‘at least the latter parts of the process that gave the Medinet Madi codex its distinctive form.’²⁵ Yet the Kellis texts, too, were probably drawn from an authoritative collection, as indicated for T.Kellis II Copt. 2 (above), even if the logic behind their selection is unclear.

Much remains to be done with regards to the relationship between Ismant el-Kharab and Medinet Madi. For present purposes, the Kellis texts are close enough to the Medinet Madi versions for the latter (when preserved) to be used to examine the contents of the former, although potential changes during transmission should be kept in mind. In total, about ten psalms from Kellis are wholly preserved, preserved in large parts, and/or identifiable with Medinet Madi texts.²⁶ They form the basis of the analysis below.

2.1.1 Manichaean Notions in the Kellis Psalms

Many of the psalms are addressed to the soul, or take the perspective of the soul. The psalms in T.Kellis II Copt. 2 shift between addressing the soul (esp. A2, A3, A4) and taking the soul’s or the singers’ perspective, addressing divinities. Christ plays a prominent role and recurs frequently. Paul, too, occurs in A2, and is cited in the text (1 Cor. 3.19). But Manichaean notions also abound, and can be found in all the texts of which more substantial parts are preserved.

23 Ibid., 24.

24 Ibid., 59.

25 Ibid., xv.

26 T.Kellis II Copt. 2A2, 4a, 6, 7; P.Kellis II Copt. 1A, 1B, 2B, 2C1; P.Kellis II Gr. 92; P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I.

Regarding the fundamental duality of the two principles, it is not expressed explicitly in the preserved psalms. It is, however, taken for granted, and both forces are depicted. In particular, a wide array of Light divinities occur, associated with the Land of Light and presided over by the hidden Father of the Lights with his Aeons.²⁷ P.Kellis II Gr. 92 even contains a hymn to 'the foundation of the Lights', the 'hidden', and 'self-constituting' Father, i.e. to the chief god of the Manichaean pantheon himself. Although of course the ultimate source of all divinity and goodness, he is a distant figure, and, one might assume, unlikely to attract everyday worship, so the appearance of a hymn to him is of some note. While demonic Matter and her sons do occur (e.g. T.Kellis II Copt. 1A), they receive less attention.

The primeval war between them, and the establishment of the world, is presented in some detail. Several texts refer to the descent of the Light into Darkness as part of a stratagem to defeat it.²⁸ Divinities engaged with this struggle occur in a wide variety of psalms.²⁹ P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I is of particular note. The psalm as preserved here is dedicated to a female personification of the descending cosmic Soul, and features (other) striking details: the name of the obscure 'Beloved of the Lights' is preserved, as is parts of a list of the five 'Sons of the Living Spirit' who guard the cosmos, each with his 'canonical' virtue,³⁰ and the rare mytheme of the emergence of a boundary to separate Light from Darkness after the battle: 'a wall for the aeons of light established itself' (II.4–5r).

While 'cosmic' mythemes are in evidence, the psalms more often treat the Light in its imprisoned state. Several refer to the kinship between individual souls, the suffering world soul, and the gods: either through direct claims of kinship, or through depictions of the five Light Elements that constitute the world soul, and identifying their tribulations with that of the individual soul.³¹ The Medinet Madi Psalm 246, parts of which are preserved in P.Kellis II Copt. 1A, gives an evocative depiction of the world soul's suffering, how it has been divided and spread out in the material world:

27 P.Kellis II Copt. 1A and 1B; P.Kellis II Gr. 92; P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I.

28 P.Kellis II Copt. 1A and 1B; P.Kellis II Gr. 97B.I.

29 Such as the Mother of Life (P.Kellis II Copt. 1B, P.Kellis II Gr. 92), the First Man (P.Kellis II Copt. 1A, 2C1), the Beloved of the Lights (P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I), and the five 'Sons of the Living Spirit' (the 'Porters') (T.Kellis II Copt. 7; P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I).

30 They were, in order of importance: the Keeper of Splendour, the King of Honour, the Adamas of Light, the King of Glory, and the Omophoros (Atlas). Unfortunately, only the name of the King of Honour and two 'virtues' are preserved ('great thought', associated with the King of Honour, and 'great insight', with the Adamas).

31 For claims of kinship, see P.Kellis II Copt. 1A, 2C1; for references to the Elements, see T.Kellis II Copt. 7; P.Kellis II Copt. 1A, 1B, P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I.

Matter and her sons divided me ... I am in everything, I bear the skies, I am the foundation, I support the earths, I am the Light that shines forth, that gives joy to souls. I am the life of the world: I am the milk that is in all trees: I am the sweet water that is beneath the sons of Matter

2 Ps. 54.17–30, abridged

Even the ‘canonical’ sequence of Elements (i.e. air, wind, light, water, and fire), is preserved in P.Kellis II Copt. 1B. The nefarious demonic forces and their activities in human bodies are also in evidence.³² The Medinet Madi Psalm partly preserved in T.Kellis II Copt. 2A2, Psalm 68, dwells particularly on this topic:

A depth of darkness is this body that you (m.sg.) wear [...] all the righteous, they have suffered, [they have ...] been oppressed in it. The creature of darkness is this house of passion [...] these masses of flesh, these beasts that [...] It is a many-faced demon, a seven-[headed] dragon. It is many likenesses, many wickednesses, a place [...] The work of perdition is the garment of [darkness that we wear ...] they bound with (?) [...]

1 Ps. 97.13–22, trans. GARDNER

In the Medinet Madi version, the last fragmented line of this stanza alludes to the demonic creation of the body, while the one that follows alludes to its associated sins (1 Ps. 97.23–25). P.Kellis II Copt. 2B even features an example of an irredeemably evil creature: scorpions.³³

The most common theme, however, is that of the release and ascent of the soul. Here, too, the psalms evince extensive familiarity with distinctly Manichaean details tied to this process. These include divine entities that the soul receives upon its release from bondage, such as the Diadem of Light or ‘crown’, and the soul’s vision of its own ‘image’ or ‘form’.³⁴ There are several references to the role of the Sun and the Moon: ‘Ships of Light’ or ‘Towers’ to which souls ascend.³⁵ The workings of the ‘sphere’ that played a part in releasing Light particles from the earth, and their ascent through the atmosphere,

32 T.Kellis II Copt. 2A2, 7; P.Kellis II Copt. 1A, 2C1.

33 The scorpion was apparently a favourite example of a creature of pure evil among the Manichaeans; cp. *De mor.* 2.8.11. Perhaps the famous parable of the scorpion and the turtle influenced this choice.

34 T.Kellis II Copt. 2A4, 2C1; P.Kellis II Copt. 1A.

35 For ‘Ships of Light’, see T.Kellis II Copt. 6, P.Kellis II Copt. 1A; for ‘Towers’, see T.Kellis II Copt. 7.

are found.³⁶ It is captured in a striking image in P.Kellis II Copt. 1A1, describing how the cosmos releases Light: ‘the Sphere turns quickly, while the lights purify [the life]’ (ll.6–8).³⁷ The Perfect Man, the end-time ‘statue’ in which individual souls merge for transport to the Land of Light, occurs in T.Kellis II Copt. 7.

Finally, the psalms evince knowledge of central aspects of the church community. Mani is mentioned, both by name and in his capacity as Paraclete. His *Gospel*, from ‘alpha [to omega]’, is praised in T.Kellis II Copt. 7 (l.42).³⁸ He himself was probably the addressee of, and his torture and death are alluded to in preserved parts of, some of the abbreviated psalms.³⁹ The Church is several times referred to as ‘the Church of the Paraclete’.⁴⁰ The Paraclete is its founder, the one who ‘planted has the Tree of Knowledge’ in the Holy Church as it is expressed in Psalm 261 (2 Ps 75.30), partly preserved in T.Kellis II Copt. 6. The same psalm refers to the Elect as ‘Elect of God’, and describes them as ‘ministers of God who are in the Church’ (2 Ps 75.28–29). A Bema-Psalm, Psalm 222, is partly preserved in T.Kellis II Copt. 4a; it evinces knowledge of both the festival itself and the associated practice of confession, as well as the (to us) more obscure ‘greeting of the right hand’ and its mythical backdrop.⁴¹

2.2 *The Prayers*

Six texts from Kellis have been labelled ‘prayers’ by their editors. Of these, one is in Coptic and five are in Greek.⁴² Three of the Greek texts are rather short or incomplete.⁴³ In the following, we focus on three more substantial texts; P.Kellis II Copt. 2A5, P.Kellis VI Gr. 98, and P.Kellis II Gr. 91, each considered separately. P.Kellis VI Gr. 98 is of particular interest, as this prayer can be identified as a work of Mani himself, the so-called ‘daily prayer’, as we shall see below.

36 The atmosphere, T.Kellis II Copt. 2C1; for the sphere, T.Kellis II Copt. 4a; P.Kellis II Copt. 1A.

37 Allberry’s reconstruction of the Medinet Madi Psalm 246 on this point (2 Ps. 55.7–8) must thus be amended.

38 See also T.Kellis II Copt. 4a.

39 For Mani as addressee, see perhaps T.Kellis II Copt. 2B2; for his death, T.Kellis II Copt. 2A1 (and perhaps 2A4).

40 T.Kellis II Copt. 2A2, 4a, 6.

41 T.Kellis II Copt. 2A3, P.Kellis VI Gr. 97B.I.

42 Coptic: T.Kellis II Copt. 2A4; Greek: P.Kellis I Gr. 88; P.Kellis II Gr. 91, 93(?), 94; P.Kellis VI Gr. 98.

43 P.Kellis II Gr. 93 is very fragmented, P.Kellis I Gr. 88 is a short invocation on a wooden board, and P.Kellis II Gr. 94 is again a short text on a board, praising the Great Father of Lights (Gonis and Römer, ‘Ein Lobgesang’).

2.2.1 A Prayer for the Soul's Ascent: T.Kellis II Copt. 2 A5

First, another remarkable prayer is found in text A5 from the wooden codex T.Kellis II Copt. 2 (which also contained six or more abbreviated psalms, see above). The prayer is written from the point of view of a deceased soul, which invokes a series of Manichaean divinities before and during its ascent to the Land of Light. It starts with an appeal to the Third Ambassador, then Jesus the Splendour (Ἰῆς Ππῑεῖε), then two divinities, the Light Mind and the Virgin of Light. Mani, Spirit of Truth (ΠΠῑῶ Ἰῑῑῑῑῑ Πῑῑῑῑ Πῑῑῑῑῑῑ), is praised for having bestowed his knowledge upon the speaker, strengthened the soul in his faith, and completed it by his commandments. These divinities are all linked to the descent of Light into the world for the salvation of human beings, and are listed by order of emanation in the 'canonical' scheme known from other Manichaean sources.⁴⁴ Next appears the soul's counterpart (Πῑῑῑ) with three angels, and present it with gifts that symbolise victory over death. The soul starts to ascend, meeting the Judge, being washed in the Pillar, and becoming perfected in the Perfect Man – i.e. restored as fleshless and sinless and joined to other ascending souls. The judge is the so-called 'Judge in the Air' known from other Manichaean sources, indicating that the soul's journey takes place in the physical world.⁴⁵ It rises to the 'ship of living water' (Πῑῑῑ Ἰῑῑῑῑῑ Ἔῑῑῑῑ), i.e. the moon, where the First Man blesses it, and then to the sun (Πῑῑῑ Ἰῑῑῑῑῑ Ἔῑῑῑῑ) where the Third Ambassador is located. From there it is ferried to the Land of Light, where the 'first righteous one' and the Beloved of the Lights are. Finally, in a passage that may look ahead to the end-times, the Father of the Lights reveals his image.⁴⁶

Gardner notes that the terms echo those found in the Berlin *Kephalaia*, and that the depiction of redemption is consonant with that found elsewhere – indeed, it 'remained remarkably constant across the Manichaean world'.⁴⁷ Certainly, the prayer is an elegant presentation of Manichaean soteriology. The psalms contained in the same codex similarly deal with the ascent of the soul (see A4, in particular), perhaps suggesting that the prayer was chosen to accompany a cycle of worship especially concerned with this theme. Gardner suggests that it was used 'to reinforce the faith in the face of death'.⁴⁸

44 Jesus Splendour was an emanation of the Ambassador, the Light Mind (and the Virgin) of Jesus Splendour, and Mani (in his spiritual union with the Paraclete) of the Light Mind. See below.

45 E.g. keph. 28, where the Judge in the Air 'separates the righteous from the sinners' (1 Ke. 80.32). See also Lindt, *Mythological Figures*, 192–93.

46 As Gardner points out, it is probably a poetical anticipation of this event, see *P.Kellis II*, 26.

47 *Ibid.*, 25.

48 *Ibid.*

But the prayer's usage needs further comment. It has recently been argued that the text was used as part of an Elect initiatory ritual.⁴⁹ Certainly, it could be that the speaker is an Elect: the perfection and release achieved by the soul is often seen as reserved for them. If so, we should perhaps see this piece (and the entire codex?) as an Elect preserve, not used by the laity. On the other hand, Auditors were exhorted to emulate Elect behaviour, and would eventually reach the same destination. Although Auditors in general needed to be reincarnated as Elect before achieving salvation, chapter 91 of the Berlin *Kephalaia* even explains how perfectly behaved Auditors can still be released 'in one body', i.e. without needing to reincarnate (1 Ke. 228.20–229.20). It is at any rate unlikely that knowledge of this salvation, to which everyone should aspire, would have been kept hidden from them. There is no barrier to the prayer being recited by an Auditor – or a group of Auditors in unison, in keeping with the probable liturgical function of the codex.

2.2.2 The Daily Prayer: P.Kellis VI Gr. 98 or 'The Prayer of the Emanations'

A wooden board found in the rear courtyard of House 3 contained a well-preserved text entitled 'Prayer of the emanations' (Εὐχὴ τῶν προβολῶν), published as P.Kellis VI Gr. 98. Gardner remarks that 'in production, format and handwriting, this piece is generally superior to contemporary papyrus prayers'.⁵⁰ It is among the most significant finds of Manichaean literature from Kellis: a Greek translation of a work that can be ascribed to Mani. Even so, the text largely lacks specialised Manichaean (or Christian) terminology. Its Manichaean provenance was therefore questioned by Alexander Khosroyev, who argued that it should rather be seen as a pre-Christian gnostic text.⁵¹ However, a Manichaean background was maintained by Gardner, supported by Fernando Bermejo-Rubio.⁵²

Shortly after having published this text in *P.Kellis VI*, Gardner discovered that it could be identified with a prayer appended to the end of the *Praise of the Small Ones*, part of a psalm cycle from Turfan being edited by Desmond

49 So, for instance, see Julia Iwersen, 'A Manichaean Ritual of Ascent? A Discussion of T. Kell. Copt. 2 A 5', in *Zur lichten Heimat: Studien zu Manichäismus, Iranistik und Zentralasienkunde im Gedenken an Werner Sundermann.*, ed. Team Turfanforschung (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017).

50 *P.Kellis VI*, 111.

51 Alexander Khosroyev, 'Zu einem manichäischen (?) Gebet', in *Il Manicheismo. Nuove prospettive della ricerca*, ed. Alois van Tongerloo and Luigi Cirillo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).

52 *P.Kellis VI*, 112–15; Fernando Bermejo-Rubio, 'Further Remarks on the Manichaean Nature of Εὐχὴ τῶν προβολῶν (P. Kell. Gr. 98)', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 168 (2009).

Durkin-Meisterernst and Enrico Morano.⁵³ Furthermore, it could also be identified with a prayer described by al-Nadim, who attributed it to Mani himself.⁵⁴ This prayer was to be prayed daily – four times a day by Auditors and seven by the Elect, according to al-Nadim – and is therefore known as the Daily prayer. Adherents washed themselves, turned towards the sun during the day and the moon at night, and prostrated themselves while praying. Al-Nadim described it as consisting of twelve (sub-)prayers and prostrations, and gives the text of the six first of these. For the Roman era, the prayer was previously known from remarks by Augustine, and an allusion to it has since also been found in the *Kephalaia* (1 Ke. 376.22–29).⁵⁵ The complete text, however, is only found at Kellis. Admittedly, it only contains ten of the twelve verses mentioned by al-Nadim. As Gardner points out, this is likely to be explained by the fact while verse three to twelve are directed at various divinities, the two first verses given by al-Nadim are made in Mani's honour, and so not originally part of the prayer. The Kellis text preserves only the ten verses written by Mani. Each starts with the phrase 'I worship and glorify' (προσκυνῶ καὶ δοξάζω), praising in turn a list of divinities. These are:

1. The Father of Lights, who has perfected the 'foundation' (σύστασιν) of the aeons (ll.7–8), and is 'the basis (σύστημα) of every grace and life and truth' (ll.13–14).
2. The collective of all gods (θεοὺς), angels, splendours, enlighteners, powers, all of whom 'subsist in holiness, and by his light are nourished, being purified of all darkness and malignance' (ll.19–22).
3. The shining angels, who suppressed 'the darkness (τὸ σκότος) and its arrogant powers that were desiring to make war with the one who is first of all' (ll.26–29). They ordered the world and bound in it the 'foundation (σύστασιν) of contempt' (ll.32–33).
4. 'The shining mind, king, Christ' (ll.34–35), who came from the aeons and interpreted the mysteries, separating truth from lie, light from darkness, good from evil, righteous from the wicked, on behalf of all races and in all languages.
5. The Living God, who 'raised up all things, what is ordered above and below' (ll.57–59).

53 Now published. See Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano, *Mani's Psalms*, xvii.

54 Iain Gardner, 'Manichaean Ritual Practice'; "With a Pure Heart and a Truthful Tongue": The Recovery of the Text of the Manichaean Daily Prayers', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4, no. 1 (2011).

55 Gardner, "With a Pure Heart", 85–86.

6. The light givers, 'both the sun and the moon and the virtuous powers in them, which by wisdom conquer the antagonists and illuminate the entire order, and of all oversee and judge the world, and conduct the victorious among the souls into the great aeon of light' (ll.60–69).
7. The five great lights (τὰ μεγάλα πέντε φῶτα), 'through which by participation power and beauty and soul and life are found in all' (ll.73–75).
8. The gods who 'uphold the creation (δημιούργημα)' (ll.80–81).
9. The shining angels who rule the universe, subdue demons, and protect righteousness.
10. All the righteous (δικαίους) – those who have existed, exist, and will exist – 'in order that all the ones whom I have worshipped and glorified and named may help me and bless me with favour, and release me from every fetter and all compulsion and torment and reincarnation (μετενσωματώσεων) and grant me access into the great aeon of light' (ll.103–113).

This summary suffices to show that the prayer contains a compressed presentation of the whole Manichaean mythical scheme most relevant to the individual: from the mixing of Light and Darkness until the soul's ascension to the 'great aeon of light'. Admittedly, the emphasis is on the positive, divine powers that regulate the earth and liberate its souls, while the powers of darkness receive little attention. It might, then, be taken to downplay the characteristic Manichaean dualism. But as Bermejo-Rubio has pointed out, the text does posit an opposition between two radically different 'foundations' (both termed *systasis*), each with associated 'powers'.⁵⁶ To be sure, it depicts an 'asymmetrical dualism', in which the Light is regarded as superior and in some sense prior, but this is common for Manichaean texts.⁵⁷ Light divinities are described as 'gods' and as emanations from the Father. The Light (in the world) needs to be purified and separated from the Darkness, and so the divinities construct the world out of Darkness, keep evil in check, and descend to save souls. A long passage on 'the shining mind, king, Christ' may allude to, or perhaps prefigure, the notion of the saviour-divinity's gradual descent to the world through multiple emanations.⁵⁸ The sun and moon are both themselves divine, and

56 Bermejo-Rubio, 'Further Remarks', 223–24.

57 Ibid. See also Concetta G. Scibona, 'How Monotheistic is Mani's Dualism? Once More on Monotheism and Dualism in Manichaean Gnosis', *Numen* 48, no. 4 (2001): 455–56.

58 *P.Kellis VI*, 126. We may already here have a prefiguration of the division of soteriological emanations into separate stages found in the Berlin *Kephalaia*: in *P.Kellis VI* Gr. 98, the Mind, King, Christ, has come 1) from the outer aeons, 2) first to the created reality above, 3) then to the created reality below, 4) then to all races in every language. *Keph.* 7 (1 Ke. 34.13–36.26) lists, in addition to the hidden Father of Greatness, the soteriological emanations as: the Third Ambassador, 'model of the King of Lights' > Jesus the Splendour,

house divinities responsible for ‘wisdom’ and ‘judgement’ (alluding to Jesus the Splendour and the Third Ambassador), to whom souls ascend before entering the ‘great aeon’. Soul and life persist in the world through five great lights, i.e. the trapped Light Elements.⁵⁹ In addition to praising the gods, adherents glorify the Elect, who are instrumental in releasing their souls from ‘all compulsion and torment and reincarnation’.

Certainly, many divinities known from the Medinet Madi traditions are not specifically named, or occur in variant forms.⁶⁰ It is likely that the terminology was still being shaped when the prayer was written – presumably by Mani himself – as argued by Gardner. While I disagree with the assertion that the religion rapidly turned into ‘something that was other than that which Mani professed’,⁶¹ the notion that technical vocabulary and systematised teachings developed gradually is well-founded.

The practice associated with the prayer seems to have undergone some changes as well. This is indicated by the absence of the verses dedicated to Mani, and the instruction at the end of the Kellis text, which reads: ‘blessed is he who prays this prayer frequently, at least three times a day’ (ll.124–126).⁶² The number of three daily prayers is indicated by a Parthian Turfan fragments as well, and so al-Nadim’s claim that the prayer was said four times a day (by the Auditors) likely reflects a later development.⁶³ But even if there were changes in terminology and practice, the key notions of belief were already present in the prayer.

‘through whom shall be given life eternal’ > the Light Mind, ‘father of all the apostles’ > the Apostle of Light, who ‘shall on occasion come and assume the church of the flesh’. This is consonant with the stages in P.Kellis VI Gr. 98 (omitting the Father of Greatness): 1) the Ambassador located in the sun, i.e. the gate to the ‘outer aeons’; 2) Jesus Splendour in the moon, in the heavenly ‘created reality above’; 3) the Light Mind active in the earthly ‘created reality below’; through 4) its manifestation in Apostles of Light, sent to different peoples.

59 Alexander Khosroyev (‘Zu einem manichäischen (?) Gebet’) argued for identifying these as the five planets, but cf. *P.Kellis VI*, 113–14; and see Bermejo-Rubio, ‘Further Remarks’; Gardner, “With a Pure Heart”.

60 E.g. ‘the Living God’ for ‘the Living Spirit’ (*ibid.*, 126); ‘shining mind, king, Christ’ for the Light Mind (and other soteriological divinities, see n.58, above); ‘five lights’ for the ‘five Light Elements’; and ‘gods’ and ‘shining angels’ for the divinities entrusted with holding and guarding the world, instead of titles such as ‘Sons of the Living Spirit’.

61 Gardner, “With a Pure Heart”, 98–99.

62 Initially, Gardner somewhat hesitantly translated this line as ‘at least every third day’ (*P.Kellis VI*, 127–28), but this translation is now obsolete. See Gardner, “With a Pure Heart”, 97.

63 Four is also found in the Uighur communal confession, the *Xuastvanift*. Gardner, “With a Pure Heart”, 97.

2.2.3 A Prayer to the Light Mind? P.Kellis II Gr. 91

Finally, we may note a short but complete bipartite prayer contained in a papyrus bifolium, published as P.Kellis II Gr. 91.⁶⁴ The first part (ll.1–18) addresses one or several divinities by a series of titles: ‘the firstborn word’, ‘the father of the intellectual man’, ‘the mother of life’, ‘the first apostleship’, ‘the splendour of the enlighteners’, ‘our holy spirit’, ‘the salt of the church’ and ‘the pilot of goodness’. The second part appeals to be made ‘worthy’ to be ‘your (sg.) faithful’ on behalf of ‘us’, described with another series of epithets (‘those who are perfected in you’, ‘those who are sober in you’, etc.). Several of the titles fit the Light Mind: in particular ‘the father of the intellectual man’ and ‘our holy spirit’, as Gardner and Worp point out,⁶⁵ but also ‘the First Apostleship’ (e.g. 1 Ke. 35.21–24) and ‘the pilot’ (e.g. 2 Ps. 161.5–6). The activities of the Light Mind in the bodies of the Elect during the ritual meal could explain the expression ‘salt of the church’ as well. The piece, then, might be a prayer devoted to this divinity, whose importance is evident also in the documentary letters. The ‘Mother of Life’, however, is directly identifiable with a different Manichaean divinity. Gardner and Worp suggest that the piece may simply be a piece of popular devotion.⁶⁶ An alternative interpretation that might be broached, however, is that the writer is using juxtapositions (‘firstborn’ and ‘father’, ‘father’ and ‘mother’) to allude to the idea that different divinities in the end are one and the same, i.e. the active, divine Light.

2.3 *Mani’s Epistles*

Like his followers in fourth-century Kellis, Mani was an avid letter writer. His letters became (in)famous in late antiquity, not least because they were collected and promoted as a part of the canonical writings of his Church.⁶⁷ In one chapter of the Berlin *Kephalaia*, Mani’s works are likened to gifts to the community from various divinities. The *Living Gospel* was from the Third Ambassador, the *Treasury* from the Pillar of Glory, the *Treatise, Mysteries*, and *Giants* all from the Light Twin. Finally, ‘all the *Epistles* that I have written for you from time to time: they are my gifts and my presents’.⁶⁸ This work, then,

64 The editors here, Iain Gardner and Klaas A. Worp, report that Ludwig Koenen has suggested a metrical pattern in the text, potentially implying that this may in fact be a psalm. *P.Kellis II*, 132 n.417.

65 *Ibid.*, 136.

66 *Ibid.*

67 For some recent works, see Werner Sundermann, ‘A Manichaean Collection of Letters and a List of Mani’s Letters in Middle Persian’, in *New Light on Manichaeism*, ed. Jason D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Gardner, ‘Some Comments on Mani’s *Epistles*’.

68 1 Ke. 355.15–17, trans. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 154.

was intimately associated with Mani himself: less divinely inspired than his other writings, perhaps, and more closely aligned with his work as a preacher and community organiser. Indeed, its content seems to have chiefly related to communal discipline.⁶⁹ A copy was still in circulation in the tenth century, as al-Nadim could still list the names of the individual epistles, along with those by other early church leaders, totalling 76 in all.⁷⁰

A large codex of *Epistles* was found at Medinet Madi, but was subsequently lost. Only a few, mostly unpublished leaves from this codex are in scholarly hands today.⁷¹ The discovery of fragments stemming from this work at Kellis is therefore of great significance. Pieces of two codices identified as containing letters of a literary nature ('epistles') were published as P.Kellis VI Copt. 53 and 54 in the second volume of Kellis literary texts.⁷² These were found in House 3, in rooms which also contained documentary letters (Room 6 and 3), but both style and content indicate that they should be assigned to literary works by Mani, in all likelihood his *Epistles*. Their contents are centred on pastoral matters, such as internal conflicts and discipline, concerns that probably characterise this work more generally.⁷³

Gardner further argues that the *Epistles* evince Mani's authentic Christian voice, in turn suggesting that he primarily saw himself as the 'Apostle of Jesus Christ' and not the Apostle par excellence found in the developed Manichaean Church:

The obvious hypothesis is that the positioning of Mani at the centre and as the fount of the religion is a matter that gradually developed, certainly after his death ... It is only in the scholastic tradition of the *Kephalaia* and so forth that Mani becomes 'the apostle' in the sense of final or definite revealer in a series, where Jesus becomes only an earlier one.⁷⁴

The use of the *Epistles*, rather than more 'advanced' Manichaean literature, could be taken to indicate that the community at Kellis saw Mani as a Christian leader whose teachings were primarily ethical and practical, and had limited

69 A gloss contained in the third article of the Chinese *Compendium* gives one of its eponyms as 'the sacred book of discipline'. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 156.

70 Translated in Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 115–20.

71 Together with other preserved material relating to the *Epistles*, these are being edited by Iain Gardner and Wolf-P. Funk. See Gardner, 'Some Comments on Mani's *Epistles*', 177 n. 15.

72 P.Kellis VI, 14–15.

73 Gardner, 'Some Comments on Mani's *Epistles*', 177.

74 P.Kellis VI, 78; and see Gardner, 'Mani's Religious Development'.

interest in his cosmology and institutionalised Church. However, as we shall see below, the way these letters frame both their ethical and practical concerns, Mani's own role, and the community as a whole, complicates this picture.

2.3.1 Discipline and the Soul: P.Kellis VI Copt. 53

Most of the fragments identified as part of Mani's *Epistles* belong to a single codex, labelled P.Kellis VI Copt. 53. The codex is not large enough to contain all the letters attributed to Mani; it likely held a selection from the larger corpus.⁷⁵ Eleven leaves from mostly discontinuous parts of the codex have been assigned to it, with material belonging to at least three different letters. Based on the content, Gardner provisionally titled two of these letters the 'Sickness letter' and the 'Enemy letter', respectively, while noting that the Sickness letter has some affinities with a writing known from elsewhere as *The Epistle of the Ten Words*.⁷⁶

The best-preserved leaves are those assigned to the Sickness letter (leaves 12, 1, 6, 31–34, and 51/52, in Gardner's reconstruction). The author, whose name is lost, styles himself 'apostle of Jesus Chrestos'. He addresses a man whose name is also lost and the brethren who are with him (P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,12.1–6). He invokes 'the Father, the God of Truth' and asserts that he has sealed his interlocutors in himself (12.13–14), giving emphasis to his authority. These features make an identification with Mani all but certain. In the first preserved bulk of the letter-body (leaves 31–34) he describes a dire sickness he is suffering from, which has been exacerbated by a letter sent by the addressee. In the mostly illegible mid-section of leaf 31, the words 'congregation of the holy ones' (31.12) and 'envy and quarrelling' (31.16) can be read: conflict within the congregation appears to be the topic. In the next leaf, it becomes clear that the addressee, in a previous letter, has complained about an adherent who has uttered (evil) words against another member of the community (32.1–5). Mani now responds, saying that by wounding one person, the offender has unwittingly wounded 'the entire righteousness and godliness' (32.8). The addressee should speak gently with the offender to lead him away from such sin. The next two leaves (33–34) are more fragmented, but continue the topic of problems within the church, as a passage reads: 'For there are people of this kind in church, who are not strong; rather they look for excuses and empty words' (33.23–25). In the last page assigned to this letter, leaf 51, Mani seeks to encourage the (now plural) addressees by stressing the need for living up to their ideals. The passage contains a strong formulation of his own role within the community:

⁷⁵ P.Kellis II, 13. See also Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 294–95.

⁷⁶ For the details of the reconstruction of these letters, see P.Kellis VII, 11–27.

Remember your first faith that you had in your youth: How I laboured in the congregations of the sects (ⲛⲥⲁⲮⲲⲤ̅ ⲛ̅ⲛⲁⲔⲒⲙⲁ) when there was yet no catechumens and no church. You have become people made better by blessed poverty. Now, since you have been bringing forth catechumens and churches – you proclaimed and they listened to you – you are obliged the more now to perfect the blessings of this poverty, by which you will gain the victory over the sects and the world. It is profitable for you to perfect it and be vigilant in it; because poverty is your glory, the crown of your victory.

P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,51.1–17

The author, then, is clearly Mani, while the addressees must be leading Elect ('bringing forth catechumens and churches') who have turned to him for a ruling on a breach of discipline among themselves. In answer, Mani invokes his role as founder: at the time he began his mission there were no catechumens or church, and he had to toil among the 'sects'. These Elect should cherish their good fortune, as Mani has prepared the way for their victory. He here makes a powerful statement concerning his own authority, often repeated by later ecclesiastical sources: Mani had not relied on a pre-existing community, but made his own 'good election' in opposition to the 'sects' (e.g. 1 Ke. 16.3), creating a superior Church where true practice of blessed poverty could proliferate (e.g. 1 Ke. 13.30–14.7).⁷⁷

A similar passage on troubles within the community comes from another letter in the same codex, the Enemy letter. Here Mani relates how some people have come to him slandering the addressee, apparently a senior member, in order to make Mani remove him:

[...] who are in the church [...] who came to the [... they (?)] sent and [...] to me [...] you, they wishing to defile [you ...] This should never happen. They are thinking: "If we are able to report all these words before our teacher (ⲛ̅ⲛⲥⲁⲲ) he may turn him away and divest him (ⲛ̅ⲒⲕⲁⲔⲉⲣⲉⲮⲉ ⲛ̅ⲙⲁⲒ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ Ⲳ̅ⲛ̅) of his ministry (ⲧⲒⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲒⲙ̅Ⲓⲧⲧ), and he defiles his heart". However, I, this is what I have done: The people who proclaimed these words before me, wishing to defile you; I have gone to them with strong words according to their worth.

P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,61.7–20

77 See also Samuel N. C. Lieu, "My Church Is Superior ...": Mani's Missionary Statement in Coptic and Middle Persian, in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, ed. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirer (Quebec: Laval University Press, 2006).

Mani sees through them, and instead it is the accusers who are rebuked. This passage shows that the community Mani is speaking of, as hinted at above, already had its own institutions, with officials organised in a hierarchy. 'Teacher' (ϙαϑ), the title applied indirectly to Mani, is clearly not solely a master of students: it is an office with the power to divest (καθαίρω, 'put down', 'depose') another of his ministry (ⲙⲏⲧⲱⲙⲱⲣⲧ).⁷⁸ Another leaf, probably belonging to a third letter, concerns the errors of a certain presbyter. It gives a similar impression, and reads:

And any presbyter whom you (*sg.*) [...] on one or two occasions, and he does not [...] and he does not take from you my teaching; Write to me and tell me who or where he is, so that I myself will know him; this person who is inferior in this manner, who hates his benefit. For understand that there is no more severe sin for this presbyter, before me, than this one: That he does not receive this teaching that I have proclaimed for him. Now, when someone will [not] receive [...] you are obliged to send [me (a message) and ...] him so that I will know.

P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,81.2–15

Mani demands that the presbyter's wrongdoings be reported to him.⁷⁹ As in the passages from the Sickness letter and the Enemy letter, breeches of discipline and conflicts between Elect are to be handled within the structure of the community. The principle of mutual observation of Elect by Auditors has recently been stressed by BeDuhn, as a control mechanism that increased pressure on the Elect to act in accordance with the discipline.⁸⁰ This letter strengthens the impression that mutual observation played a central role. Mani, as a superior, was to be informed and take action against trouble-makers. A system of observation and report was to regulate behaviour among adherents. Considering that the addressee is an Elect, and likely a senior member, such supervision was not considered as limited to Elect-Auditor relationships, but was to pervade the entire Church. As we shall see in Chapter 9, peer scrutiny between Elect was a central tool in the Manichaean institutional repertoire also in practice.

78 Perhaps the title of teacher being ascribed to Mani by himself here explains why the archegos, the head of the Church and Mani's 'heir', on Augustine's testimony in *De haer.* (46.16) was considered first among the other teachers, and not a (completely) separate office.

79 It is interesting to see this passage in connection with an unfortunately very fragmented chapter from the Berlin *Kephalaia*; keph. 166. As in the letter from Kellis, a rogue presbyter and the sending of messages are central features of this kephalaion (1 Ke. 411.15, 412.1–3).

80 BeDuhn, 'Domestic Setting', 264–65.

The above suggests that disciplinary concerns were of primary interest in the letters. Nonetheless, there are points at which cosmological notions intrude. In the Enemy letter, Mani alludes to the body's 'bondage', telling his followers:

The word that our lord proclaimed with his mouth has been fulfilled with me ... All these things I have endured from my children and my disciples; they whom I saved from the bondage of the world and the bondage of the body. I took them from the death of the world. I, all these things I have borne and endured from time to time, from many people.

P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,41.15–20

He continues by exhorting the Elect addressees to prepare for 'long-suffering', and be like an athlete, a 'good priest', and a farmer who tends a vineyard, and takes its fruits to his master (42.22–25). This latter metaphor may well allude to the role of the Elect in refining Light and sending it to the Father: especially as the discussion on the next leaf also concerns 'our exalted soul' (ΤῆΥΥΧΗ ΕΤΣΑΔΕ), which Satan has lied about, and which is the light of the Father 'which enlightens the world' (43.16–17), i.e. the trapped Light Soul. Mani exhorts: 'Again, pay heed to your (*pl.*) exalted soul, that is, the life of the universe which is spread out in every place; for how many are the wounds, how great the terrors endured by (?) humanity' (43.19–24).⁸¹ This is an explicit reference to the world soul, in which the addressees also take part, and which can be wounded by sin. Again, in the Sickness letter, one offender, by an act of transgression, had sinned against 'the entire righteousness and godliness' (32.8): a cosmic wrong caused by an unwitting human agent. Here we find Mani making connections between macrocosmic forces and individual ethics, similar to the (admittedly more abstract) mythological-ethical reasoning concerning divinities and virtues from the 'scholastic' traditions, in e.g. keph. 38 and P.Kellis VI Gr. 97.

2.3.2 Communal Love: P.Kellis VI Copt. 54

A leaf assigned to a different codex, P.Kellis VI Copt. 54, also contains a text that can be attributed to Mani, although its classification as one of his *Epistles* is less clear.⁸² The first legible part concerns an unknown logion by a 'saviour' on love and redemption. Again, Mani asserts his own position: 'I, I [give] strength to my [limbs (?); these] whom I gather in' (ll.7–8). This echoes the Berlin

81 See also P.Kellis VI Gr. 98 (ll.73–75), and the discussion above.

82 See *P.Kellis VI*, 85, 91. Gardner has more recently suggested that it might be plausibly identified with the 'Letter of the Seal', where Mani sealed the community in his love. Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 310–14.

Kephalaia, where Mani is often made to refer to his adherents as ‘limbs’,⁸³ and furthermore stresses that it is by his authority that adherents are ‘gathered in’, i.e. redeemed. Next, Mani stresses the completeness of the revelations that he has offered, through the citation that opened this chapter:

You do not lack anything from [the] mysteries of the wisdom of God. Much is [... the] wisdom that I have proclaimed to [...], that which I have written [for] you in [my holy books?]. You do [not lack] anything from the wisdom. There is only this one thing: devote yourself to what is written. (ll.12–17)

He then prays that they the recipients possess love for each other and avoid ‘divisions, disharmony, quarrels or reproaches’ (ll.20–21). He exhorts them to practice ‘love and gentleness’ (ll.23–24). Towards the end of the leaf, he comes with an injunction concerning love between the different grades of the community, which in Gardner’s translation reads:

you will love one [another]: the [teachers] will love the teachers (ἄναξ), the wise ones (ἄν[α]β[ε]ο[υ]γ[ε]) love the wise ones, the bishops (ἐπίσκοπος) love the bishops, the disciples (ἰμ[α]θη[τ]ῆς) love the disciples, the brothers love the brothers, also the sisters love the sisters; and you will all become children of [a] single undivided body (σῶμα). Now, [this is] the way that you should behave, my loved ones, so that you will all possess this one love [and one (?) ...]; because this love is the seal [of] all your deeds. For these bodies [belong to] you for a little while. Therefore, man [cannot remain] without the seal [of] the love [of his] brotherhood and that of his redeemer. (ll.49–63)

Mani here proclaims that the disposition of love is to govern internal relationships between members of the community, in order to create a ‘single undivided body’. As in the cases of errant Elect above, the focus is on unity and harmony within church ranks.⁸⁴ The title of ‘teacher’ heads the list, demonstrating that it had already received prominence within the Church, as is also shown by its application to Mani in the Enemy letter above. The other titles are not in accordance with later lists, however. The office of ‘bishop’ is listed third, replacing the office of ‘presbyter’ – although this office is found in the

83 As adduced in Chapter 5, Section 5, n.87.

84 A similar emphasis of intra-communal ‘love’ is also found in 1 Ke. (e.g. keph. 63, ‘Concerning love’).

above-cited P.Kellis VI Copt. 53. It may suggest that the precise order and terms were not as fixed at the time of the writing of these letters as they became at a later stage.⁸⁵ The relationship between, and/or translation of, these terms may have undergone development. Nevertheless, the importance of a hierarchical structure at an early date is clear.

From the above examination, it emerges that while the *Epistle* fragments from Kellis certainly focus on matters of ethical conduct and discipline, they frame these issues within the boundaries of an institutionalised, socio-religious body. The originator and final authority of this body is Mani, and it seems to me that his role as the final 'apostle', whose revelations legitimised a new movement, are already present here. It is seen in his claim to have founded a completely new Church in the Sickness letter, his self-presentation as having 'saved' the addressees and fulfilled the words of Jesus in the Enemy letter, and especially the emphasis on his own revelations as providing the complete truth in P.Kellis VI Copt. 54. Citations from his other writings, such as the *Living Gospel* and *Šabuhraġan*, point in this direction as well.⁸⁶ Not least, the practical matters he attends to are anchored in his cosmological system. Mani's *Epistles* may primarily have dealt with ethical and disciplinary issues – although letters known from other sources are known to have featured detailed myth – but the ethics expounded there were not easily separated from cosmological notions.⁸⁷

2.4 *A Proto-Kephalaion?*

We have already seen that the notions discussed at the beginning of this chapter are present in the Kellis literary papyri. Close engagement even with more esoteric, cosmological details is evinced by a wooden board discovered in House 3, T.Kellis II Copt. 1, which may moreover suggest a didactical purpose. The board contains a Coptic text listing the five properties (ⲥⲰⲬⲏⲙⲁ) of the divinity known as the Third Ambassador, who 'exists corresponding to five properties of the Father' (1.3). He is described as 1) exalted, 2) king, 3) a light dispersed over aeons, 4) hidden, and 5) in possession of Twelve Virgins.⁸⁸ For each, except in

85 See P.Kellis VI, 92 n.31.

86 Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 97, 102–3.

87 That other letters concerned themselves with 'myth' is evident. Mani's *Fundamental Epistle*, read to Augustine as an Auditor and attacked by him early in his episcopacy, 'in which almost the whole of what you believe is contained' (c. *ep. Man.* 5, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 236), was centrally concerned with the war between Light and Darkness, and described the aspects of the respective realms in detail.

88 The Twelve Virgins were a set of divinities that manifested the effects of the disciplinary regime on the Elect body, according to texts found at Turfan. Whether this concept was fully systematised in the western tradition is unclear. BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 226. See also 1 Ke. 97.7–19.

the case of the third, it is emphasised that the Third Ambassador's properties are modelled on those of the (highest) 'Father' with his Aeons, i.e. the Father of Lights, God of Truth. The third property, that of being 'dispersed' in all the Light, explicitly reflects the notion of higher and lower emanations ultimately being the same deity.

The catechetical style of listing, and the division of processes and divinities into categories of five, are important characteristics of the Berlin *Kephalaia*. On the other hand, it lacks the literary frame that attributes the information to 'the Enlightener' or 'the Apostle', also characteristic of that work.⁸⁹ Pettipiece has seen the prevalence of lists of five as part of a process of systematisation which he calls 'pentadisation' conducted within the scholastic tradition of the Church.⁹⁰ Whether the board represents an urtext of kephalaic material, later incorporated in such a systematisation, or was itself derived from an authoritative collection such as the Berlin *Kephalaia*, is not known. Gardner, followed by Pettipiece, appears to prefer the former solution.⁹¹ However, the process by which such urtexts were created and canonised, if they did not already derive from authoritative attempts at systematisation, seems to me to require more attention if this hypothesis is to be accepted. At any rate, this text clearly shows that 'scholastic' modes of discourse were current in Kellis. But who was it for? The board would appear to have been a teaching or mnemonic instrument, given its rough production and schematic list of aspects without a literary framing. Gardner describes it as 'a "flip card", utilised for the easy learning of the complex details of Manichaean doctrine', and goes on to write:

The personal letters from Kellis evidence that the lay faithful regarded Manichaeism as a kind of superior Christianity; and the specifically Manichaean divinities such as the Third Ambassador rarely intrude. It would seem that in their evangelical mission the elect presented the faith as that of the true church, and as the fulfilment of Jesus' teaching. Catechumens would then be slowly drawn into the community and gradually introduced to the higher knowledge of Mani's revelations. This process is also apparent from Augustine's writings.... It also suggests the presence of elect at Kellis.⁹²

89 See *P.Kellis II*, 4–7.

90 Timothy Pettipiece, *Pentadic Redaction in the Manichaean Kephalaia* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

91 *P.Kellis II*, 4; Pettipiece, *Pentadic Redaction*, 12.

92 *P.Kellis II*, 4.

The distinction between presenting the faith as the ‘true church’ of Jesus and slowly drawing believers into the higher mysteries is not clear to me – the Elect would presumably have seen no distinction, just a gradually more complete and more satisfying account of the faith made manifest by Jesus, explained and revealed by Mani. The Third Ambassador figured, as we saw, in the prayer in T.Kellis II Copt. 2A5. He was not a secret divinity reserved for the few, even if he was not often invoked, and his specific attributes were probably primarily known to those who made further studies. The presence of this board raises intriguing questions regarding the interaction between Elect and laity in House 1–3. It was found in the same room and deposit level as material written by Auditors.⁹³ It may have been used by an Elect lecturing or instructing Auditors on the role of the Third Ambassador, and then for some reason been left behind. But it could also be that the board was copied by an Auditor, perhaps from a text provided by an Elect. At any rate, the mundane context in which it was found must be taken to indicate that this board was intended for use among the laity.⁹⁴ It shows that the appropriation of ‘esoteric’ knowledge was not restricted to the circles of Elect, but was explained to and even memorised by some lay believers.

3 Textual Practices

The above examination shows that all the key notions of the Manichaean world were present in the literary texts found at Kellis. It furthermore suggests that texts played a vital role for the laity there. But in what way? And how did they impact shared identity? In order to elucidate these questions, we may draw on Brian Stock’s concept of *textual community*.⁹⁵ This concept was developed in

93 Room 11 (dep. 4), containing letters by Pekysis to ‘father’ Horos I (P.Kellis VII Copt. 78–79); P.Kellis I Gr. 81 by Sabinos to Elias dealing with a landlord; and P.Kellis VII Copt. 93, by Timotheos to Talou, concerning freight.

94 Another find of a similar character is the unfortunately very fragmented text in P.Kellis II Copt. 8, from House 2, which may also contain kephalaic material. It features an exposé on day and night, and the heights (and the depths), corresponding to similar teachings of Mani. *P.Kellis II*, 96–97.

95 For this notion applied to ancient Christianity, see Robin Lane Fox, ‘Literacy and Power in Early Christianity’, in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 28–36; Bremmer, ‘Social and Religious Capital’; David Brakke, ‘Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity’, in *Invention, Rewriting, Usurpation: Discursive Fights over Religious Traditions in Antiquity*, ed. Jürg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and David Brakke (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012). For a critical discussion, see Jane Heath, “‘Textual Communities’”: Brian

order to grasp the relationship between text and social formation, designating ‘a community whose life, thought, sense of identity and relations with outsiders are organised around an authoritative text’.⁹⁶ It emphasises that only one or a few members need to have a literate education in order for texts to play a central role in producing a shared identity, the others being socialised into the community through participation in practices structured by texts. It alerts us to the need for examining the specific ways that texts were embedded in practice. The concept was originally applied to the interplay between ‘heretical’ groups and their usage of Biblical texts in the Medieval era. For social formations in antiquity, it has been operationalised in a variety of ways.⁹⁷ Here we note its application to Christian communities in late antique Egypt by David Brakke. He has sought to make it explicit by focusing on the *institutions* that shape the usage of religious texts, which he terms ‘scriptural practices’.⁹⁸ Provisionally, he identified three scriptural practices in the Christian Church: study and contemplation, continued inspiration, and communal worship. In the following, we look at the first and last of these categories in relation to the Kellis material.

3.1 *Individual Practices: Studying and Copying*

Let us start by identifying those instances where texts are mentioned in the documentary evidence. There are in fact ample references to ‘books’ (ⲁⲠⲙⲉ). Many of them are from the Maria/Makarios circle, but far from all.⁹⁹ Certainly, it is not always made explicit that religious texts are meant. But in the case of all three letters where book titles are mentioned, religious texts are meant: Makarios names a substantial number of such texts in P.Kellis v Copt. 19, including *Psalms*, *The Epistles*, and *The Judgement of Peter*, while both P.Kellis v Copt. 33 (ll.3–4) and P.Kellis VII Copt. 120 (ll.2–7) mention ‘the *Gospel*’, and the latter also ‘the *Acts*’ (see Table 6, below). None of the texts state that the works are of specifically Manichaean provenance. The *Gospel*, *Acts*, *Epistles*, *Psalms*, and so forth could, perhaps, be mainstream Christian texts. This seems most likely in the case of the *Apostolos*, a common term used to designate Paul’s letters.¹⁰⁰ Still, in the case of psalms, prayers, and *Epistles*, we have, as seen above, many examples of specifically Manichaean texts found *in situ*. It seems

Stocks Concept and Recent Scholarship on Antiquity’, in *Scriptural Interpretation at the Interface between Education and Religion*, ed. Florian Wilk (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

96 Heath, “Textual Communities”, 5.

97 *Ibid.*, 14–29.

98 David Brakke, ‘Scriptural Practices’, 268.

99 For Maria/Makarios, P.Kellis v Copt. 19–21, 24, 26; for others, P.Kellis v Copt. 33–35, P.Kellis VII Copt. 111, 120, P.Kellis I Gr. 67.

100 *P.Kellis VII*, 294; and see Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 298–99.

TABLE 6 Religious books in the documentary papyri

Title	Text	Coptic spelling	Circle
<i>Epistles, large/ small</i>	P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (ll.82–83)	ⲡⲛⲁⲛⲛⲉⲡⲓⲥⲦⲟⲗ[ⲒⲐⲛ] ... ⲡⲕⲟⲩⲧⲓ	Maria/Makarios
<i>Judgement of Peter</i>	P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (l.15) P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (l.84)	ⲧⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ ⲧⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ	Maria/Makarios
<i>Greek Psalms Apostolos^a</i>	P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (ll.15–16)	ⲛ̄ⲫⲁ[ⲗ]ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄[ⲐⲘⲒⲁⲛ]Ⲓⲛ [ⲡⲁⲡ]ⲐⲥⲦⲟⲗⲟⲥ	Maria/Makarios Maria/Makarios
<i>Great Prayers Prayer-Book Sayings Prostrations Gospel</i>	P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (l.16) P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (l.84) P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (l.17) P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (l.17) P.Kellis v Copt. 33 (l.4) P.Kellis VII Copt. 120 (ll.5–6)	ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲛⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲗⲗ ⲡⲉⲘⲭⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲕⲗⲓⲥⲓⲥ [ⲡⲉⲘⲁ]ⲒⲒⲉⲗⲒⲐⲛ ⲡⲉⲘⲁⲒⲒⲉⲗⲒⲐⲛ	Maria/Makarios Maria/Makarios Maria/Makarios Maria/Makarios (Theognostos?) Pamour/Pekysis
<i>Acts</i>	P.Kellis VII Copt. 120 (ll.3–4)	ⲛ̄ⲡⲣⲁⲗⲗⲉⲓⲥ	Pamour/Pekysis

a The title 'Apostolos' also occurs in P.Kellis VII Copt. 127, a letter written in Sahidic from Area D. The editors there suggest that it refers to a collection of Paul's epistles. *P.Kellis VII*, 294.

reasonable to suggest that the *Gospel* that circulated in the lay network at Kellis similarly was Mani's *Living Gospel*, which is indeed mentioned in the psalm of T.Kellis II Copt. 7. It contained material pertaining to Mani's life as well as descriptions of distinctive Manichaean mythological and doctrinal themes.¹⁰¹ While it may well have been a comparatively rare book, it does not in any way seem to have been kept secret or restricted.

Turning to the practices associated with these texts, it is perhaps no surprise that reading is among them. Two letters mention 'reading' of books, both explicitly religious: in an unfortunately fragmented passage from P.Kellis v Copt. 33, the unknown author (perhaps Theognostos) writes: '[Write to (?)] us, whether the little one has completed the gospel ([ⲡⲉⲘⲁ]ⲒⲒⲉⲗⲒⲐⲛ). Again,

101 Wurst, 'L'état de la recherche', 249; Funk, 'Mani's Account'.

if [...] then do [...] cover [...] quickly; in that he [...] read the *epaggeliaz* ([...]ⲟⲩⲛⲛⲉⲡⲓⲁⲓⲛⲉⲗⲓⲁ) [...]’ (ll.3–8). In an important passage, to which we return several times below, Makarios admonishes Matthaïos to read a range of texts:

Study [your] psalms, whether Greek or Coptic <every> day (?) [...] Do not abandon your vow. Here, the *Judgment of Peter* is with you. [Do the] *Apostolos*; or else master the *Great Prayers* and the Greek *Psalms*. Here too, the *Sayings* are with you: study them! Here are the *Prostrations*. Write a little from time to time, more and more. Write a daily example, for I need you to write books here.

P.Kellis v Copt. 19, ll.13–19

Matthaïos is not merely to read, but specifically ‘practice’ or ‘study’ (μελετε) his texts. The role of study and contemplation has already been explored for Manichaeism by Jason D. BeDuhn, who used evidence from Kellis to argue for the centrality of books to Manichaean identity. He emphasises that texts played a central role in shaping individual identities among literate Manichaeans, their importance for the ‘private, individualized spiritual development, for the permanent access of the individual to religious instruction even in the absence of religious authorities and professionals.’¹⁰² In addition to study, Makarios admonishes Matthaïos to ‘write a daily example’ in P.Kellis v Copt. 19. This attests to another practice: the copying of texts by local adherents. There are many mentions of writing or copying in the letters.¹⁰³ For most of these, too, a religious context is clear. In the above-quoted passage from P.Kellis v Copt. 33, the author wrote that the *Gospel* had been finished by a ‘little one’. In P.Kellis VII Copt. 120, addressed to Pamour (III), the author writes: ‘About this book that Lamon has: Let the *Acts* be copied. But the *Gospel*: Let them bring it to me from father Pabo’ (ll.3–7). Pamour is to have the *Acts* copied, either by himself or by someone else. That members of the Pamour family themselves were involved in copying literature is attested to by two letters to Psais III, P.Kellis v Copt. 35 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 111. They concern the copying of ‘tetrads’, and Psais III actively participates in copying texts himself. In the former letter, Ouales writes:

¹⁰² BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 269.

¹⁰³ P.Kellis v Copt. 19, 24, 33, 35; P.Kellis VII Copt. 111, 120; and perhaps P.Kellis I Gr. 67 (see below).

I beg you, my lord brother: if you can write these tetrads for me, which I sent to you, I will cause what is written to be brought to you too; so that you can know where they have reached. Look out (?) whether he has not been negligent writing them. Quickly, you send them to me by a blessed one; for they say: “We want someone else to write the other ones”. Now, do not neglect to send them quickly. By no means! I did it for the great texts; (but it is) because they say that the papyrus has run out. Still, writing is what is useful; and if you do write them, I for my part will find your recompense. I am no fool!

P.Kellis v Copt. 35, ll.36–46

On this text’s first publication, the editors suggested that the ‘tetrads’ may be understood as papyrus quires consisting of four double leaves, i.e. quaternions.¹⁰⁴ If so, the copying of ‘tetrads’ involves the copying of text onto clean papyri. Given the presence of a ‘blessed one’, and the oath sworn by the Paraclete some lines earlier, it is highly likely that the texts to be copied – the ‘great texts’ (ἄγία ἱερά, l.44)¹⁰⁵ – were religious in nature. In P.Kellis VII Copt. III, ‘brother’ Pebos likewise admonishes Psais III to keep writing ‘tetrads’, even though he has already written a great many. Perhaps we might add P.Kellis I Gr. 67, in which Lysimachos writes: ‘Send a well-proportioned and nicely executed ten-page notebook for your brother Ision. For he has become a user of Greek and a Syriac reader (Ἑλληνιστῆς γὰρ γέγονεν καὶ ἀναγνώστης συριατικῶς) (ll.17–21).¹⁰⁶ The aside regarding Ision’s reading ability implies that the ‘notebook’ or ‘tablet’ (πινακίδιον) was to contain a text of some kind, and so the recipient, Theognostos, was presumably to copy one onto it (perhaps even in Syriac).¹⁰⁷ The cases of Matthaios, this ‘little one’, and Psais III suggest that it was common practice to have young men acquire literary skills by copying books as part of their religious practice. It seems to be echoed by the materiality of the texts: the number of different and coarse hands visible in the psalms prompted Gardner to suggest that copying scripture was deemed a spiritual task, practised by ‘the whole believing community’.¹⁰⁸

104 For this suggestion, and the text itself, see Paul Mirecki, Iain Gardner, and Anthony Alcock, ‘Magical Spell, Manichaean Letter’, in *Emerging from Darkness*, ed. Paul Mirecki and BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 31.

105 Note the alternate translations suggested by Brand ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 296.

106 For this translation, Iain Gardner, ‘P. Kellis I 67 Revisited’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 159 (2007).

107 The address was written in Syriac, and so Theognostos was presumably conversant with this language. Syriac texts and translation tools were, as previously noted, found in Kellis.

108 *P.Kellis VI*, 6. See also Iricinschi, ‘Tam pretiosi codices’, 157–59.

This brings us to another practice, namely the intertextual use of Manichaean literature – the employment of Manichaean cues. By studying and copying religious books, literate members would have internalised typical Manichaean literary allusions and rhetorical devices, as we may well have seen some examples of in Chapter 5. It is explicitly on display in Makarios' P.Kellis v Copt. 19, where he uses a citation of the 'Paraclete' in order to reinforce his message to Matthaïos: 'Now, be in worthy matters; just as the Paraclete has said: "The disciple of righteousness is found with the fear of his teacher upon him even while he is far from him, like (a?) guardian"' (ll.8–11).¹⁰⁹ It is quite possible that such cues may have been derived from textual transmission. However, considering that the usage of cues extended to members who probably had a lower level of literacy than Makarios, such as Pamour III and Tekysis III, we should consider other routes as well. In particular, we may look to communal practices – which also had important textual dimensions, as we shall see.

3.2 *Communal Worship: Almsgiving and Ritual Performance*

While studying and copying books may have had important individual dimensions, books were not only for one's own, private contemplation. For one, there is evidence that books were communally held. Books certainly circulated widely among, and were widely available to, the laity. Makarios bade Maria I obtain the *Great Epistles* from 'mother' Kyria I, by way of 'daughter' Drousiane in P.Kellis v Copt. 19 (ll.73–74, 82–84), and the family's literary network included figures such as Ouales, Pebo, and Pekos. Books were sent across long distances; requests are found for books to be sent from Kellis both to the Nile Valley (P.Kellis v Copt. 19, 20) and Hibis (P.Kellis VII Copt. 111). Makarios' aside to Matthaïos in P.Kellis v Copt. 19, that he had a 'need' for Matthaïos 'to write books here', indicates that there was demand from a wide circle of readers.

An explanation for this demand may well be that the religious aspect of book-copying by young members, discussed above, constituted a form of almsgiving to the Holy Church. This is known to have been part of the religious obligations of lay Manichaeans in Turfan, where copying books on behalf of the 'religion' is indeed described as almsgiving.¹¹⁰ It is supported by the contexts in which the requests for Psais III's writings occur. The figure of 'father' Pebo/Pabo in P.Kellis VII Copt. 111 may be identifiable as an Elect presbyter, as

109 For this reconstruction, see Gardner, 'A Letter from the Teacher', 321 n.7. For another citation, see perhaps the letter of Ammon, as noted in *P.Kellis V*, 233–34.

110 See the discussion in Section 4, n.117, below, and Andrea Piras, 'The Writing Hearer: A Suggested Restoration of M 101d', in *Zur lichten Heimat. Studien zu Manichäismus, Iranistik und Zentralasienkunde im Gedenken an Werner Sundermann* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2017).

argued in Chapter 9. Ouales, in P.Kellis v Copt. 35, relates that a plural ‘they’ are responsible for ordering the writings, indicating the existence of superiors.¹¹¹ Another passage alludes to a ‘brother’ Kallikles, who seems to be some kind of authority, while a ‘blessed one’ is requested in order to bring the texts from Psais III to Ouales. That several Manichaean authorities were interested in the production and collection of such writings strongly indicates that we should take Psais III’s tetrads as alms.

At any rate, the texts themselves were not only used for individual reading. While studying would have been of great significance for some, it was not something every member of the community could engage in. We should certainly not imagine that the community at Kellis was made up only of literate people. For these texts to play a role beyond the immediate users, then, they would have to be embedded in communal textual practices, such as communal readings. BeDuhn, whose emphasis was, as we saw, on the individual aspect of textual usage, noted that ‘all of the references to reading or copying texts in the Kellis documents seem to assume private study’.¹¹² However, there is in fact one clear reference to communal readings: Matthaïos describes how his brother (i.e. Piene) has been honoured by the Teacher, who ‘loves him very much, and makes him to read in church (εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν)’ (P.Kellis v Copt. 25, ll.45–46). This presumably relates to the public reading of religious text in a liturgical context. Such occasions are mentioned by Augustine, who relates that he attended worship where Mani’s writings, such as the *Fundamental Epistle*, were read.¹¹³ The remains of Mani’s *Epistles* found at Kellis may well have been used in such settings. Admittedly, Matthaïos refers to practice among Manichaeans in Alexandria, where Piene was located. However, it does not seem unlikely that similar readings occurred in Kellis – certainly, the recipients of Matthaïos’ letter must have been aware that it was common practice. It may be argued that an absence of local Elect in Kellis made formal church readings uncommon there, on the assumptions that Elect presence was necessary for such meetings to take place, and if the argument recently advanced by Mattias Brand, that the Elect were generally absent from Kellis, is correct. However, as I argue in the next chapter, there is much evidence to suggest that Elect visited Kellis, even on a regular basis.¹¹⁴ Nor should we exclude

111 As also pointed out by Mirecki, Gardner, and Alcock, ‘Magical Spell’, 30.

112 BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 269.

113 *C. epist. Man.* 5. See Johannes van Oort, ‘The Young Augustine’s Knowledge of Manichaeism: An Analysis of the “Confessiones” and Some Other Relevant Texts’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 62, no. 5 (2008): 454.

114 For Brand’s argument and my own views, see Chapter 8, Sections 1 and 3.1.

the possibility that literate laity took it upon themselves to arrange such meetings: the textual finds certainly show that they had the tools to do so.

The mention of *Psalms* in Makarios' letter P.Kellis v Copt. 19 points indirectly to another communal practice in which texts played a role, namely that of psalm singing. This is indicated by the material remains surveyed above. As we have seen, the abbreviated psalms of T.Kellis II Copt. 2 indicate that the codex-boards were used as memory-aides for singers; presumably to be sung at church gatherings. One of the psalms examined above, T.Kellis II Copt. 4a, corresponded to the Bema Psalm 222: it may that it was intended to be sung at the local celebration of the Bema-festival, when Mani's suffering and death was commemorated. The religious cues considered previously, moreover, find many echoes in the Manichaean psalms. So, for instance, the image of 'fruits of the flourishing tree' in the opening of Makarios' P.Kellis v Copt. 22 is found in Psalm 249 and in Psalm 261, the latter of which has been identified at Kellis (T.Kellis II Copt. 6). Other Manichaean epistolary cues also echo psalms found at the site: the phrase 'children of the living race', from the same letter, occurs in T.Kellis II Copt. 4b, and the phrase 'elect and catechumen', used in the closings of Horion's letters (P.Kellis v Copt. 15–17), is found in the doxology of the psalm P.Kellis II Copt. 2C1 (ll.70–71).

Books clearly had a function in communal practice at Kellis. It may be even that be that they were placed on special cushions in order to be displayed on ritual occasions: in P.Kellis v Copt. 21, Makarios asks Maria I to send 'the dyed cushion for the book (ΠΥΔΥ ΝΧΗΘΕ ΜΠΧΩΜΕ)' (ll.24–25). 'Cushions' could have provided ceremonial resting places or decorative trappings for certain books, presumably to give them a special aura when taken out and displayed in communal settings, although this interpretation requires more substantiation.¹¹⁵ Most of the literary texts from Kellis were clearly not of the sort that were only put on display.

4 Textual Community, Manichaean Identity

Religious literature at Kellis, then, was studied, cited, copied, read, sung, and circulated widely in the community. Clearly, textual practices had a relatively central place in lay religious life. But what role did such practices play in shaping a Manichaean identity? Given that the literary texts used by the

¹¹⁵ P.Kellis V, 174; Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 153–54. For Manichaean use of imagery from Mani's *Picture-Book* in congregational settings, see Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*.

Auditors did not shy away from central and particular Manichaean doctrines, we may well imagine that they functioned to introduce them to such ideas, and allowed the Auditors to appropriate them as part of their Manichaean identity. However, it might be argued that mere references to myths and beliefs in liturgical settings would not necessarily have functioned to impart knowledge of them to a wider audience, far less internalise 'beliefs'. BeDuhn, in his work on the ritual meal, cites a study of ritual language indicating that such utterances do not function primarily as communicative acts for disseminating stories or teachings.¹¹⁶ Nor does ritual depend upon members understanding the 'underlying' doctrines. Manichaean authorities may not even have intended them to have such a function: allusions to the 'mysteries' could have been aimed at the Elect, who would know their true significance, congruent with the depiction of Elect as guardians of a 'Manichaean world'.¹¹⁷

Yet, there are to my mind good reasons to think that it often functioned to facilitate lay appropriation of distinct Manichaean ideas. For one, Manichaean authorities did make a concerted and conscious effort to promote knowledge of their cosmology through the liturgy. Gardner has noted the frequency with which lists of emanations occur in Manichaean psalms, indicating

116 BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 241.

117 It has similarly been suggested that Auditors were barred from reading or handling Mani's books. Claudia Leurini, for instance, has argued that Mani's script was reserved for religious books in order to make them inaccessible. As evidence she refers to Augustine, who according to Kevin Coyle gained deep knowledge of Manichaeism only after having confiscated books as a Christian bishop. She also cites a line from a series of parables found in a codex containing the *Book of Giants* at Turfan: 'the Hearer that copies a book, is like unto a sick man ...'. In her view, it implies that Auditors were forbidden to 'look at [Manichaean texts], to read them and they seem even to be prevented from copying them', Leurini, *The Manichaean Church*, 85. So also Lim, 'nomen manichaeorum', 155; and see Kevin Coyle, 'What Did Augustine Know About Manichaeism When He Wrote his Two Treatises *De Moribus?*', in *Manichaeism and its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). However, Johannes Van Oort has convincingly shown that Augustine acquired most of his knowledge already during his time as an Auditor, at least in part through his own readings, contesting Coyle's interpretation. Van Oort adduces several passages that show Augustine reading 'books of Mani' ('Young Augustine', 450–56). Moreover, the line Leurini cites from the parable of the writing Auditor does not end there (although the final words are lost); it is, in fact, part of a string of metaphors concerning *positive* activities that Auditors were requested to do for the Church, and that lifts them out of their lowly state. So for instance, in the same text we find that: 'The Hearer who gives alms to the Elect, is like unto a poor man that presents his daughter to the king; he reaches a position of great honour', Walter B. Henning, 'The Book of the Giants', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1943): 63–64. More recently, see Piras, 'The Writing Hearer', 528–29.

‘a catechetical as well as liturgical function.’¹¹⁸ The notions were all present in the Daily prayer, to be prayed ‘at least three times a day’ according the text found at Kellis, as we have seen. It seems to have provided a list of what its author, i.e. presumably Mani, considered most crucial for adherents, including Auditors, to internalise. It included the primeval war between Light and Darkness, the construction of the world by Light divinities from evil matter, the salvific role of the sun and the moon, the existence of a world soul in which all life takes part, and the need to serve the Elect to be freed from transmigration. This prayer was widely used by adherents. At Kellis, it is further demonstrated by Makarios’ exhortation for Matthaïos to practice (or write) the ‘prostrations’ (κλιτικ),¹¹⁹ and by the discovery that its first few words are scribbled on the board constituting P.Kellis I Gr. 82 and P.Kellis V Copt. 48.¹²⁰ Augustine, in his *Confessions*, attests to the centrality of this prayer during his time as an Auditor, and it was still in use at the time of al-Nadim and of the Uyghur kingdom in Turfan.

Augustine provides an intriguing example of how notions could be appropriated. Recent scholarship has shown that his engagement with Manichaean ideas was extensive, and lingered after his ‘de-conversion’.¹²¹ He displays explicit knowledge of more ‘esoteric’ myths, or mythical imagery. Thus, in his polemical work against the Manichaean bishop Faustus, he describes a well-known psalm sung by the community, called ‘the Song of the Lovers’.¹²² According to Augustine, it depicted the garlanded Father of Lights in the Land of Light, among many identities mountains and sweet air, surrounded by his Twelve Aeons, grouped three by three in four regions, and it described the five sons of the Living Spirit – the Custodian of Splendour, the King of Honour, the Adamas of Light, the King of Glory, and Atlas, – each with his own

118 P.Kellis VI, 106.

119 Cf. Brand (‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 297), who argues that it should be taken in the sense of ‘inflections’. However, the other terms in Makarios list are all texts. Al-Nadim records that the Manichaeans prostrated themselves while praying, and it seems likely that this is the way that *proskyneō* must be understood in P.Kellis I Gr. 98. Gardner, ‘Manichaean Ritual Practice’, 253–56; id., “With a Pure Heart”, 86–87.

120 Iain Gardner, ‘P. Kellis 82 and an Unnoticed Record of the Manichaean Daily Prayers’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 211 no.1 (2019).

121 For the potentially comprehensive effect that Manichaean concepts of for instance memory had on Augustine, see Johannes van Oort, ‘God, Memory, and Beauty: A Manichaean Analysis of Augustine’s *Confessions*, Book 10,1–38’, in *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity*, ed. J. van Oort (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

122 C. Faust. 15.5–6, trans. Roland J. Teske, *Answer to Faustus a Manichaean* (New York: New City Press, 2007), 189–91. See also Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 134.

properties. Samuel N. C. Lieu has pointed out that psalms with similar content are found in the *Psalms-book*.¹²³ These divinities were also named in at least one psalm found at Kellis. The usage of 'esoteric' mythological imagery in hymns was clearly widespread, and as Lieu argues, Augustine's ability to recall this imagery likely indicates that they had a mnemonic effect.

Augustine, to be sure, could be a special case. Yet he does describe several key notions as common knowledge. Having gotten a sub-deacon of his see, Victorinus, to confess to being a Manichaean Auditor, he explained in a letter to the bishop of Caesarea in Mauretania that: 'They (the Auditors) also adore and pray to the sun and moon with the elect. On the Lord's day they also fast with them, and they believe along with them all the blasphemies because of which the heresy of the Manichees should be detested'.¹²⁴ He goes on to list such 'blasphemies', including the participation of animals in the divine, God's battle and mixture with Darkness, the Elect's purification of Light, and the Light's ascent through the sun and moon. Richard Lim has suggested that while Victorinus admitted to being an Auditor, he did not admit to and probably did not hold these beliefs (despite Augustine's insistence to the contrary), and was not part of any Manichaean group.¹²⁵ However, whatever the case of Victorinus, in light of the Kellis finds there is little reason to doubt that most Auditors were in fact familiar with them.

Thus, even if many details were known mainly to the Elect, and some could vary with time and place, the key notions of the 'Manichaean world' circulated widely. The effort to disseminate them must be seen in relation to a need to defend Elect practice, to furnish it with *rationales*. The Elect in Egypt, and the Roman Empire more generally, were working to establish religious authority in an environment of much religious competition. Their position as 'holy men' would have to be explained to the laity, and defended against the traditional religious authority of the temples, of the emerging Christian Church, as well as of other 'holy men'. Appeals to the authority of Christ certainly played a part when preaching in Christian environments, but the Elect would have had to differentiate themselves from mainstream Christian teachers in order to justify their specific regime and needs. Persuading their listeners of the validity of their particular 'world' – the primeval dualism, the imprisoned Light, its transmigration, a salvation facilitated by the Elect – were necessary for adherents

123 E.g. Psalm 219 (2 Ps. 1–3). See Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 134–35.

124 Augustine, *ep.* 236 (to Deuterius), trans. Roland J. Teske, *Letters 211–270, 1*–29** (*Epistulae*) (New York: New City Press, 2005), 134–35.

125 Lim, 'nomen manichaeorum', 155.

to accept the burdens of almsgiving. They provided narratives within which other ritual acts could be made sense of.¹²⁶ Moreover, they may have resonated with myths already familiar to potential ‘converts’ – although they could also, at times, come into conflict with the sensibilities of other relatively systematised world-views, such as that of Neoplatonism in the case of Augustine. It is often implied that the Elect simply alluded to their intricate mysteries, ‘enticing’ Auditors with promises of a total explanation. This is largely based on the experience of Augustine, who expressed much bitterness over that what the Elect had ‘served’ him was not the explanations he had been promised (or wanted). But we should not generalise from Augustine’s polemically shaped narrative of his own ‘de-conversion’ to that of other adherents, for whom the myths and images of Mani would have continued to hold attraction.

This does not mean that Auditors always responded with great interest to ‘lore’. Thorough study of the system of emanations and mythological details was in all likelihood rather uncommon, restricted to literate and enthusiastic adherents, although the discovery of T.Kellis II Copt. 1, describing the aspects of the Third Ambassador, suggests that such were present also at Kellis. But despite the attempts of authorities to initiate Auditors into the Manichaean world, adherents may have considered many aspects irrelevant, harboured reservations, or interpreted the instructions outside the preferred framework of Manichaean authorities – while at the same time continuing to participate in rituals and to identify with as adherents. As discussed in Chapter 5, individuals juggle many identities, and it is not a given that everyone at Kellis gave their Manichaean one a special saliency, or thought it necessary to internalise all of these ideas. But as BeDuhn stressed, the primary function of ritual language is to reinforce a sense of belonging to a distinct social body.¹²⁷ Even if the ritual and textual practices did not always affect the conscious ‘knowledge’ or ‘beliefs’ of participants, it would have had the effect of socialising them into the community of the ‘Holy Church’.

In conclusion, the literary texts from Kellis show a high degree of awareness of specifically Manichaean myths and beliefs, and attest to conscious attempts by Manichaean authorities to disseminate such notions among the laity. The degree to which individual adherents engaged with them would certainly vary, as in other comparable religious groups, and we should not imagine that every part of the Manichaean ‘theology’ reconstructed by modern scholars was

126 See e.g. the chapter of the Berlin *Kephalaia* concerned with the Call and Response (keph. 115), or with the laying on of hands (keph. 9).

127 BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 242–44.

known to them. However, key ideas must have become familiar to the laity through texts used in both individual and communal practice, as attested to by the literary and the documentary sources from House 1–3. In turn, such practices functioned to create and reinforce a sense of belonging to a distinctive textual community: the ‘Holy Church’ of Mani. The laity of Kellis, insofar as they sang the psalms, prayed the prayers, or copied the texts, participated in reproducing a distinctly Manichaean communal identity.

Manichaean Rituals: Elect and Lay Practices

My loved daughters, who are greatly revered by me: The members of the holy church, [the daughter] of the Light Mind, they who [also are numbered] with the children of God; the favoured, blessed, God-loving souls; my shona children. It is I, your father who is in Egypt, who writes to you; in the Lord, – greetings! Before everything I greet you warmly, and your children together, each by their name. I am praying to God every hour that he will guard you for a long time, free from anything evil of the wicked world: You being for us helpers, and worthy patrons, and firm unbending pillars; while we ourselves rely upon you.

P.Kellis v Copt. 31, ll.1–19

The above citation introduces a letter found at House 3, one of several which can be attributed to Elect authorship. It articulates an Elect perspective on the central theme of the current chapter, namely the patterns of interaction between Auditors and Elect, and relates, as we shall see, to perhaps the most vital form of interaction, the institution of almsgiving. We start by identifying the Elect and, implicitly, those instances of Elect-Auditor interaction that can be discerned in the House 3 letters, before analysing the rhetorical strategies and contents of these letters, in order to consider the way ‘Manichaeism’ was put into practice by the laity.

The arguably most important study of Manichaean institutions is Jason D. BeDuhn’s *The Manichaean Body* (2000), which treats the behavioural norms and rationales pertaining to food alms and the Elect meal. By analysing normative Manichaean discourse, BeDuhn shows how subjection to the Manichaean ethical regime was intended to produce a specific type of disciplined, ‘Elect’ bodies. It was through such bodies that the Elect became vehicles for the salvation of souls, enacted by their daily meals. The discipline allowed the Elect bodies to separate soul from matter through their digestion, freeing Light from its imprisonment in foodstuff. BeDuhn argues that this constituted the core, so to speak, of Manichaean practice:

[T]he food ritual was the focal point of Manichaean communal organisation, the *raison d’être* of Manichaean discipline, and the key to understanding how normative Manichaeism proposed to produce “souls”

liberated from the bonds of contingency by the actions of the very body in which they were imprisoned.¹

Manichaean institutions, in BeDuhn's reconstruction, were geared to serve this central ritual. The Church itself, with its hierarchy and initiation rituals, had the function of spreading and propagating Mani's teachings, but also guaranteeing the legitimacy of the Elect authorities to which alms were presented, and thus the efficacy of the salvific ritual. Almsgiving was an important part of what made the Auditors full members of the Church.²

BeDuhn focuses on the institutions surrounding the meal in normative discourse, not the practicalities of communal life and organisation. Touching briefly on Manichaeism as a socio-religious organisation, he notes:

The designation "church" may be applied to Manichaeism legitimately insofar as it refers to an organized, centrally administered institution – for such Manichaeism was, during at least part of its history. Mani apparently instituted a hierarchy through which he could direct the far-flung missionary activity he instigated. We know nothing of the origin and development of this system of administration ... For our purposes, it is enough to recognize that Manichaeism existed as an institution capable of promoting its aims and enforcing its rules.³

Certainly, although Manichaean authorities sought to reproduce norms and institutions, and had success in certain areas and periods, it is not a given that specific communities in fourth century Egypt shared in or were able to maintain them. They clearly succeeded to some extent, otherwise we would hardly have found traces of such discourse in Egypt. It could well be, however, that internal tensions – in particular relating to the Elect regime – hampered maintenance or prevented the emergence of an effective Church organisation, or that it did not extend to distant localities such as the Dakhleh Oasis.

In trying to elucidate the functioning of this 'system of administration' in Kellis, there are two chief aspects that need to be considered: the ability of Manichaean authorities to mobilise Auditors for almsgiving and other rituals, and their ability to enforce discipline among the Elect themselves. They must, on the one hand, have found mechanisms to ensure stable and mutually beneficial ties between the two levels of adherents, and, on the other, ensured that

¹ BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 24.

² *Ibid.*, 53–65.

³ *Ibid.*, 29–30.

internal Elect discipline and authority was maintained. These two issues were related, as the arguments of Lim concerning the North African church organisation indicate (see Chapter 1), but we postpone the latter to the next chapter. Here, we examine the former: the bonds between Auditors and Elect at Kellis.

Scholarship of Manichaeism has generally taken this relationship to have been located within small, intimate ‘cells’, ‘each comprising a handful of Electi with their devoted Hearers’.⁴ Such cells have also been considered primarily domestic, with small gatherings of Auditors waiting upon visiting Elect in their homes, in strong contrast to the communal worship dominant in Turfan. This view has lent Manichaeism in the Roman Empire an aura of secrecy. Lane Fox, for instance, described the gatherings Augustine attended in these terms: ‘Every day, not before the late afternoon, members would meet in rooms in private houses, like “cells” in a mobile, secret group.’⁵ The Kellis texts have been taken to support such a reconstruction. In his article on domestic Manichaean practice, BeDuhn used papyri from Kellis to illustrate the intimate relations fostered in Elect-Auditor cells.⁶ The visit of Elect to lay homes, with the accompanying meal ritual, allowed the laity to become ‘active participants in a mystery that served towards the liberation of their own souls, as well as the souls of all living beings. Angels literally filled the room where such a sacred meal was occurring, activating a portal between sacred and profane dimensions of reality.’⁷ However, as we shall see below, a full account of the Kellis evidence shows that it primarily pertains to more mundane, and more institutionalised, aspects of Elect-Auditor interaction. It allows these Manichaean gatherings to shed some of the mystique.

Unfortunately, the papyri are not, as a rule, explicit in their depiction of such ties. Both religious practices and the presence of Elect in the documentary texts generally have to be established indirectly, a point to which we return. Furthermore, in order to consider whether or how practices fit into a distinctly Manichaean framework, we have to put them in dialogue with other texts, and examine the way Manichaean traditions and the Kellis material can mutually illuminate each other. Such a synthetic approach has been challenged. Lim has argued that

4 Lieu, ‘Precept and Practices’, 79.

5 Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions and Confessions* (London: Penguin Books, 2015; repr., 2016), 121.

6 BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 260ff.

7 *Ibid.*, 263; followed by Baker-Brian, ‘Mass and Elite’, 166.

[b]y insisting on the identification and recovery of Manichaeans across the centuries and the continents as one of their chief goals, scholars in the field are unwittingly joining forces with the likes of Augustine to create and sustain a master discourse about who and what the Manichaeans were.⁸

Below, we focus on the texts from Medinet Madi: sources that were produced in the vicinity of and broadly contemporary with the Manichaean community at Kellis. However, other texts, ranging from the writings of Augustine to Central Asian traditions, are also adduced and can be compared to these. It is argued that the evidence shows a degree of coherence that cannot simply be ascribed to scholarly reconstruction; rather, it reflects the institutions, or techniques for reproducing patterns of interaction, of a Manichaean church organisation.

The Berlin *Kephalaia*, in particular, provides several passages of interest. It is often seen as a 'scholastic' product, whose complicated doctrines were of little relevance to the daily lives of adherents. Certainly, its main purpose was to systematise cosmological and anthropological teachings, not to provide a blueprint for social interaction. However, it does provide insight into practices considered normative or taken for granted by the compilers: the institutional 'templates' that Manichaean leaders in late antique Egypt drew upon to construct a Manichaean social world.⁹

1 Identifying Elect

Our first task here is to identify Manichaean actors and actions in Kellis, and in order to do so, we need some criteria. Identifying Elect should, in theory, not be too difficult – their ascetical regime was, after all, geared towards setting them apart from worldly society. Unfortunately, it has not left visible traces in the archaeology from House 1–3.¹⁰ Instead we have to rely on authors to identify

8 Lim, 'nomen manichaeorum', 166–67.

9 This is especially the case if, as has been argued by e.g. Pettipiece, the Berlin *Kephalaia* represents a tradition that grew throughout the fourth century, with new traditions added to address needs and concerns within the Egyptian community. Pettipiece, *Pentadic Redaction*, 12–13. Note however Chapter 9, Section 4, n.115.

10 Archaeological evidence for Manichaean practice in general, apart from texts, may not be all that likely. However, one feature that might be considered is the practice of burial, in particular as relates to the Kellis 2 (east) cemetery. The bodies here were wrapped in linens, few artefacts (and no jewelry or amulets) were found, and it was only in use in the

themselves, or others, as Elect. Here, too, we encounter problems: such identity markers were often omitted in daily correspondences, as Malcolm Choat has noted.¹¹ A further difficulty in the present context is limiting identification to monks of a specifically 'Manichaean' persuasion. Terms such as 'righteous' and 'Elect', current in scholarly literature and useful for separating them from mainstream Christian monks, do not appear as self-designations in the documentary corpus (although 'Elect' does occur in P.Kellis v Copt. 15, 16). This may be taken to signal the absence of Elect from Kellis, as recently argued by Mattias Brand, who has taken a minimalist view and only accepts the identification of Elect present in the Nile Valley.¹² As we shall see below, however, there is ample reason to add several other figures to this list, some of whom were active in Kellis.

While 'Elect' as an identity marker is absent, there are figures who can be identified as Elect based on terms of religious office. As presented in the introduction, the Manichaean hierarchy was regularly depicted as consisting of the archegos, Teachers, bishops, and presbyters, to which we can add deacons (see Chapter 9, Section 2.1). The literary texts examined in the previous chapter indicate that Manichaeans in Kellis were well acquainted with the hierarchy. Unfortunately, the only somewhat distinctly Manichaean title is that of 'Teacher'. It is used as a self-designation by the author of P.Kellis VII Copt. 61, and to designate an important actor in the Maria/Makarior correspondence. Although the term 'teacher' (Ⲙⲁⲗ) itself is ambiguous, both instances show that the figure in question is an important religious authority – he is, for instance, referred to as the 'Great Teacher' (P.Kellis v Copt. 20) – and there is little reason to doubt that we are dealing with a top official in the Manichaean hierarchy.¹³ Other clerical titles used by the Manichaeans for Elect officials

fourth century; see Michael Birrel, 'Excavations in the Cemeteries of Ismant el-Kharab', in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1992–1993 and 1993–1994 Field Seasons*, ed. Colin A. Hope and A. J. Mills (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999), 41. Bowen comments that: 'the Christian Kellis 2 cemetery has been devoid of garments with the exception of the upper part of an infant's hooded tunic. This is unusual for it is known that Christians had a penchant for being buried fully clothed; the majority of the 20 000 plus Coptic textiles in collections throughout the world were retrieved from cemeteries (Carroll 1986, 1)'. Bowen, 'Textiles, Basketry and Leather', 97. To this we can compare depictions by two non-Manichaean writers in China, who relate that the Manichaeans there buried their dead naked; see Paul Pelliot and Émmanuel-Édouard Chavannes, 'Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine', *Journal Asiatique* (1913): 338, 55–56.

11 Choat, 'Monastic letters', 46, 57–58.

12 Brand, 'Speech Patterns'; and id., 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 217–19.

13 See e.g. the Teacher's own allusions to Mani's *Epistles*. Gardner, 'A Letter from the Teacher'.

were shared with the Christians,¹⁴ as were common monastic designations such as ‘monk’ and ‘apa’.¹⁵ Brand has argued that identifying people as Elect based on such titles alone is hazardous. He points to the presence of officials in the House 3 papyri that are explicitly marked as ‘of the catholic church’, and therefore restricts himself to identifying the Teacher and the figure of Apa Lysimachos (see below) as Elect, noting that ‘others are not beyond question’.¹⁶ However, the designation ‘catholic church’, and the names associated with it – Ouonsis, Harpokrates, Jakob – occur only in official Greek documents, not in the private Coptic correspondence of House 1–3.¹⁷ Moreover, the criterion that Brand uses to identify Lysimachos as an Elect is not a specifically Manichaean self-designation, or use of distinctively Manichaean cues, but the consistent application of the title ‘apa’ to him by Makarios, and his closeness with the Pamour family. As pointed out in Chapter 5, Lysimachos’ own two letters evince no specifically Manichaean cues. It is here argued that actors appearing with religious titles in the House 1–3 material can reasonably be assumed to be Elect officials, insofar as the labels are used by known Manichaean actors and they figure within the private social circles of the House 1–3 community. Although not beyond questioning, this assumption is more reasonable than taking a ‘Catholic’ Christian context as default, or refraining from making a judgement. Criteria for identifying Elect have to be of degree, rather than of kind.

Based on the criterion of official titles, several actors can be identified as Elect. First, there are a few actors only referred to by their titles. In addition to the Teacher, mentioned above, this category includes two deacons, one interacting daily with Makarios in P.Kellis v Copt. 19 and one associated with Lysimachos in P.Kellis VII Copt. 72. Both are located in the Nile Valley. Of the Elect officials known by name, we mainly find those bearing the designation ‘presbyter’. These are Pebos and Ploutogenios, addressed as ‘the presbyters, my children’ by the Teacher in P.Kellis VII Copt. 61, and Saren, who is labelled ‘presbyter’ by Horion in P.Kellis v Copt. 18 and ‘our brother’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 58. In these instances, affiliation with Manichaeism is well-established,

14 For a discussion of secular vs. religious usage of these terms in general, see Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 57–73.

15 Found in several of the doxologies for individuals from the Medinet Madi *Psalm-book*, e.g. 2 Ps. 47.22–23. For the meaning of this term, generally used in Christian religious contexts, see Tomasz Derda and Ewa Wipszycka, ‘L’emploi des titres *abba, apa et papas* dans l’Égypte byzantine’, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 24 (1994).

16 Brand, ‘Speech Patterns’, 107.

17 P.Kellis I Gr. 24, 32, 58. Ouonsis is partly an exception, but only occurs as patronymic of ‘Ploutogenes son of Ouonsis’, whose name is still partly legible on the papyrus used for the account P.Kellis v Copt. 47.

and at least in the case of Saren, we find close interaction with Manichaeans in the Oasis. A less clear-cut case is Psais the presbyter in the letter P.Kellis VII Copt. 92. The author is Timotheos, a name found in several other letters (and for a 'monk' in the KAB, see below), but which was common and so cannot be identified with certainty. The letter does mention several Pamour associates. Furthermore, there is strong evidence for the presence of an Elect by the name of Psais in other documents.¹⁸ Although more tentative, Elect status seems likely here, as well.

Two monastic titles, 'apa' and 'monk', are suggestive of Elect status. 'Apa' is applied to two figures in the archive: Lysimachos, whose Elect status is reasonably clear, and a certain Psekes, who applies it to himself in the only letter attributable to him, P.Kellis VII Copt. 90. Psekes' letter is written in an educated style and contains several religious cues, among them the 'embrace' formula.¹⁹ Although not certain, the context is probably Manichaean. He may further be identifiable with a 'father' Psekes, who occurs in Matthaïos' P.Kellis V Copt. 25, and a Psekes 'presbyter' in P.Kellis I Gr. 48. Regarding 'monk', the Greek term *monakhos* (μοναχός) does not occur in House 1–3. It is, however, used in the KAB for two men, Timotheos and Petros. The latter pays for a *topos Mani* (ll.320, 513), probably to be identified as a Manichaean religious institution (see Chapter 9, Section 3.3). The names recur separately in various House 1–3 texts, Timotheos being fairly common. But in the Petros letters, two actors by these names occur travelling together, and an identification of them with the KAB monks was suggested by the editors.²⁰ Both are referred to as 'our brother', and the letters, while lacking Manichaean cues, have features strongly suggestive of a religious context. Not least, two Petros letters feature the Coptic term 'monk' (C. 𐩪𐩺𐩻).²¹ The term is ambiguous, as it can simply mean 'old man', and it is not explicitly applied to either Petros or Timotheos, but in P.Kellis V Copt. 39 it occurs in connection with scribal activity and in a context where it may conceivably relate to one of them. The names, moreover, occur in two other letters of note: 'our brother' Timotheos brings news in Apa Psekes'

18 Psais the 'monk' occurs with Petros (see below) in O.Kellis I 121, an ostrakon from the West Church. See also 'our brother' Psais, named by Apa Lysimachos in P.Kellis V Copt. 30; Psais, agent of Ouales in his letter to Psais III, P.Kellis V Copt. 36 (identical to a 'blessed one', an agent requested in P.Kellis V Copt. 35?); and Psais 'the great' who occurs with 'father' Bemophanes in P.Kellis I Gr. 75, also a letter of the Psais/Andreas circle.

19 See *P.Kellis VII*, 160–61.

20 See *P.Kellis V*, 235.

21 The term occurs in P.Kellis V Copt. 39 and 40. Of the other Coptic letters, it only features in P.Kellis V Copt. 11, where it is somewhat ambiguous, and in P.Kellis VII Copt. 68, where it should probably be taken in the sense 'old man' See further the discussion in Chapter 9.

P.Kellis VII Copt. 90, and a Petros is involved in a matter concerning Saren the presbyter in P.Kellis V Copt. 18. The identification of Petros and Timotheos as Elect remains very probably, and we may in fact be dealing with an Elect circle active in the Oasis.

Three authors who designate themselves 'father' (ἰϱτ) can be identified as Elect based on letter contents. These are the authors of P.Kellis V Copt. 31, of 32–33, and of P.Kellis I Gr. 63, respectively, a group of letters that we may collectively refer to as the 'Father letters'. In each instance, the author uses the familial term 'father' in a religious sense, and labels the recipients 'catechumens', 'children' of the church, and/or supporters cast in religious terms. A more detailed analysis of their rhetorical devices leaves little doubt that we are dealing with alms-related letters sent by Manichaean Elect, as we shall see. The author of P.Kellis V Copt. 31 states that he is 'your Father who is in Egypt'. The Father in P.Kellis V Copt. 32, however, is located in, or close, to the Oasis, and moreover states that he will travel to the recipient, presumably in Kellis.

These letters provide vital evidence for the practice of almsgiving in the village. The absence of names, unfortunately, makes further identification of these 'Fathers' impossible – although there is one possible exception. Style and palaeography strongly imply that the scribe who wrote P.Kellis V Copt. 32–33 also wrote Theognostos' letter P.Kellis VII Copt. 84. The editors concluded: 'It seems more probable than not that 32, 33 and 84 were all written by the one scribe; but whether Theognostos himself composed the remarkable Manichaean sentiments in 32 (especially) is an unanswerable question.'²² If so, Theognostos would have to be identified as an Elect. His close relationship to Lysimachos, who sent letter P.Kellis I Gr. 67 to him with a Syriac address and asking him to mind his 'sobriety', as well as Ision, could point in this direction. It would moreover explain why Pekysis, in P.Kellis VII Copt. 73, requests Psais III to consult 'our brother' Theognostos on matters of 'life eternal'. If this is correct, we should also consider his constant companion, Horos. He might be identified with Horos, recipient of another letter by Lysimachos, P.Kellis V Copt. 30, and with a Horos located with Lysimachos in P.Kellis VII Copt. 72. On this reconstruction, these two would provide a highly interesting case of Elect embedded in lay families. It would have strong implications for the way we view Elect life, as well as for our understanding of familial ties and economic activity in the House 1–3 texts. However, it may be that Theognostos asked the scribe of P.Kellis V Copt. 32 to write on his behalf, and there may have been more than one Horos. Without further evidence, the matter will have to remain unresolved.

²² P.Kellis VII, 136.

This does not exhaust possible identifications. Piene, travelling with the Teacher in the Nile Valley and assisting him with church activities in Alexandria, was clearly an Elect in training. A certain Ision may similarly have been Elect in training; he is a 'Syriac reader' located with Lysimachos in P.Kellis I Gr. 67, and Philammon II calls him 'our brother' in P.Kellis VII Copt. 82, where he is travelling to Theognostos in Kellis.²³ More generic references to Elect can be adduced: a reference to a 'blessed one', located in the vicinity of Psais III in P.Kellis V Copt. 35; as well as a reference to 'bishops' by Lysimachos in P.Kellis V Copt. 30 and to 'the brotherhood' by Matthaïos in P.Kellis V Copt. 25, both in the Nile Valley. Finally, the possible existence of a Manichaean monastery in the vicinity of Kellis provides support for identifying some of the 'fathers' and 'brothers', such as 'brother' Ouales (P.Kellis V Copt. 35–36), 'father' Pebok (P.Kellis V Copt. 12), or the several 'fathers' in the Petros letters, as Elect. We return to this question in Chapter 9.

We should certainly be careful not to make too strong assumptions, especially when seeking to trace identified Elect in other documents. Many of the relevant names – Pebos, Ploutogenios, Psais, and Timotheos – are quite common. Some instances of possible or likely identifications are broached in the course of this and the next chapter. However, the actors who are assigned religious titles or, in the case of the Father letters, conduct elaborate symbolic performances, remain our most secure identifications. They serve as our main vantage points for examining Elect-Auditor interaction in Kellis. This still leaves us with a sizable group: six unnamed and eight named actors identifiable as Elect, totalling 14 actors (Table 7). All these texts belong to the same period, i.e. the second half of the fourth century, apart from P.Kellis I Gr. 63, whose father N. N. was probably active in the 330s. The actual number of Elect could therefore be smaller, as unnamed actors may be identifiable with named ones, or with each other, although it seems equally possible that it might be higher.

23 Especially if his becoming a 'Syriac reader' implies that he held position as a minor official who read in church, as is argued by Gardner ('P. Kellis I 67 Revisited', 226), and if the Manichaean office of 'reader' was reserved Elect, as argued by Nils A. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War: Investigations of a Manichaean-Coptic Text from the Fourth Century* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 164 n.38. Here we should also note Piene who read in church. The office was perhaps chiefly held by youths under preparations for Elethood.

TABLE 7 Elect in the House 1–3 material

Elect	Primary texts for Elect identification	Suggested appearances
'Deacon'	P.Kellis v Copt. 19	
'Deacon'	P.Kellis VII Copt. 72	
'Father in Egypt'	P.Kellis v Copt. 31	
'Father'	P.Kellis v Copt. 32	P.Kellis v Copt. 33
father N.N.	P.Kellis I Gr. 63	
Lysimachos	P.Kellis v Copt. 21, 24, 29, 30;	P.Kellis I Gr. 67 ^a
(Apa)	P.Kellis VII Copt. 72, 82	
Pebos (pr.)	P.Kellis VII Copt. 61	P.Kellis VII Copt. 120, (111?)
Petros (monk)	ΚΑΒ, P.Kellis v Copt. 38–40	P.Kellis v Copt. 18, O.Kellis I 121, (114?, 115?, 117?)
Ploutogenios (pr.)	P.Kellis VII Copt. 61	
Psais (pr.)	P.Kellis VII Copt. 92	(ΚΑΒ 1315?, O.Kellis I 121?)
Psekes (Apa)	P.Kellis VII Copt. 90	(P.Kellis v Copt. 25?, P.Kellis I Gr. 48?)
Saren (pr.)	P.Kellis v Copt. 18	P.Kellis VII Copt. 58 ^b
Timotheos (monk)	ΚΑΒ, P.Kellis v Copt. 39	P.Kellis VII Copt. 90, (17?, 92, 93?) ^c
'Teacher'	P.Kellis v Copt. 19, 20, 24, 25, 29, 52; P.Kellis VII Copt. 61	

a See Gardner, 'P. Kellis I 67 Revisited'.

b See *P.Kellis VII*, 25.

c See *ibid.*, 164–65. This man could be e.g. the son of Tiberios or son of Loudon.

2 Auditor Almsgiving

According to the polymath Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (fl. 11th century), Mani forbade the Elect the 'acquisition of anything, except from food for one day and clothing for one year'.²⁴ Such an injunction must indeed go back to Mani himself: passages from the CMC as well as fragments of Mani's *Šabuhrgan* and of his *Epistles* from Turfan attest to the veracity of al-Biruni's quotation.²⁵ The

24 Al-Biruni, *Athar*, trans. Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 212.

25 A MP Manichaean fragment, M 731v., gives a part of the same injunction and explicitly quotes Mani's *Epistle to Mesene*, showing al-Biruni to be well-informed. See BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 128–35.

Elect were not allowed to accumulate food, goods, or land, but still needed to be fed, clothed, and housed. These tasks fell to the Auditors, by way of almsgiving. Alms were the ‘financial lifeblood of the church’, as Tardieu has put it.²⁶ Furnishing the Elect with food was particularly important, as the meals were both, in principle, rituals of cosmic significance, and, more prosaically, because they had to be supplied on a daily basis.²⁷ Food alms therefore form the main topic of discussion below, although the donation of textiles and recruits are also attested in the letters.

2.1 *Literary Traditions*

Begging for alms is often seen as the original norm for Elect. Mani himself is depicted as begging for his food in an unfortunately lacunose passage from the CMC (142.3–13), and the image of the wandering Elect, walking from house to house seeking lay shelter and a meal remained a powerful ideal. However, at least in the eastern branch, the meal became a collective affair. The Chinese *Compendium*, a summary of teachings and practices of the group written sometime before 731 CE (when it was translated into Chinese), proscribes that the Elect wait for alms together in their monastery: they should only go out to beg if none are forthcoming.²⁸ Monasteries were furnished with an official called the *e-huan-jian-sai-bo-sai* (probably for Pa **arwāngān ispāsg*, ‘servant of the alms’), together with a lay official, which rotated monthly and collected (or received) alms.²⁹ This office appears to be a late (and transient) development, as the term is not known from early Iranian texts and later disappears.³⁰ At any rate, the meal was an elaborate ritual conducted while the Elect were gathered together in the evening, with a ceremonial giving of the food by Auditors (the ‘invitation’, MP *nīwēdmā*). Their donation, given to a representative of the

26 Tardieu, *Manichaeism*, 70.

27 See above; for further recent treatments, Jason D. BeDuhn, ‘The Manichaean Sacred Meal’, in *Turfan, Khotan und Dunhuang: Vorträge der Tagung Annemarie v. Gabain und die Turfanforschung*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996); id., ‘Eucharist or Yasna? Antecedents of Manichaean Food Ritual’.

28 Lieu, ‘Precept and Practices’, 85.

29 BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 138; see further Takao Moriyasu, ‘The Flourishing of Manichaeism under the West Uighur Kingdom. New Edition of the Uighur Charter on the Administration of the Manichaean Monastery in Qočo’, in *World History Reconsidered through the Eyes of the Silk Road*, ed. Moriyasu Takao (Osaka: Osaka University, 2003), 75.

30 There is no trace of an office called ‘servant of the alms’ in Iranian texts, although the Chinese term clearly derives from an Iranian one. See Werner Sundermann, ‘A Manichaean Liturgical Instruction on the Act of Almsgiving’, in *The Light and the Darkness*, ed. Jason D. BeDuhn and Paul A. Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 208. In the later Uighur realm, the office was replaced by the *xroxan*; Moriyasu, ‘Flourishing of Manichaeism’, 75–77.

community, was accompanied by hymns and homilies.³¹ The Auditors then withdrew, leaving the Elect to reflect, eat, and conduct their own after-meal hymns and prayers.³²

The eastern practices might well contrast with a continued tradition of begging monks in the Roman Empire. The author of the Tebessa codex refers back to the time of the Christian Gospels, a time when the Auditors 'helped the elect and, receiving them under their roofs and into their own homes, they provided them with the necessities of life', presumably indicating that this remained a central ideal.³³ Yet, normative discourse on food rituals in the west did recognise collective meals and ceremonial receptions, a point which hitherto has not received proper attention. A chapter of the Berlin *Kephalaia* depicts Auditors bringing the 'table' to the Elect, accompanied by hymns and prayers; here some form of ceremony is taken for granted (1 Ke. 346.22–347.9).³⁴ Moreover, many chapters from the *Kephalaia* imply collective meal consumption. Keph. 85 deals with an Elect having to go out to gather alms, which is presented as causing some anxiety and causing him to ask the Apostle for guidance. The passage of his question reads:

Sometimes, also, a teacher [of the] church where I am, or some of the foreign brethren, may [ask me] about a portion of alms, concerning some food that they need. I know that what I do is good, as I am obeying the one who commands [me], who sends me on the road to a foreign country. Again, if I [take] up the alms and it is brought to the church, the br[others] and the sisters can take their sufficiency of it. I know and perceive that I have therein a great success, by this matter. [Never]theless, I am also afraid lest in any way I commit a sin when [I wa]lk on the path, as I trample upon the earth, [tre]ading on [the Cro]ss of Light

1 Ke. 208.23–33

Mani's response comes in the form of a parable: The Cross of Light (the world soul) and the alms (its constituent parts) are like a sick person, and the Elect is like a doctor who must at times cause pain in order to heal (1 Ke. 212.10–12). But although this suffering is to a certain extent inevitable, it does not imply that the Elect are allowed to cause unnecessary pain, by acting violently or

31 BeDuhn, 'The Manichaean Sacred Meal', 5; Sundermann, 'Liturgical Instruction', 203–4.

32 BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 149–57; Sundermann, 'Liturgical Instruction', 208.

33 *Codex Tebestina*, col. 17 (v.i) trans. Vermes, in Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 269.

34 'Table' (τράπεζα) was regularly used as a metonym for the Elect meal. Henri-Charles Puech, *Sur le manichéisme et autres essais* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), 74–75, 257.

gluttonously. Instead, the Elect are to rely on the Auditors, and lead the almsgiving ‘by word’ to the Auditors (1 Ke. 213.5–6). The citation above shows that the questioner takes as his starting assumption that going out to collect alms means bringing them back to ‘the church where I am’, where it was distributed and eaten by the brethren in the (local) church. Going out to collect alms was moreover only sometimes (ΟΥΝΙ ΣΑΠ) necessary, in instances when a superior commanded it. Mani’s answer shows the reasoning behind this: going out to receive alms involves harm to the earth, which is at times necessary but should generally be avoided. It is better to instruct the Auditors to provide the necessities. Collective meals are similarly taken for granted in the important keph. 38.³⁵ It describes how souls are liberated by the Light Mind, which enters the body and fashions an Elect. However, bodies can continue to experience rebellions, e.g. sickness, doubt, and apostasy. To prevent this, the community is to sit in council and put the potentially errant Elect straight. Sin resurfaces if the Elect does not heed the advice, manifesting itself in anti-social behaviour, described in these terms:

If again [...] to that place, then again sin shall rise [...] and clothe him with lust and vanity and pride. He separates from his teacher and his brethren. [He sh]all always [w]ant to go in and to come out alone. He shall want to eat and to drink alone, a solitary man (ΟΥΛΕΕΥ ΝΡΜ̄ΝΟΥΟΥΤ). [He sh]all always [w]ant to walk alone. Indeed, this is the [si]gn that the familiarity (ΤΤΑΠ̄) of his brethren does not act on him.

1 Ke. 98.15–22

The term ΤΑΠ̄– (1.22), translated ‘familiarity’, also has the meaning ‘custom, habit’.³⁶ It shows that the Elect were expected to reinforce good conduct among themselves through regular interaction, emulating each other’s habits. Eating, drinking, and travelling on one’s own result in ‘sin’, in becoming ‘solitary’ (Ρ̄Μ̄ΝΟΥΟΥΤ).³⁷ Clearly, communal gatherings were vital occasions at which the Elect were to reinforce each other’s ‘familiarity’. Several other traditions can be

35 It is one of the longest in 1 Ke., and has parallels in Parthian, Sogdian, Turkic, and Chinese traditions tied to the *Sermon of the Light Nous*; material that ultimately seems to be rooted in Mani’s *Book of Giants*. Sundermann, *Der Sermon vom Licht-Nous*, 11–19. See further Chapter 5.

36 From ΤΩΠ, ‘be accustomed, familiar’, see Crum 422b. See also the Medinet Madi homily ‘On Prayer’: ‘Your (Mani’s) habit (Τ̄ΚΤΑΠ̄) [remains] in my heart more than [my] brothers and my relatives’ (Hom. 2.24–25).

37 For this term, see Choat, ‘The Development and Usage of the Term Monk in Late Antique Egypt’, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 45 (2002), 20.

adduced. Keph. 81, cited in the next chapter, depicts a group of 50 Elect fasting and eating together. Keph. 150 depicts Elect turning to another for alms if they are lacking (1 Ke. 364.14–17), pointing to a practice of internal distribution – or at least sharing – of food.

Waiting collectively for alms and consuming them together, then, was perceived as the normative pattern by the author(s) of these traditions, in agreement with the *Compendium*. While recognising individual begging, Manichaean authorities in the west clearly considered the ritual meal to be an affair pertaining to the Elect as a community, central for reinforcing Elect discipline, and so shared in the notions of ceremonial alms receptions and collective meal consumption found in a more developed form in the eastern tradition.

2.2 *Manichaean Alms at Kellis*

It is certainly difficult to separate almsgiving from other charitable transactions in the papyri, where knowledge of the underlying purpose of the transaction is generally taken for granted. As in the case of identifying Elect, technical terms found in Manichaean texts relating to piety and mercy (Gr. εὐσέβεια, ἐλεημοσύνη, C. 𐤎𐤏𐤥𐤓𐤁𐤀),³⁸ are largely absent. There are, however, transactions that can be taken to represent almsgiving with some certainty. Most securely identified are those in the Coptic Father letters P.Kellis v Copt. 31–32, which contain requests for gifts of goods described in terms that imbue the gifts with a spiritual dimension. The editors were the first to note that they should probably be taken as alms.³⁹ Majella Franzmann has treated these letters in a series of studies on lay religiosity and almsgiving in Kellis, showing how the Biblical allusions and other religious notions present in the letters fit into a Manichaean Auditor – Elect framework.⁴⁰ To these we should add the request from a letter by another identifiable Elect: the ‘father’ in P.Kellis I Gr. 63, writing to Pausanias and Pisistratos, who uses a similarly spiritual language in relation to a gift. Perhaps we can add the requests made by Apa Lysimachos in

38 The verb 𐤎𐤁𐤀 (‘have mercy, charity’) appears in Makarios’ letter P.Kellis v Copt. 19 and Tehat’s P.Kellis v Copt. 43. For the latter, see below. For such terms more generally, see BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 128–29.

39 *P.Kellis V*, 207. See the analysis below.

40 Majella Franzmann, ‘An “heretical” Use of the New Testament: A Manichaean Adaptation of Matt 6:19–20 in P. Kell. Copt. 32’, in *The New Testament Interpreted: Essays in Honour of Bernard C. Lategan*, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2006); ead., ‘Tehat the Weaver’; ead., ‘The Treasure of the Manichaean Spiritual Life’, in *In Search of Truth*, ed. Jacob A. van den Berg, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011); ead., ‘Manichaean Almsgiving’.

P.Kellis v Copt. 30 and P.Kellis I Gr. 67, addressed to Horos I and Theognostos, respectively, although the language and contexts here are less clear.

Unambiguous technical terms for Auditor – Elect alms are, as noted, absent. But a term often applied to Christian charitable meals in antiquity, *agape* (ἀγάπη), is at times employed for Auditor – Elect alms in Manichaean sources.⁴¹ For the Manichaeans, the Elect were the truly poor, and charity for the Elect was thus true *agape*. This term is also found at Kellis, designating charitable gifts in the form of foodstuff in documents connected to Horion and Tehat: in Horion's letters P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and 17, in Tehat's accounts P.Kellis v Copt. 44, 47, as well as in the KAB.⁴² Although it cannot be proven beyond doubt that Horion and Tehat refer to Elect alms, there are strong reasons to accept this interpretation, as we shall see below.

A few other transactions mentioned by lay writers may also be alms for the Elect, despite the absence of technical vocabulary. In addition to discussing *agape*, Horion orders clothes on behalf of Saren the presbyter in P.Kellis v Copt. 18 and gives a cowl to the 'brothers' in P.Kellis VII Copt. 58. If his identification as an Elect presbyter is correct, the gifts to Saren should be understood as alms. Pekysis discusses a matter of two girls requested as a 'service to the church' (P.Kellis VII Copt. 73, ll.16–17), which likely relates to the practice of giving children into the care of Elect for education and training as new Elect. The sojourn of Piene with the Teacher known from the Maria/Makarios letters suggests a similar donation. The copying of books may be another instance of almsgiving, as argued in Chapter 7.

Finally, an appeal by Tehat might be read as an appeal for charity to Elect. The passage is unfortunately heavily fragmented, but is worth quoting in full:

If there is a bowl (?) of vegetables (?) [...] Indeed, this is the time: Send a pot (?) [...] to these orphans (ἀνηλιόρφ[αν]οί); for you did send [...] If this is what your heart has [...] me, your mother; so that you throw (?) like this [...] Tapshai [...] for him to [...] to you. A [...] happened [...] Tkoou [...] seek after it [...] Now then, the [...] Have pity for them, and you set up (?) [some] pots for them; in that they have no father nor mother. And until you know (?), the baked loaves [...] every widow (χήρη νιμ) eats (?) [...] find it [...] charity (νάε?); and he [...] and he has mercy (νῆναε?) on them in their [...] with Tbeke [...] baked loaves to them. What is the

41 *P.Kellis V*, 70–71, 77; Anthony Alcock, 'The Agape', *Vigiliae Christianae* 54, no. 2 (2000). For the link between love and charity to the Elect in the Berlin *Kephalaia*, see also 1 Ke. 279.11–19, 166.13–16, 230.4–5. Cf. Brand, 'Manichaeans of Kellis', 219–26, but see below.

42 For these, see the discussion below, and *P.Kellis IV*, 80–82.

manner of [...] your heart receives to them (?). Do not [...] Greet [...] on their behalf [...] You [...] place in you [...] Do not [...] according to the manner of [...] their father Hor [...] these strangers (ⲛⲓⲠⲟⲩⲙⲁⲓ) [...] all of them. Lay your hands on [...] which they sent after [... ...] Who is it really that takes care of them and their anxiety(?) in their hearts? For, are there any others for them?

P.Kellis v Copt. 43, ll.6–38⁴³

Franzmann expresses scepticism as to whether the ‘orphans’ mentioned in the request can be identified as Elect.⁴⁴ The usage of ⲛⲁϥ could link this passage to the Medinet Madi literature, where a common term for alms is ⲛⲏⲧⲛⲁϥ (‘charity’), but it was not particular to the Manichaeans. Yet the passage strongly recalls stock terms and themes employed in reference to the Elect: not only ‘orphans’ and ‘widows’, common terms in connection with Christian alms, but also ‘strangers’.⁴⁵ Most striking is the similarity to a passage from the Sermon on the Great War (SGW), in which Mani is depicted as weeping for his persecuted Elect:

I weep for my widows (ⲛⲁⲭⲏⲣⲁ) who h[ave no one that will] stretch his hand to them (in order to help). I weep for my [orphan]ed ch[ildren] (ⲛⲁⲠⲟⲩⲙⲁⲓ ⲛⲏⲣⲉ ⲛⲟⲣⲫⲁⲓⲛⲟⲥ), these lonely strangers (ⲛⲓⲠⲟⲩⲙⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲧⲣⲟⲙⲉ), for w[ho will lo]ok after them? At [whose] tabl[e] (ⲧⲣⲁⲡⲉⲗ[ⲁ]) will they eat?

Hom. 17.11–14

Here all three terms occur together, in the context of alms, with woeful rhetorical questions similar to those of Tehat. This interpretation of the passage from Tehat’s letter certainly remains tentative, but the possibility that she refers to preparations of an Elect meal should not be dismissed – particularly not in light of the occurrences of agape in her accounts, and considering her close relationship to Horos I and Horion, themselves organisers of agape.

To sum up, while there are no unambiguous acts of Auditor – Elect almsgiving, there are several requests and transactions that can reasonably be interpreted within this framework. The most well-established of these are the letters written by Manichaean authorities, P.Kellis I Gr. 63 and P.Kellis v Copt. 31–32.

43 For the revised translation of the last line, see *P.Kellis VII*, 366.

44 Franzmann, ‘Manichaean Almsgiving’, 3; also Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 215.

45 ‘Widows’ and ‘orphans’ occur in several Medinet Madi texts in reference to the Manichaean community, and in several instances, it is clear that Elect in particular are meant; e.g. 2 PsB. 53.24–25, 62.17, 175.22; Hom. 44.26.

To these we should probably add the agape of Horion in P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and 17, and his gifts to the presbyter Saren in P.Kellis v Copt. 18 and P.Kellis VII Copt. 58. A few other passages are also suggestive of Elect alms, but the aforementioned provide the main starting point for the analysis below.

2.3 *Soliciting Alms*

Let us first consider how the Elect went about being ‘leaders’ of the alms ‘by word to the catechumen’, i.e. the rhetorical construction of Elect alms letters, before moving on to their practical implications. The Father letters provide the primary examples for this purpose. Letter P.Kellis v Copt. 31 is addressed to a group of women by an author who styles himself ‘your father who is in Egypt’ (ll.7–8). His incipit contains a tripartite greeting, situating the women as ‘members of the Holy Church’, ‘[daughters] of the Light Mind’, and ‘children of God’, and praising them as ‘favoured’, ‘blessed’, and ‘God-loving’ (ll.2–6). The letter body starts with a prayer for God to guard the women against the evils of the world due to their mutual relationship: ‘You being helpers, worthy patrons and firm unbending pillars; while we ourselves rely upon you’ (ll.17–19). This relationship, however, does not appear to be based on direct interaction:

Indeed, when I heard about your good, God-loving fame; I rejoiced greatly. I was very grateful to you, ten million times! Whether we are far or we are near: indeed, we have found remembrance (πρπμεγε) among you.

P.Kellis v Copt. 31, ll.20–26

Through their good deeds, the lay women at Kellis have achieved a good reputation (πετῆσαῖτ’ ετῆνανογυ) that has reached the author and incurred his gratefulness all the way over in Egypt, phrased by way of the ‘far but near’ formula. Moreover, by their deeds – perhaps help to other Elect familiar to the author – the women had equally displayed appreciation for the Father, who was presumably a figure of some stature in the community. He continues by praying for that ‘this knowledge and this faith’ shall stay with them in the future (ll.26–29), implicitly tying the strength of their faith to their good deeds. Only after this introduction does he turn to the more mundane purpose of the letter: a request for two *choes* of olive oil. Although the rest of the letter is quite fragmented, it is apparent that this request is occasioned by some hardship the author is experiencing.

The author of P.Kellis v Copt. 32 simply calls himself ‘your father’, and writes a single ‘our loved daughter’. He, too, situates her in relation to the community with a tripartite greeting: she is a ‘daughter of the Holy Church’, a ‘catechumen of the faith’, and a ‘good tree whose fruit never wither, which is your love that emits radiance every day’ (ll.1–7). From the image of the tree he turns to

one of wealth: the woman has acquired riches in the treasuries in the heights, 'where moths shall not find a way, nor shall thieves dig through to them to steal; which (storehouses) are the sun and the moon (ΠΡΗ ΜΝ ΠΟΞ)' (ll.10–13).⁴⁶ Finally, he states that her 'deeds resemble her name', Eirene (ll.14–15).⁴⁷ These turns of praise echo Manichaean interpretation of New Testament passages, which are used in a particular way to put emphasis on the importance of good deeds: Eirene's faith is the 'tree' which bears 'fruit' in the form of 'love', which in turn 'emits radiance' in the form of good deeds. The image of 'treasure' in the 'storehouses' of the sun and the moon expresses, by way of Matt. 6:19–20, the Manichaean notion that an Auditor's good deeds are 'Light' that literally goes up to be stored in the heavenly bodies. Franzmann has taken the depiction of Eirene as radiating light to imply that she is placed on par with the Elect.⁴⁸ However, this image should probably rather be read in light of a passage from the Berlin *Kephalaia* (1 Ke. 227.18–26), which describes how the Auditors' Light particles (i.e. 'soul fragments'), through good deeds, travel before them to the heavenly bodies and await their death before final judgement. After this rich introduction follows the tripartite prayer for well-being in body, soul, and spirit until their next meeting. The author then broaches more mundane matters: he wants Eirene to mix warp and send oil and wheat. But even these matters are intertwined with a metaphor: her actions lay the foundations of a 'house' where she will find eternal rest (ll.28–31).⁴⁹ At the end of this discussion, he exhorts her to 'fight in every way to complete the work, for a person knows not at what hour the thief will come to dig through the house' (ll.40–45).⁵⁰ A certain threat can perhaps be detected: the 'thief' can still undermine her salvation if she stops doing work on behalf of the Church.⁵¹ Finally, the father ends by rejoicing over her recovery from an illness. Considering his previous forceful assurances that Eirene's good deeds have already been stored in the heavenly bodies, but will give her spiritual benefits only if she continues to perform them, one might consider the possibility that her illness had occasioned some doubts, which the author is trying to dispel.⁵²

46 For an analysis of the images of the 'good tree' and the 'treasure', see Franzmann, 'Treasure'. See also the discussion of tree-imagery in Makarios' letter P.Kellis v Copt. 22 in Chapter 5.

47 See the comments in *P.Kellis V*, 24. See also P.Kellis VII Copt. 105 (l.81).

48 Franzmann, 'An Heretical Use', 156–57.

49 For the image of the 'house', see Franzmann, 'Treasure'; Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 301–2.

50 The religious language and the request for warp and oil are strongly intertwined – so much so that Gardner considers whether the request itself might be symbolic. Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 301–2, and see below, section 2.4.

51 See also Franzmann, 'Treasure', 241–44.

52 For the connection between physical and spiritual illnesses within Manichaean thought, see e.g. *keph.* 86.

There is little reason to doubt that these letters deal with requests for alms by Elect. Their shared concerns provide insight into *topoi* that the Elect could draw on in order to persuade Auditors to donate. Both letters start with introductory formula that depict the value of the Auditors to God, the Church, and the writer. Both put a strong emphasis on the importance of good deeds. Good deeds are tied to the resilience of the recipients' faith and ultimately to their very salvation. Both authors connect the practical performance of good deeds (i.e. expressions of faith) to requests of assistance, in both cases involving foodstuff – and, in P.Kellis v Copt. 32, textile work, – they are to receive.

The final Father letter considered here, the Greek P.Kellis I Gr. 63 to Pausanias and Pisistratos, has a different structure and purpose. At the same time, it shares many of the same concerns. The author, who does state his name (although it is unfortunately lost in a lacuna), starts by praising his recipients. The opening lists positive attributes of the recipients, differing from the tripartite structure of the Coptic letters, but 'reputation' plays a key role, as in P.Kellis v Copt. 31. Pausanias' and Pisistratos' 'good reputation' is 'great and without limit' in 'our mind and speech', 'recorded and testified' by way of the 'most sincere mind in you' (ἐίλι[χρ]ι]γξστάτω νῶ) (ll.5–11).⁵³ Subsequently, instead of making a request, the author and his companions offer thanks for gifts, in a particularly striking passage, as translated by Worp:

And yet, knowing that this letter will gladden (you) in due measure, consequently we hasten to make use of this and to send off to the [...] word of the divinely generated conceptions which we cherish inside towards your pious character. For we are most pleased and rejoice when (or: that?) we shall receive both the indications of your sympathy and the welcome letter of yours, I mean [...]; and now we benefit from a few fruits of the spirit and (later) again we benefit also from the fruits of the soul of the pious [...] (καρπῶν ψυχικῶν τῆς εὐσεβούς ... φοράς) and filled with both we shall set going every praise towards your most luminous soul inasmuch as this is possible for us. But only our lord the Paraclete is competent to praise you as you deserve and to compensate you at the appropriate moment.

P.Kellis I Gr. 63, ll.11–30

After this display of gratitude, the author shifts to more prosaic matters, noting that the basket (τὸ σπυρίδιον, l.31) that Pausanias and Pisistratos sent has

53 From εἰλικρινῆς, 'unmixed, pure, sincere'. A more 'Manichaean' translation might be 'most pure' or 'most unmixed'. Note the Manichaean emphasis on individuals separating good from evil within themselves.

arrived, and that he has forwarded (some of) its contents to lord [..]ryllos.⁵⁴ He ends by saying that he prays for the two to remain helpful, and greets from various brethren, whose names are mostly lost (ll.38–39).

As in P.Kellis v Copt. 31, the author appears to be located at some distance from the recipients, and may primarily be familiar with them by way of their ‘good reputation’. As in P.Kellis v Copt. 32, he employs language of spiritual ‘fruits’ to refer to the Auditors’ good deeds: they are tied to pious donations to himself and his brethren, as seen in the sudden shifts from mundane gifts to higher, ‘spiritual’ matters, and back to the discussion of a basket. Moreover, by his assertion that he and his companions will be filled by ‘fruits of the soul of the pious [...]’ when they receive the gifts, it seems that the gifts are goods for consumption.⁵⁵ We should probably understand P.Kellis I Gr. 63 as a letter of thanks for alms, and alms, moreover, that the recipients would consume at a ritual meal. It is supported by the author’s final assertion in the lines quoted: that he and his companions will make praise on behalf of the Auditors’ ‘luminous soul’, i.e. the living soul that is purified through the meals, ‘inasmuch as this is possible for us’.⁵⁶ Their praise is linked to the ‘recompense’ (i.e. salvation) of the Auditors discussed in the next line, although he hastens to piously emphasise that, in the final instance, full salvation is in the hands of the Paraclete.

Several of the same *topoi* are found here as in the two Coptic Father letters: the spiritual authority of the author, the importance of good deeds/reputation of the recipients, the spiritual recompense for their deeds, and not least a link between good deeds, salvation, and specific donations of goods to the author.

In these three letters, then, we find Elect employing elaborate symbolic performances to persuade or reassure the Auditors of their value to the Church. Such performances were not always necessary, however. Letter P.Kellis I Gr. 67 by Apa Lysimachos to Theognostos, which contains a request for a notebook, is much less elaborate: while the main letter body is lost, and Lysimachos does exhort Theognostos to mind his ‘sobriety’ (προσέχετε ἑαυτ[ους] σεσ νήψεως,

54 Possibly [Ky]ryllos, but the spelling of Kyrillous with a second upsilon is to my knowledge unattested. Could the name be [Be]ryllos? This name is found in papyri of the later Roman Empire (P.Oxy. XIV 1679, SB XXVI 16581), fits the lacuna, and its associations with ‘light’ and ‘radiance’ fits nicely with the Manichaean context of this ‘lord’.

55 This is especially the case if the word following εὐσεβῶς at the start of line 24, which Worp transcribes as ... φορῶς, should be resolved as ἀναφορῶς (‘offerings’), a term often used for Manichaean alms-offerings in the Medinet Madi literature, giving: ‘(fruits) of the souls of the pious offerings’ (my translation).

56 For the argument that this likely refers to an after-meal prayer on behalf of the Auditors’ souls, see below.

ll.6–7), one may compare the comparatively curt introductory formula (ll.1–3) to those of the Father letters. This might be an indication of the less formal ties between him and Theognostos; the latter was closely connected to several of Lysimachos' associates, such as Ision and Philammon II, and presumably intimately known to Lysimachos himself. Asking for alms could, in other words, be a more mundane affair, and so may not always be obvious in the letters.⁵⁷ In contrast to the close ties between Lysimachos and Theognostos, the Elect authors of P.Kellis v Copt. 31 and P.Kellis I Gr. 63 seem not to have been directly familiar with their recipients. Their rhetorical displays function to assert their religious credentials in the absence of pre-existing, direct ties. Another context must, however, have occasioned the symbolic performance of the author of P.Kellis v Copt. 32, who had had prior contact with Eirene (see below). His eagerness to reassure her of the value of her deeds, and the scriptural allusions he employs to do so, may well stem from a perceived need to comfort her in the wake of sickness – or even religious doubt.

2.4 *Providing Alms*

The above-considered letters not only tell us much about Elect requests, but can reveal much about the way Auditors were expected to arrange for donations. For one, it is clear that they were expected to contribute alms to unfamiliar Elect even across large distances, and so not only to supply their local itinerant. As pointed out above, the author of P.Kellis v Copt. 31 knew his recipients by reputation, and likely had not previously had direct contact with the women in Kellis. However, he still assumed that they would be willing to send alms to him all the way over in the Nile Valley, by way of a 'son' he sends to retrieve them (l.41). Similarly, the 'father' in P.Kellis I Gr. 63 emphasises the great extent of the reputation of Pausanias and Pisistratos in his letter, and his symbolic performance can be seen in light of a need to reassure them of the spiritual value of their gifts, despite a lack of prior familiarity.

While some, perhaps prominent, Elect could solicit alms from afar, others cultivated personal bonds. The Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 32 was acquainted with the recipient, Eirene: he ends a tripartite prayer for health in body, gladness in soul, and joy in spirit with the phrase 'until we see you (*pl.*) again' (l.24), and grieves over her sickness and rejoices in her recovery, of which he has been

57 However, Theognostos' religious role is admittedly somewhat uncertain: it could be that the curt performance is due to him in fact being a junior Elect. This would also make good sense of Lysimachos' comment regarding his sobriety. However, see the discussion above, Section 1.

informed by shared contacts (ll.45–49). He also mentions practical matters which the two were to conduct face-to-face:

Furthermore, I write, giving you the remembrance that you [...] for the matter is fine, until I come up. Once you have laid the foundation of your house, fight in every way to put on its coping that you may be at ease therein forever. Do the work and mix the warp (?) until I come. If you have oil standing, give a *chous* to our brother; let him send it to me, or two naturally (?), if also there is wheat, give him eighteen *maje*; until we meet one another and settle our account

P.Kellis v Copt. 32, ll.24–40

The meeting of the two is presented as a rather mundane, perhaps even regular, affair: the Father comes to supervise her work and settle accounts († πῆδον, lit. ‘give our count’). The account that they are to settle, if taken in the sense of monetary compensation, makes the status of this transaction as almsgiving uncertain. Eirene may have been unable (or unwilling) to pay for the oil and grain from her own pocket, and so required compensation, perhaps from communal funds.⁵⁸ Gardner, however, has recently suggested that it should be taken in the sense of a spiritual exchange.⁵⁹ At any rate, although the author appears to be located in the vicinity, and even plans to visit, he also directs Eirene to send alms from a distance, through ‘our brother’ – another Elect, located with Eirene, or a lay figure with particular responsibilities for alms? Eirene’s donations of oil, wheat, and textiles were in other words not intended for the single Elect Father at his visit, even though the author appears to be located in the immediate vicinity: they had to be shipped off over a distance for another Elect – or, more probably, an Elect group, as we shall see.

The letters dealing with agape allow us to glimpse almsgiving from the lay perspective. Horion’s dealings, in particular, provide several interesting details. In P.Kellis VII Copt. 58, he berates Tehat and Hatre for asking for payment for a cowl which he had given to the ‘brothers’. The editors suggest that Horion had expected Tehat/Hatres to provide the cowl as alms, and is somewhat indignant that he has to pay for it.⁶⁰ It indicates that Horion was responsible for relaying alms on behalf of other Auditors, even if disagreement may arise as to who was to shoulder the expenses. He himself is found purchasing resources for the

58 There is evidence to suggest that the Elect accumulated communal funds, which could presumably be used for alms. See the discussion of *c. Faust.* 5.5 in Chapter 9, Section 3.2.

59 Gardner, *Founder of Manichaeism*, 102.

60 P.Kellis VII, 23.

agape. In P.Kellis v Copt. 15, he writes ‘brother’ Horos I about practical arrangements that he has made:

I have received the *agon* of oil from our son Raz. Look, I left it [with them] for the *agape*, like you said. You also write: “Buy 6 *maje* of wheat”. I will buy them at 1200 to the artaba; thus 705 *nummi* for these 6 *maje*. I have also received the *jlge* from our son Pateni (?). Look, I filled it and sent it by way of Raz. As you receive it, write to me. Do not bother (?) yourself about the *agape*. I will do it, rejoicing. Yes, our brother Pakous is south of the ditch, harvesting. If he does not come by that day, I will send his share south to him (ll.14–27)

Horion has ‘left it’ (ἀἰκᾶαα), i.e. the oil, with a group of people. He does not have to specify who ‘they’ were; the aside in the last quoted line shows that Horos, too, was regularly concerned with the agape, as also indicated by a similar discussion in P.Kellis v Copt. 17. Horion was apparently responsible on his end, but received orders from Horos.

The interpretation of these transactions as Elect alms has not gone undisputed, however, and has been questioned by Brand. He points to a problem found in the lines where Horion describes sending a share south to ‘our brother’ Pakous. While acknowledging that some proposed alternative interpretations do not fit the context (charity for the poor, meals commemorating martyrs, and funerary meals), Brand states that ‘the *agape* ... was not a typical Manichaean meal either, as parts could be sent elsewhere.’⁶¹ However, I do not think it at odds with what we know and can reasonably surmise about almsgiving from the Kellis evidence. As discussed, all the certain instances of Elect alms here involve goods being sent elsewhere. In fact, Horion’s transactions bear a great resemblance to those of the Coptic Father letters. The combination of wheat and oil is not found elsewhere in the archive: it features solely in Horion’s two agape-letters, P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and 17, and in the two above-mentioned Coptic Father letters – in both instances intended for charitable gifts.⁶² Horion’s use of distinctively Manichaean cues in both these letters, as discussed in Chapter 5, seem to underscore the religious significance of these transactions. Combined with the presence of Petros and the presbyter

61 Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 222.

62 It may also be noted that the oil-to-wheat ratio of Horion’s purchase in P.Kellis v Copt. 15 (1.5 litres oil & 18 kg wheat = 12 kg wheat per litre) is of the same order of magnitude as that requested by the Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 32 (3–6 litres & 58 kg = 9.5–19 kg wheat per litre oil).

Saren in Horion's other letters, we have strong reasons to think that Horion had particular concerns for managing ties with the Elect.⁶³ More difficult to reconcile with a Manichaean context, perhaps, is the statement that Pakous is 'harvesting' (ⲉϣⲕⲟⲩⲧⲓ), an activity normally not permissible to Elect. However, the phrase is ambiguous.⁶⁴ Moreover, it is somewhat strange for Pakous to receive a charity meal while harvesting out in the field. Pakous is not just in the fields outside the village, either, but 'south of the ditch', i.e. somewhere on the road to Khargeh (or in Khargeh itself). There are, then, reasons to take Pakous' 'harvesting' in a non-literal sense.⁶⁵

Turning to some other possible instances of alms in Horion's letters, most relate to the figure of Saren. He recurs in both of Horion's letters to Tehat/Hatres, where he is seen to have sent orders for clothes that Horion transmits to Tehat/Hatres. It is clear that Horion and Saren had regular interaction. More details are provided in a passage from P.Kellis VII Copt. 58:

These fabrics and these cowls belong to our brother Saren. Now, as he will come (would you be?) so very kind [...] bid (?) Eraklei to write to get them to come to the Oasis; and I shall [(also?) go] there and see you. He wants the fabrics to be made into jerkins [...] Also, you are to cut them with their cloak(s): two *mna* for [each?] cloak, one *mna* [...] *staters* for large warp and this cloak. (Wool?) from the place he will also send to you (ll.21–26)

It appears that Saren was about to make a journey (ⲉϣⲛⲁῖ Ⲅⲉ, l.21) in order to meet with Horion and Tehat/Hatres, presumably in order to receive the clothes. The last line, if the editors' suggestion for reconstruction is correct, may indicate that he provided wool for the clothing, perhaps acquired from laity active in the Valley, although both the reconstruction and the subject of the sentence is open to interpretation. It is at any rate not wholly unexpected to find Elect involved in textile transactions: we have already seen it in the

63 The importance of oil is particularly interesting, and can perhaps be compared to evidence such as the anti-Manichaean *Acta Archelai* (11), which implies that olive oil was used to anoint the Elect after the meal. See BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 148.

64 Crum (129b) gives: 'gather corn, fruit, wood', and so it does not necessarily denote agricultural work.

65 While it is here argued that normal Elect practice was to eat collectively (below), it must have been a practical necessity that those who were out preaching received alms on the road, at least in areas with limited lay support. An Elect by the name Pakous is not otherwise known, but see perhaps Pakous the presbyter in the ⲕⲁⲖ (142), or Pekos, author of P.Kellis VII Copt. 120.

Father's interaction with Eirene in P.Kellis v Copt. 32. The presence of Saren presbyter indicates that alms were, at least at times, mediated by Elect officials, a point to which we return in Chapter 9.

Accounts are the last group of documents examined here. For the Coptic accounts, a Manichaean context is clear. Their author, Tehat, notes two agape contributions. In P.Kellis v Copt. 44, she writes: 'The agape of Theodora: She has given a majo of olives and a half majo of grapes' (ll.12–13). In P.Kellis v Copt. 47, she addresses a group of associates, writing: 'The lentils and lupin seeds: Make them as an agape for me (ΔΡΙΟΥ ΝΑΚΑΠΗ ΖΑΡΑΕΙ)' (ll.10–11). Just as the 'agape of Theodora' is agape given by Theodora, so the agape that 'they' are to make for the author is presumably one that will be given on behalf of her. That the author has to account for the agape contributions she receives (or demands) also suggests that she is not the ultimate recipient. Tehat's letter P.Kellis v Copt. 43 may provide support for this: she there has to persuade her 'son' to prepare and send a pot of vegetables(?) (ΤΥΝΝΑΥ ΟΥΖΝΟ, ll.7–8) to a group of 'orphans' or 'strangers' – however, as pointed out, the context is very uncertain. At any rate, Tehat's activities can be seen in light of the similar roles played by her associates Horos I and Horion. Taken together, the evidence from the Tehat/Horion circle suggests that these figures had some sort of responsibility for sending alms to Elect from locals in Kellis, with Horion as an intermediary.

Finally, we must briefly consider the evidence for agape from the KAB. The role of Tehat seems to be confirmed by an entry in this document, where six (small) matia wheat are designated as 'for agape of Tehat' (εις ἀγάπη Θεατ, KAB 106).⁶⁶ Following my interpretation above, this entry would indicate that the KAB author has promised to provide an agape contribution that Tehat will send on.⁶⁷ However, this entry is not the only agape entry found in the KAB. In addition to Tehat, the author gives agape for a certain Tanoup. Furthermore, the manager lists yearly, unmarked payments for agape, concentrated in the first four months of each year.⁶⁸ It could perhaps be suggested that these were

66 For the 'small' and the 'large' matiation used in the KAB, see Table 1. Six small mat. amount to 7.8 kg.

67 This may have its background in a close relationship between Tehat and the account author: Tehat had (as seen in Chapter 4) ties to the circle of Tithoes in House 2, where the codex was found, and the KAB contains payments to a textile workshop and a loan connected to Tehat (as touched on in relation to Faustianos in Chapter 4). Without identifying the KAB author, however, the exact nature of this relationship cannot be determined.

68 Bagnall (*P.Kellis IV*, 82–83) describes five main features that characterise the expenditures on agape in the KAB: 1) they appear in entries both for *dapane* and *hyperesia*, i.e. what seems to be unspecified service expenses; 2) they are mostly in wheat, but twice in wine, once in barley, and once in cheese; 3) two instances are associated with specific individuals (Tehat and Tanoup); 4) the amounts vary considerably and so are not fixed; and 5) they

the author's (or landlord's?) personal contributions, which the Elect received on a regular basis for parts of the year. But there are several problems with this interpretation. The KAB also features payments to a local (?) episcopal church: to the church (880, 883), to the bishop (706), and 'to the church for the bishop' (620–621). Although these, too, could conceivably be Manichaean, they are difficult to square with concurrent payments of agape. Furthermore, the regular agape payments include wine, which, although not decisive, speaks against a Manichaean context.⁶⁹ Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that the author was affiliated with a more mainstream Church.⁷⁰ Of course, the author may not have seen it in such binary terms, and contributed agape both to Manichaean Elect and to the 'Catholic' Church. Still, it seems imprudent to conclude that all the agape entries in the KAB relate to specifically Manichaean alms.

At any rate, the acts of Auditor-Elect almsgiving visible in the Coptic evidence are not intimate occasions. Instead, the Elect either retrieved the alms themselves, or awaited them at a separate location, as was also suggested by the Medinet Madi texts. This should alert us to an often-overlooked fact when dealing with the practicalities of Elect-Auditor relations: Auditors could not be expected to show up at Elect gatherings every day. Even eager Auditors, located in the same village or city as an Elect or an Elect group, would have needed mechanisms for delivering alms at the times when they could not come themselves. For most lay adherents, this would presumably have been most days (perhaps explaining why Monday was set apart for special 'prayer gatherings'). Instead, Auditors who were more involved with the Church than others took on the responsibility of making sure that the Elect received the necessities they were due. This would explain the relay system that we have seen the

are concentrated in the first four months of each year. What these features might signify for agape practice remains unclear. Varying amounts could indicate that the number of recipients also varied, in line with a varying numbers of Elect in need of *agape* (cp. Horion having to note, in P.Kellis v Copt. 17, that there are 'many' (more than usual?) present), but this is very speculative. For the wine payments, see below.

69 Although the presence of wine among the contributions could be seen as evincing a non-Manichaean context, we cannot be sure that they were sent directly to the Elect, and not, for instance, sold or exchanged for other goods first (significantly, in P.Kellis v Copt. 15 and 17, Horion informs that he has received money to pay for oil for the agape). At the same time, one may note *De mor.* 2.16.47, where Augustine says that the 'juice' the Elect drink is nothing other than alcohol-free wine (*caroenum*, which Teske notes 'refers to a sweet wine that had been boiled down to a third of its original amount.' Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 60 n. 9).

70 See *ibid.*, 80–84, for a 'Catholic' Christian link, esp. 83–84.

contours of above, where certain Auditors collected and sent alms to Elect who gathered at particular centres, so that Elect agents did not (generally) have to collect them themselves.⁷¹

2.5 *Sharing Alms*

These donations can also tell us something about the Elect to whom they were given. First, we may note that the food alms in the Coptic material consist primarily of oil and wheat, as well as olives, grapes, lentils, and lupin seeds. This diet is in line with what is known of the Elect dietary norms.

More interesting are the many indications that alms were received and consumed by Elect groups, rather than individuals. This is suggested already by P.Kellis I Gr. 63 (quoted above), where father N. N. writes on behalf of a plurality of individuals, presumably Elect, who have all been filled (ἀπολαύ[ο]μεν) by ‘spiritual fruits’. The amounts of wheat and oil requested in the Coptic Father letters are also revealing in this regard. They are much larger than those needed for any individual Elect. The author of P.Kellis V Copt. 32 requested one or two choes, i.e. 1.5–3 litres, and 18 mat. wheat, amounting to almost two artaba, or c.58 kg. One artaba was enough to sustain an active, adult man for a whole month;⁷² two artaba are wholly unlikely to be intended for a single person. The author of P.Kellis V Copt. 31 asked for two choes oil (about six litres), and explicitly writes on behalf of a plurality of people (ll.29–34). The Elect must either have had the food stored for them (in communal spaces?) or consumed it in groups upon delivery – or, as seems most likely, a combination.

These Father letters provide strong evidence to the effect that Elect received food (and presumably consumed meals) collectively. Horion’s letters suggest a similar picture. In P.Kellis V Copt. 15, Horion purchased six matia wheat – a little more than half an artaba, or around 18kg – and sent one agon oil, i.e. 1.5 litres, of which he says: ‘I left (ἀἶκααα) it [with them]⁷³ for the agape’ (ll.15–16). It is clear that the agape is delivered and handed over to a plurality of recipients. Likewise, in P.Kellis V Copt. 17, Horion refers to one or two agon oil,

71 For the existence of Manichaean communal centres where such gatherings would be held, see Chapter 9, Section 3.

72 L. Foxhall & H. A. Forbes (1982), cited in Dominic W. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century A.D. Egypt: The Heroninos Archive and the Appianus Estate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 109–10.

73 For this reconstruction the editors noted: ‘Here the reading is particularly difficult; but the sense must be something like: “I have put it aside for the agape”. We cannot simply read ἄπτοου; perhaps the best possibility is οὔτωου (“I left it among them for the agape”).’ *P.Kellis V*, 144.

1.5–3 litres,⁷⁴ and makes an aside: ‘we take in much oil for the *agape*, in that we are many, and they consume much oil’ (ll.23–25). As in the letters of the Fathers examined above, the size of the deliveries and the explicit reference to a plurality of consumers show that we are dealing with an Elect group. Furthermore, although not pertaining to food alms, Horion and Tehat intended to provide Saren the presbyter with multiple cowls, jerkins, and cloaks in P.Kellis VII Copt. 58. Horion also notes that he donated a cowl to a plurality of ‘brothers’ in that letter. This would only make sense if these were received on behalf of a group.

2.6 *Summary*

To conclude, the evidence for almsgiving from Kellis is in line with the evidence adduced from other Manichaean traditions. It required the coordination of both Auditors and Elect, which in turn made it possible for the Elect to expect alms sent as far afield as the Nile Valley. The evidence suggests that the Elect regularly received alms (and in all likelihood consumed meals) as a group, rather than as individual itinerants. This goes against a common assumption in previous scholarship. Scholars have often taken it to be the case that, in practice, the Elect received their meals individually while visiting Auditors. According to BeDuhn, local lay groups would primarily gather in the home of one of their numbers, where the visiting Elect was received and fed. Although pointing out that the Kellis evidence shows some degree of communication and maintenance of bonds across distances between Elect and Auditors, his focus is on local receptions:

[c]areful organization and communication was necessary to prepare for the arrival and hosting of an Elect, and is attested by the documents from Kellis. The Elect depended entirely on the ordinary adherent for safety, housing, food, clothing, and other supplies necessary to the Manichaean mission. These responsibilities continued to some extent even after the Elect had departed, as the Manichaean families would continue to provide needed items as requested by letter and messenger.⁷⁵

74 Some fragmented lines (ll.26–27) also refer to three xestes. This would make the amount 4.5 litres altogether, if these are to be taken as in addition to (and not a repeated reference of) the aforementioned one agon.

75 BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 261.

However, while it is *a priori* likely that Elect visits necessitated ceremonial attention, and that Elect in practice would eat in the homes of Auditors when travelling, the Kellis evidence does not, as far as we can determine, provide any evidence for this. Instead, the texts left to us relate to supplies sent from Auditors in Kellis to Elect gathering elsewhere – and not only those that belonged to ‘their’ local cell: some of the Elect were not familiar with the Auditors who furnished them with alms at all. Small, intimate alms ceremonies have presumably left less of an imprint in written documents than requests for larger quantities of goods over distances. Yet this also indicates that almsgiving had received a routinised, institutionalised form in fourth-century Egypt.

3 Elect Services

Lay responsibilities are only half the story, however. The Elect, in return for meals and other gifts, undertook the arguably more important task, from their point of view, of caring for the Auditors’ souls. Almsgiving was certainly a two-way transaction: by releasing the Light present in the food alms offered by the Auditors, the Elect helped their souls gain a share in salvation. But the Elect also assisted in a variety of other ways: they participated in ritual gatherings, offer prayers for their souls, provided instruction in religious knowledge, and perhaps other forms of ritual expertise, as we shall see below.

3.1 *Ritual Gatherings*

Lay and Elect interaction was, in theory, facilitated by communal gatherings on a regular basis. In the eastern tradition, the laity were to attend the daily Elect meal gatherings, the occasion on which they delivered their alms offerings, involving communal psalm singing and prayer. They were also exhorted to attend a weekly gathering, which seems to have been designated for Mondays.⁷⁶ Here, too, both Elect and Auditors engaged in prayers and singing of psalms, as well as reading of scripture, fasting, and confession. There seems to have been ritualised interaction between Elect and Auditors on such occasions: keph. 122 (1 Ke 292.4–8) provides a mythical explanation for the ‘call’ that the congregation would chant and the ‘answer’ with which the Elect would respond during one (unspecified) gathering. From the *Homilies*, we know that the Church had a ‘reader’ (ἀναγνώστης): a minor church official of the type found in the contemporary ‘Catholic’ Church – although an Elect in the Manichaean Church, – whose readings were also attended by the laity.

⁷⁶ See Puech, *Sur le manichéisme*, 96–97; BeDuhn, ‘Manichaean Weekly Confession’, 277–78.

In addition to these regular meetings, there were rarer and/or ad hoc gatherings. Most importantly, the community gathered every year for the Bema ceremony, in order to commemorate Mani's death. It featured a month of celebrations that included psalm singing, communal readings, prayers, fasting, and vigils, leading up to a central ritual of confession and a meal in front of the *bema*, Mani's empty 'throne'. Funeral services were another occasion for ritual gatherings. Manichaean 'death masses' have been suggested based on the content of psalms such as those in the *Psalm-book*, with parallels drawn to the Mandaean *massiqta*-liturgy, where ritual specialists help facilitate the ascent of the soul of the dead.⁷⁷

As we saw in the previous chapter, there is much evidence for prayers, psalms, and other material used in presumably liturgical settings from Kellis. Unfortunately, what gatherings they may have been used at, and whether Elect were present, remain unknown, although the find of a Bema Psalm suggests that this festival was celebrated. The laity of House 1–3 do not regularly discuss ritual gatherings in their letters. Only one contains an (incidental) reference to regular church gatherings: in Matthaïos' P.Kellis v Copt. 25, he relates that his brother is located in the north (Alexandria, as per P.Kellis v Copt. 24 and 29), and that the Teacher 'makes him to read in church'. This passage signals Elect presence at, and – considering Piene's status as the Teacher's protégé, – performance of, readings of scripture in church. Matthaïos' language certainly implies that such gatherings were regular. The fact that Ision, in P.Kellis I Gr. 67, had become a 'Syriac reader', presumably the office previously discussed, could indicate that Syriac texts were occasionally read.

Some more indirect evidence points to ritual gatherings. Matthaïos may allude to another form of ritual gathering in the letter discussed above. In order to explain why he has not gone to see his father, he writes:

Thus, I have been here in Antinoou since the day when the Teacher came south; (and) I have been unable to find a way to go [...], nor to visit my father, because they are mourning in the city for the blessed soul of my great mother. We are remembering her very much. And I was distressed that she died when we were not with her, and that she died without finding the brotherhood gathered around her.

P.Kellis v Copt. 25, ll.48–56

77 Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*, 108. See also Siegfried Richter, 'Die manichäischen Toten- oder Seelenmesse', in *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit*, ed. Stephen Emmel, Martin Krause, Siegfried G. Richter, and Sofia Schaten (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 1999).

This strongly suggests a ritual funerary gathering of the sort previously argued by scholarship. The editors take it to indicate a role for the Elect in administering to Auditors at the point of death.⁷⁸ As seen in the previous chapter, several hymns and prayers from Kellis address the soul as it was preparing for and ascending to the Land of Light, and the prayer found in T.Kellis I1 Copt. 2A5 may have been used on such an occasion. It is not clear whether ‘great mother’ should be taken to indicate a figure of religious authority (implying a ceremony for a departed Elect) or, as the editors prefer, Matthaïos’ literal grandmother.⁷⁹ Either way, that Matthaïos reports on it to Maria I shows that it was a gathering of importance also to the Auditors.

Barring the literary remains themselves, these pieces of evidence pertain to activities in the Valley. The attendance of Elect at ritual gatherings in Kellis, or even the existence of such gatherings there, remain unattested by the documentary papyri. Still, the presence of Elect in the vicinity of the village does show that such interaction is at least plausible. The evidence, referred to at various points above, includes the Elect Father coming to visit Eirene; Ision travelling to Theognostos; Petros and Timotheos travelling between the ‘mother’ and ‘son’; and the presbyter Saren set to visit Horion and/or Tehat.⁸⁰ In P.Kellis v Copt. 35, Ouales appears to expect that a ‘blessed one’ is located in the vicinity of Psais III on a regular basis, as he writes concerning certain texts: ‘Quickly, you send them to me by a blessed one’ (ll.41–42). Together with the mundane nature of the visits of the Petros letters and of the Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 32, the material suggests that Elect encounters were not necessarily a rare experience – and, as we shall see in the next chapter, there may well have been an Elect gathering point in the vicinity of Kellis. It is not unlikely that Elect in or near Kellis would have presided over gatherings similar to those of their brethren in the Valley.

3.2 *Religious Instruction*

Elect assistance could also take on more didactical forms. Several chapters from the Berlin *Kephalaia*, such as keph. 115 (referred to below), show Mani answering questions from Auditors. Presumably, he was considered a model for Elect who would similarly have to respond to questions from the laity. A passage from the ‘Sermon on the Great War’ relates how the Church will be persecuted to the brink of destruction, but will afterwards be rebuilt, and at this point the Auditors will return *en masse* to listen to the ‘reader’, and the churches and the

⁷⁸ P.Kellis V, 78.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 193.

⁸⁰ See P.Kellis v Copt. 32, 38–41, P.Kellis VII Copt. 58, 80.

Auditors' houses will become 'schools' (ἀντιθεῖς ἡγῶν, Hom. 30.32). By providing knowledge as well as prayers, the Elect ensured the spiritual health and eventual salvation of the Auditors on whom they depended.

Augustine's experiences provide some striking evidence for such activities in practice. As an Auditor, he read texts – including Manichaean astrological texts – with his mentor, the Manichaean bishop Faustus.⁸¹ His studies were not only private. Along with a group of other Auditors, he had regular and lively discussions with Elect in Hippo, especially with 'two men of fairly good reputation, men of quick wit and leaders in those discussions of theirs, who were closer to us than the others'.⁸² He mentions a scandal of an Elect 'whose discussions we frequently attended in the quarter of the fig merchants'.⁸³ These passages provide vivid examples of occasions on which Elect and Auditors met for discussions and instruction in Manichaean doctrine, outside the framework of ritual gatherings.

In contrast, the evidence from Kellis is not extensive, and mostly indirect. As discussed in Chapter 7, the discovery in House 3 of T.Kellis II Copt. 1, a wooden board listing the five aspects of the divinity called the Third Ambassador, evinces attempts at providing more advanced religious instruction to the Kellites.⁸⁴ The documentary texts provides some glimpses of Elect taking on the obligation of teaching members of the community. Makarios relates that Piene, the brother of Matthaïos who took to follow the Teacher, was taught Latin by him. The passage reads: 'And Piene: The great Teacher let him travel with him, so that he might learn Latin. He teaches him well' (P.Kellis v Copt. 20, ll.24–26). It seems unlikely that Latin was the only part of the curriculum, which likely also involved religious knowledge, considering that Piene was to read in church. Likewise, Lysimachos informs Theognostos that his 'brother' Ision has become literate in both Greek and Syriac (P.Kellis I Gr. 67).⁸⁵ If the preserved documents from Kellis are any indication, Ision being taught Syriac literacy must surely have been intended for reading and translating Manichaean religious texts.

Instruction of these two boys should probably be seen in light of Elect apprenticeship, reserved for youths being groomed for Electhood, rather than

81 See *De mor.* 2.8.11, 2.19.71, *Conf.* 5.7. See also van Oort, 'Young Augustine'; BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma I*, 123–31. Note the debate of van Oort and Coyle, discussed in Chapter 7, Section 5, n.117.

82 *De mor.* 2.19.71, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 101.

83 *De mor.* 2.19.72, trans. *ibid.*

84 See the discussion in the previous chapter, and see also BeDuhn, 'Domestic Setting', 263.

85 Following Gardner's ('P. Kellis I 67 Revisited') interpretation of this text.

as part of general didactical service to Auditors.⁸⁶ For Elect instruction of everyday Auditors, we are kept in the dark. Yet a passage from P.Kellis VII Copt. 73 might illuminate how religious knowledge spread through lay networks. The author, Pekysis, solicits a ‘service for the church’ (ΠΩΜΩΞ ΝΤΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ, ll.16–17) from the recipient, Psais III, in the form of two recently orphaned girls. In order to persuade Psais, Pekysis asks him to talk to Theognostos: ‘Our brother Theognos will tell you everything. He will speak to you about the girl and [...] the [great (?)] matter, so that we may attain life eternal [...]’ (ll.20–24). Although fragmented, the passage strongly suggests that Theognostos was to be called upon in order to convince Psais III of the religious value of the donation. If, as I take it, Theognostos was an eager Auditor who had close ties to Lysimachos and Ision, this can explain his authority here: through his friendship with Elect he had acquired the religious knowledge that he, in turn, could impart to Psais III to explain the importance of this ‘service’. It also provides a good example of how religious knowledge had to be mobilised in order to justify specifically Manichaean practices, as argued in Chapter 7. Such practices and motivations would have led Elect teachings to be disseminated through lay networks.

3.3 *Prayers*

Prayers were considered an important part of the Elect-Auditor relationship. The Elect would daily provide for lay souls through their meals, both through the act of eating and by way of special after-meal prayers.⁸⁷ Prayers assisted in the redemption of the Auditors and their families, and the Elect derived their authority in part from the efficacy of their prayers. This is shown in keph. 115, where an Auditor asks Mani whether alms and intercessory prayers by the Elect also help the salvation of those who are already dead. Mani is made to answer in the affirmative, and in his answer, he draws on mythical parallels to demonstrate how pure souls can assist in the release of other souls (1 Ke 279.15–26). An instance of Elect praying on behalf of the Auditors’ souls can be detected in the Greek Father letter P.Kellis I Gr. 63. The author here wants to reassure the two lay recipients, Pausanias and Pisistratos, that their alms-act will give the proper spiritual benefit in return for the gifts they have sent. His subsequent promise to ‘set going every praise’ on behalf of their ‘most luminous souls’ in the wake of ‘having been filled’ by spiritual fruits could

86 As argued by Baker-Brian, ‘Mass and Elite’, 180–81 (already cited). For Ision, see also above.

87 For previous known allusions to such a prayer, see BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 147–48.

well relate to after-meal prayers on behalf of the Auditors, given in exchange for alms.

3.4 *'Magical' and Practical Services*

Finally, we may have a case of more 'illicit' ritual services provided by Elect to Auditors, in the form of magical practices. Mani is, according to some traditions, said to have banned sorcery.⁸⁸ But BeDuhn noted that '[a]mong the "magical" services offered by the Elect, we find in correspondence prayers for the physical well-being of addressees, invoking the blessings of the divine forces on their life, as well as the occasional spell for the use of the recipient in quite mundane matters', citing P.Kellis v Copt. 31, 32, and 35.⁸⁹ The two former relate to the spiritual health of the recipients and the solicitation of alms, as argued above. But the latter, Ouales' P.Kellis v Copt. 35, deals explicitly with 'magic'. The papyrus consists of two texts: the upper half contains a magical spell for the separation of two lovers, the bottom half contains Ouales' accompanying letter, with an explanation for the spell and a request for other writings to be sent with a 'blessed one' in return. Shared Manichaean identity is indicated by the oath Ouales swears by 'our lord the Paraclete' (l.27). Thus, in spite of Mani's (likely) disapproval, Ouales and Psais III did not shy away from magic. Perhaps, as Rebillard argued for Christians in North Africa, they did not think their religious identity to be relevant for the practice they engaged in.⁹⁰ However, the religious framework of the exchange seems difficult to square with this, and there are other possibilities. They may have considered Mani's ban to apply to other types of magic than the one they engaged in, or been unaware of it: it was not an important part of his teachings, and one that could be conveniently ignored. Or perhaps awareness of the unsanctioned nature of the task could explain an enigmatic aside from Ouales regarding the text he is sending: 'for my part knowing that it will not be brought to brother Kallikles, I am sending' (ll.32-34).⁹¹

This is far from the only spell found at Kellis; the House 1-3 documents include several examples of charms and astrological calendars (P.Kellis 1 Gr. 82-90), as do papyri from elsewhere in Kellis, indicating that such requests

88 See Mirecki, Gardner, and Alcock, 'Magical Spell', 10-11 n.44. For rejection of such practices by an early church authority, Mani's disciple Kustaios, see the criticism of Elect who practice astrology in the SGW (Hom. 30.2-4).

89 BeDuhn, 'Domestic Setting', 265-66.

90 See Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities*, 74-75; but cf. the discussion in Chapter 5.

91 For another explanation for this aside, see Mirecki, Gardner, and Alcock, 'Magical Spell', 31.

were not unusual.⁹² Being able to harness the ritual powers of the Elect for more prosaic ends would provide an incentive for the Auditors to stay invested. For the Elect, producing magical formula would have been an efficient way to provide the laity with 'tangible' evidence for their religious competence.⁹³ This may have made the movement's authorities less inclined to emphasise criticism of such practices found in canonical texts.

However, it is important to sound a note of caution here: there is no evidence that Ouales was, in fact, an Elect. Apart from his pious invocation of the Paraclete, he does not utilise elaborate cues, nor does he identify himself as a religious authority. The understanding of him as an Elect hinges on the possibly monastic setting for this letter. While the involvement of a 'blessed one' indicates that the milieu that frames the incidence included Elect, it does not mean that he was one himself.

That many – if not most – Elect were expected to have some level of literacy would at any rate have made them useful for the Auditors in a range of settings, in addition to that of copying magic. A more mundane Elect scribal service might be found in P.Kellis I Gr. 48. Here, a certain Psekes guarantees for the release of a slave by Valerios, who explains his act by invoking his 'exceptional Christianity' (ὑπερβολὴν χ[ρι]στιανότητος). Psekes is styled, in Worp's reconstruction, 'our most reverend father' (αἰδε[σιμω]τάτου πατρ[ὸς] ἡμῶν) (ll.9–10), and it is quite plausible that '(of the) monks' ([μο]ναχῶν) should also be restored in relation to his introduction (ll.10–11). At the end of the document, he is given the abbreviated title πρ() (l.20), probably for presbyter. These factors seem to suggest that Psekes was a religious leader acting on behalf of monks. Worp notes, against the hypothesis that this was a Christian *manumission in ecclesia*, the bilateral character of the document and the absence of a bishop or other church representatives.⁹⁴ However, these objections would not hold much weight if the context is a Manichaean one, in which the presence of an Elect official, acting on behalf of the monastic community, may well have been sufficient to secure its validity. If so, he might be identifiable with Psekes, author of P.Kellis VII Copt. 90, who is a candidate for Electhood based on his title 'Apa', use of elaborate (albeit not distinctively Manichaean) religious cues, and association with 'our brother' Timotheos.⁹⁵ Thus, although the evidence is

92 E.g. P.Gascou 84, from House 4, and P.Gascou 87, from D/8. See Worp, 'Miscellaneous New Papyri'.

93 Perhaps such a continued role might further explain finds of protective magical incantations in Aramaic, written in Manichaean script, found in Mesopotamia (dated fifth–seventh centuries). See Pedersen and Larsen, *Manichaean Texts in Syriac*, 5–8.

94 *P.Kellis I*, 142.

95 Since the manumission in P.Kellis I Gr. 48 was given in letter format, Apa Psekes' long-term presence in the Nile Valley (per P.Kellis VII Copt. 90) does not prevent an identification.

not conclusive, it could plausibly attest to an Elect providing both an earthly witness (as required by Roman law) and a spiritual guarantee for the validity of the manumission.

3.5 *Summary*

To sum up, there is evidence from Kellis for the Elect ministering to Auditors through a range of channels, although mostly indirect. The evidence for ritual gatherings in the documentary texts is unfortunately meagre, and restricted to activity in the Nile Valley. The psalms discussed in Chapter 7 do strongly suggest that communal gatherings were practiced in Kellis as well. We cannot be sure of whether, or how often, the Elect participated, although they were certainly active in the area. There is also some evidence, if again chiefly indirect, for advanced religious instruction taking place, and for the Elect bolstering their authority by channelling their spiritual and scribal abilities into more practical matters, such as the production of spells.

4 **Conclusions**

From the above, the Elect-Auditor interaction visible in the Kellis texts emerges as largely consonant with what can be discerned from Manichaean traditions from Medinet Madi, as well as other sources. Almsgiving in mid-fourth century Kellis had undergone some degree of routinisation, by way of stable ties between Elect and Auditors. Alms were delivered by specific lay people, or retrieved by the Elect themselves, on a regular basis, both within local communities and across regional distances. In return for alms, the Elect provided services geared towards caring for lay souls, participating in communal ritual, providing prayers and instruction, and perhaps procuring magical formulae and other, more 'mundane' services. The frequency with which the Elect attended on the laity cannot be known, although the evidence suggest that meetings were not necessarily rare. The close Elect-Auditor relationships developed through these different types of interactions functioned as a way for the Elect to disseminate discourse, practices, and notions of beliefs within the network, and potentially to reinforce their own status, through displays of religious knowledge and eloquence. By participating, the Auditors received spiritual benefits from, and could avail themselves of the practical, ritual competence of, the Elect.

The Manichaean Church: Elect Organisation

This chapter continues the investigation of Manichaean social institutions begun in the previous chapter. Whereas the focus there was on Elect-Auditor practices, we here turn our attention to Elect peer interaction. The dominant scholarly view of the Elect in the Roman Empire is that they largely constituted a disorganised body, characterised by absent institutions and weak cohesion, an interpretation that the present chapter seeks to challenge.

As we have seen, Manichaean communities have generally been taken as organised in intimate, domestic groups, or ‘cells’, in which Auditors received Elect in their houses. This organisation has been considered both a necessity and a liability to the movement. On the one hand, cells allowed for closely-knit groups between which itinerant Elect could move in relative safety. Thus, they provided a measure of protection against persecution. On the other, they have also been seen as weakening or excluding a church organisation. Jason D. BeDuhn has recently pointed out how adherents may have suffered from being constrained to the private sphere, unable to perform public acts of worship to affirm private self-definition.¹ A stronger dismissal was put forth by Peter Brown, who ascribed the decline of Manichaeism in part to Elect itinerancy: ‘Manichaeism was out of date.... It represents a more primitive strand of asceticism [than Christian monasticism]: it continued the radical isolation from the world, the obligatory vagrancy of its Syriac homeland.’² The combination of isolation and vagrancy led to the Elect being out-competed by the better-organised Christian monastic movement. This argument has been more fully articulated by Richard Lim with regards to Manichaeans in the Latin west. The Elect regime itself, he maintains, was not conducive to the organisation of a ‘Church’:

1 BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 270–71.

2 Brown, ‘Diffusion of Manichaeism’, 101–2. Similarly, Baker-Brian describes the Elect-Auditor relations thus: ‘Hearers’ residences likely served as way-stations for the Elect who, under the guidance of their ordinances, became rootless wanderers, moving between different locations in the performance of their duties.’ Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism*, 130. At the same time, he maintains that they had a strong communal ethos, that ‘the self-identity of Manichaeans as an exceptional ecclesia lay in the collective expression of its commitment to the teachings of Mani, and to the sanctification of his memory’ *Ibid.*, 131. However, he does not offer an opinion as to how such a self-identity was maintained.

To speak unequivocally of one Manichaean church in any given city is misleading insofar as it blinds our analytic eye to the diversity of “sub-cultures” present. Diversity is unavoidable and would come as the result of the fundamentally different conditions between the lives of the elect and that of hearers, and on the other hand, due to the specific patterns of socialization and contact which might make one group of hearers and one group of elect share more in common than with their counterparts of the same “rank.”³

As Lim rightly points out, patterns of socialisation that isolated Elect from each other would have weakened the ability of church authorities to coordinate action, reinforce commitment to ascetic discipline, and impose sanctions on misbehaving Elect. Auditor scrutiny may have gone some way to provide social pressure to conform, as is argued by BeDuhn.⁴ However, the lack of practical mechanisms for pressure by the ‘in-group’, i.e. Elect peers, would in the end make it difficult for authorities to prevent abuse of religious authority or fractioning by independent-minded Elect. If an effective church organisation ever existed in Roman Egypt its authorities must have sought ways to deal with these issues.

The previous chapters have shown that a picture of the community at Kellis as a ‘cell’ of Auditor receiving the occasional vagrant Elect does not capture the evidence there. On the contrary, the community was rather extensive, Elect engaged actively with their adherents, and alms were often sent across distances to Elect groups. Below, we consider the implications of this argument for Elect organisation in more detail. Three central aspects of the Elect regime will be examined: itinerancy (and its role within the Church), peer supervision (in particular as it relates to the hierarchy), and finally the perennial question of Manichaean monasteries. In each case, as in Chapter 8, we examine different literary testimonies, before moving on to the Kellis evidence. In particular, the writings of Augustine receive more attention here than previously, as it is primarily his testimony that has been taken to prove that Elect peer interaction, leadership, and monastic communities were absent in the Roman Empire. As this chapter aims to show, the claim that Roman Manichaeism was characterised by absent Elect institutions is not tenable. It has not been argued based on Manichaean sources, and derives from a reading of Augustine that does not properly situate his polemics.

³ Lim, ‘Unity and Diversity’, 239.

⁴ BeDuhn, ‘Domestic Setting’, 264–66. We return to this topic below.

1 Itinerancy and Group-Making

1.1 *Literary Traditions*

Itinerancy, the practice of frequent travel and lodging with laity, is one of the most distinctive features of Manichaean ethics, although it had its origin in the tradition of wandering monks among Syro-Mesopotamian Christians.⁵ Among the Manichaeans, it was connected to their (rather conventional) notion of the soul as a stranger to the world. In order to free it from the body, the Elect had to become strangers themselves, avoiding worldly attachments and (re-)orienting their souls towards their heavenly origins. Al-Biruni provides a succinct formulation, quoting a rule that Mani imposed on the Elect to ‘continually journey throughout the present world, engaging in missionary work and guiding people onto the right path’.⁶ The Elect appropriated the wandering ‘holy man’ as part of their self-representation, and the ideal is articulated in a wide array of texts. Thus, the title of a collection of Coptic psalms found in the Medinet Madi *Psalm-book*, ΨΑΛΜΟΙ ΣΑΡΑΚΩΤΩΝ, probably means ‘psalms of the wanderers’ or ‘pilgrims’.⁷ A chapter from the Berlin *Kephalaia* concerning the perfect Auditor (necessarily one who models himself on the Elect), keph.91, describes its essence:

His house, in his reckoning, shall be like these lodging houses (ΝΙΜΑΝΣΙΛ[Ε]). He says: I am living in a house for rent by some days and months. His brothers and his relatives shall be, in his reckoning, necessary as foreign people who take up with him while travelling on the road with him.

1 Ke. 228.25–29

Whether there were more detailed regulations is unclear. A late source, the Mu‘tazilite author al-Jahiz (fl. ninth century), had heard that Manichaean Elect considered it a sin to sleep more than two days in the same house.⁸ Nothing

5 See Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*, 3 vols. (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1958), 109–37; Julien Ries, ‘Commandments de la justice et vie missionnaire dans l’Église de Mani’, in *Gnosis and Gnosticism*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 101.

6 Athar, trans. Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 212.

7 Peter Nagel, ‘Die Psalmoi Sarakoton des manichäischen Psalmbuches’, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 62, no. 1–6 (1967).

8 *Kitab al-hayawan*, see Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 206. One may perhaps compare the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (the *Didache*) by an anonymous early Christian author, which features an injunction for adherents not to let ‘prophets’ stay more than two or three nights (Did. 12). Vööbus (*History of Asceticism*, 116–17) states: ‘The rule never to pass two nights in

so specific is to my knowledge found in the Manichaean material itself. As we shall see, traditions from both the eastern and western sphere expect Elect to meet regularly in specific buildings. The rule not to remain at any one place was probably taken to pertain to sleeping arrangements in a particular house, and there may have been exceptions.

Manichaean texts moreover suggest that itinerancy was not taken to imply isolation. In fact, there is evidence which indicated that isolation was to be avoided and group travel strongly encouraged. A passage from keph. 38, cited more fully in Chapter 8 (Section 2.1), states that one can always spot an errant Elect by that: 'He shall always want to go in and to come out alone ... He shall always want to walk alone'. Well-behaving Elect were those who travelled with their peers. A later observer indicates that this was also adhered to in practice. Al-Jahiz, quoted above, was also informed by his source that: 'They (*zindiq* monks) always wander in pairs. Whenever you observe one of them, look around, and you will soon see his companion'.⁹

1.2 *Augustine*

Itinerant behaviour is indicated for several of the Manichaean authorities with whom Augustine interacted. It seems to be implied in the behaviour of Felix, an Elect who travelled to Hippo in order to preach and minister to the local Auditors, and of the bishop Faustus, who spent many years away from Carthage, presumably ministering to Manichaeans elsewhere in North Africa.¹⁰ These also show that such travels did not preclude long-term stays in the same city. An Elect presbyter, Fortunatus, resided for a long time preaching in Hippo, and Augustine had regular meetings and cultivated close bonds with specific Elect during his time in Carthage.¹¹ Moreover, three passages, in particular, have been taken to imply that the Elect generally lived a vagrant existence, separated from their Elect brethren and precluding any significant role for Elect groups. Two of these are connected with Augustine's depiction of the monastic project of his friend Constantius.¹² These passages are considered in

the same place ... seems to have been imposed by such scrupulous circles as those of Ruhban al-Zanadiqa, and were not, therefore, a general regulation.'

- 9 Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-hayawan*, trans. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, 116–17. The source goes on to relate a story about two monks who came to Ahwaz in Iran. While at other times ambiguous, the term *zindiq* in this instance quite clearly relates to Manichaeans.
- 10 For Felix, see *Retract.* 2.8.35; for Faustus, the discussion of BeDeuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma I*, 108.
- 11 For Fortunatus, see *Retract.* 1.15.1; for such meetings, see *De mor.* 2.19.71–72 (cited in Chapter 8, Section 3.2) and 2.8.11.
- 12 *De mor.* 2.19.74 and *c. Faust.* 5.5.

detail in the discussion of monasticism below, where it is argued that they are often misinterpreted. The third passage pertains to an incident that Augustine recalls from his time in Carthage.¹³ Augustine relates that he saw a group of Elect walking together and exhibiting immoral behaviour:

I myself – and not I alone but also the people who in part have already been set free from that superstition and who in part will still, as I hope, be set free from it – saw at a crossroads in Carthage, in a very well-known square, not one but more than three of the Elect, who were passing together behind some women or other, hustle them with such an immodest gesture that they outdid the impurity and impudence of all the scum of the earth. It was clear enough that this stemmed from a longstanding habit and that they lived in that way among themselves, since none of them was afraid of the presence of a companion, and in that way they demonstrated that all or almost all were involved in this evil. For they were not men from one house but men who certainly lived in different places; perhaps they had together come from the place where the meeting of all of them had been held.¹⁴

Several features of this passage suggest that it cannot be taken as evidence for a primarily dispersed and isolated Elect existence. First, it can be noted that seeing Elect walking together was apparently not an extraordinary occurrence. Shortly after the above-quoted passage, Augustine also relates that he often encountered a group of Elect who regularly visited the theatre together, accompanied by a presbyter.¹⁵ More importantly, the care Augustine takes to emphasise that these *particular* Elect were not from ‘one house’ should alert us to the implied assumption that there were Elect who *were* from ‘one house’, i.e. a group of several, associated Elect. In fact, he seems to be indicating that these Elect were, not from ‘one house’, but from several ‘houses’ or Elect groups – only in this way does his argument that the public behaviour of these ‘more than three’ Elect attests to the evil ways of ‘all or almost all’ of them ‘among themselves’ make sense: it is meant to demonstrate that bad behaviour permeated several, different groups of Elect. The Elect were so morally deprived, in his estimation, that peer pressure within such groups did not work. Whether he was right in his assessment is moot; what is important is the implications

13 For instance Lim, ‘Unity and Diversity’, 240.

14 *De mor.* 2.19.68, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 99–100.

15 *De mor.* 2.19.72, discussed below.

that Elect peer interaction was intended, presumably by leading authorities (as seen in *keph.* 38), to keep such behaviour in check.

The above-quoted passage shines light on another way in which the Elect strove to maintain peer community. The final line regarding ‘the meeting of all of them’ shows that, to Augustine, large gatherings of ‘all’ Elect were mundane affairs: the most plausible explanation for why these Elect, coming together from different groups, would be walking together. Such a gathering is presumably of the same type as that which he describes earlier in the same work, and to which he refers at the start of his debate with Fortunatus: a daily gathering of Elect for the consumption of a meal.¹⁶

1.3 *The Kellis Evidence*

The Elect known from Kellis were certainly frequently on the move. The best-documented example is the Teacher himself. Matthaïos describes how he and his retinue went north from Antinoopolis, together with Piene, in *P.Kellis v Copt.* 25, and Piene himself writes that he was going to travel with the Teacher all the way to Alexandria as seen in *P.Kellis v Copt.* 29. Makarios mentions ‘brothers’ coming from Alexandria bearing news of Piene, who was now planning to come south again, like the Teacher had already done per *P.Kellis v Copt.* 24. However, to the activities of the Teacher we may add a long

16 *De mor.* 2.16.52 and *c. Fort.* 3, respectively. Lim takes the latter passage to imply that ‘[t]he activities of the elect were shrouded in mystery, or at least we are not told much about them. Even Augustine himself who had been a Manichaean for quite some time could plausibly disavow knowledge of their activities when it suited him to do so.’ Lim, ‘Unity and diversity’, 239. However, Augustine states explicitly that he attended prayer with the Elect and found them inconspicuous, and says only: ‘I cannot, however, know what you, the Elect, do among yourselves. For I have often heard from you that you receive the eucharist, but the time when you received it was kept hidden from me, so how could I have known what you receive?’ (*c. Fort.* 3, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 146). Augustine clearly could not deny knowledge of their meetings, or even of their location – and elsewhere he does claim knowledge of Elect communal meals, as exhibited by his ‘graphic’ description of Elect eating together with their novices in *De mor.* (2.16.52). Instead, he takes the opportunity slyly to allude to the rumours that the Elect ate cakes containing human semen when there were only other Elect present, which Fortunatus does not deign to answer. Per this passage, it seems that Auditors in the west were not present at the meal itself: this was also the case with Auditors in the east. As we have seen, they could, if they wished, attend the donation ceremony, involving prayers, readings, and preaching – a ceremony which Augustine implies that he did attend – although, as he claims that he did not know the time meals were served, the donation ceremony was probably not continuous with the meal ritual, in contrast to in the east. See BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 131–33.

list of journeys made by every other well-documented Elect.¹⁷ Their travels took place both within the Oasis (in P.Kellis v Copt. 32 and the Petros letters) and up and down the Nile Valley (in the case of the Teacher). Lysimachos may have remained in Antinoopolis, at least for a while, but in general the material depicts a highly mobile group of Elect.

It is likely that this should be attributed to the norm of itinerancy. Admittedly, it is never made explicit that the Elect are 'wanderers' in or 'strangers' to the world – although Tehat's mention of 'these strangers' in P.Kellis v Copt. 43 would, if referring to Elect, reflect this idea, as tentatively broached in the previous chapter. The continuous journeys of the Teacher and Piene should certainly be interpreted in light of itinerancy, and those of the other Elect suggest that this was a practice generally ascribed to. The question remains, rather, how such behavioural patterns affected their ability to organise. 'Itinerant' is often set in opposition to 'organisation'.¹⁸ As we saw, Elect itinerancy has been taken to cause weakened group-cohesiveness and organisation. Individual Elect, staying with their own circles of Auditors, would be free from pressure to conform to institutional discipline. The lack of mechanisms for peer reinforcement would leave the Church vulnerable to fragmentation. Against this hypothesis, however it is argued here that Elect mobility should rather be seen as part of the effort of Church authorities to maintain and strengthen group cohesiveness.

First, the documented travels largely take place within the framework of communal activity. A particularly important function may have been to mediate between lay and Elect groups in relation to alms. Thus, in P.Kellis v Copt. 32, the Father travels in order to oversee Eirene's textile work and cater to her spiritual needs; in P.Kellis v11 Copt. 58, Saren met with Horion

17 Lysimachos occasionally took to the road, per P.Kellis v11 Copt. 82; and perhaps even made it all the way to Kellis, which could be restored in P.Kellis v Copt. 30. 'Our brother' Ision certainly made this journey in P.Kellis v11 Copt. 80. The 'Father in Egypt' mentions a trip he made in P.Kellis v Copt. 31 (l.34), and the Father who wrote P.Kellis v Copt. 32 travelled between his own location and Eirene (and both mention agents on the road, an 'our brother' in P.Kellis v Copt. 32 and a 'my son' P.Kellis v Copt. 31, who could, perhaps, be Elect). Saren the presbyter informed Horion that he was about to travel in P.Kellis v11 Copt. 58. 'Our brother' Petros is depicted as on the road in every Petros letter in which he appears, travelling back and forth between the 'mother' and 'son', together with 'our brother' Timotheos in P.Kellis v Copt. 39. Ouales specifically requested a 'blessed one' to be entrusted with texts in order to carry them from Psais III to him in P.Kellis v Copt. 35.

18 As implicit in the Weberian concept of 'wandering charismatics' and widely assumed. For a criticism of Theissen's and later scholarly use of this concept, however, see Jonathan A. Draper, 'Weber, Theissen, and "Wandering Charismatics" in the Didache', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6, no. 4 (1998).

to retrieve textiles. Itinerancy, moreover, could function to strengthen the far-reaching network of adherents, disseminating news, information, and writings. The travels of Petros and Timotheos provide good examples. The 'son' writes: 'When our brother Timotheos came, I asked him about you (*pl.*). He says that you are well' (P.Kellis v Copt. 39 ll.5–7); and similarly, concerning Petros: '[I] inform you that our brother Petros came here. I [asked] after the children. He says: "They are well, as you yourselves will learn from their letters"' (P.Kellis v Copt. 40 ll.4–6). Certainly, Elect were not the only actors to do so, but their high frequency of travel would have increased the network's connectivity. These passages alert us to the manner in which the ethical injunction of itinerancy could be used as an instrument to serve the wider church community.

Secondly, there are good reasons to think that Elect usually travelled in groups. Certainly, the Elect we find in the material are not isolated, but, as a rule, present with peers. It has already been argued that most instances of almsgiving point to communal meals, but it is also evinced by the instances where they write or greet. For instance, Lysimachos greets from 'our brothers' in P.Kellis v Copt. 30 (l.21), and he is present with at least one fellow Elect (or Elect-to-be), Ision, in P.Kellis I Gr. 67. Only a few letters do not mention companions.¹⁹ Some of the 'brethren' could be Auditors: we find Philammon II relating how he and others (presumably fellow Auditors) may leave with Apa Lysimachos in P.Kellis VII Copt. 82. Yet, the presence of more than one Elect is often implicit, and at times explicit. So, for instance, in P.Kellis VII Copt. 72, Pamour III relays greetings from 'those of Apa L(ysimachos) and Horos (ⲛⲁⲁⲡⲓⲁ ⲗ. ⲙⲛ̅ ⲉⲰⲡ)' (ll.35–36), and among the others subsequently listed is a deacon. This phrase could may imply that Elect were grouped together in 'companies', as Iain Gardner has drawn attention to. He adduces contemporary papyrological evidence, in the form of P.Oxy. XXXI 2603 (=P.Harr. 107), a fourth-century letter of introduction from Oxyrhynchus identified as of Manichaean provenance.²⁰ The writer, Paul, asks the recipient to receive a group of people: 'in love, as friends, for they are not catechumens but belong to the company of

19 P.Kellis VII Copt. 61 opens: 'The Teacher, and the brothers who are with me: to all the presbyters, my children, my loved ones; Ploutogenios and Pebo and all the others' (ll.1–4). The 'fathers' all use the first-person plural: P.Kellis v Copt. 31 (l.25), 32 (l.24); P.Kellis I Gr. 63 (l.38), and the authors of P.Kellis v Copt. 31 and P.Kellis I Gr. 63 refer explicitly to brethren who are with them. Only P.Kellis v Copt. 38, relating to Petros, does not feature a companions, but Petros is found travelling with 'out brother' Timotheos in P.Kellis v Copt. 39.

20 J. H. Harrop, 'A Christian Letter of Commendation', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 48 (1962); for the identification, see Gardner, Nobbs, and Choat, 'P. Harr. 107'; Gardner, 'Once More on Mani's *Epistles*', 307.

Ison and Nikolaos (τῶν περὶ Ἰσίωνος καὶ Νικολάου ἰδ[ί]οι), and “if you do anything for them, you have done it for me”.²¹ The phrase ‘if you do anything for them, you have done it for me’ is, as Gardner has shown, a direct quote from Mani, where he paraphrases Matt. 25:40 and equates the Elect with the ‘least’.²² We are, in other words, dealing an Elect group. Taken together with the group of Lysimachos and Horos, we may well be dealing with a practice of assigning Elect groups to named individuals.²³ To Gardner’s argument here, we can add Augustine’s depiction of a group of Elect under tutelage of a presbyter, whom he saw regularly visiting the theatre in Carthage, found in *De moribus* (cited below). Certainly, Elect did not always travel in groups, but it must have been a common strategy.

The glimpses of Elect behaviour from the Kellis papyri, then, suggest that norms of itinerant behaviour were widely adhered to. Elect itinerancy involved errands linked to alms and to the maintenance of a cohesive network. It clearly did not produce a movement of isolated religious virtuosi, content with catering to their own individual constituencies. Rather, Elect mobility was channelled into serving the organisational needs of the Church. Group travel served as a mechanism for the preservation and reinforcement of the Elect ethos. It is of course true that this mode of organisation still left the Elect much freer and more independent than, for instance, monks in Pachomian monasteries, a point which may have given some credence to the charge that they ‘lacked’ discipline and organisation coming from other Christians. However, the Elect we glimpse in the archive appear to have worked hard to maintain Church institutions.

2 Hierarchy and Supervision

2.1 *Literary Traditions*

Manichaean traditions assume that the Elect coordinated their activity, organising missionary work and ritual activities in common, under the direction of a hierarchy. It consisted of the archegos, 12 Teachers, 72 bishops, and presbyters. An ecclesiastical ideology had developed in which the numbers of officials were considered to be modelled on both Jesus’ 12 disciples and 72 envoys, as

21 P.Oxy. 2603, ll.26–28, trans. J. H. Harrop, ‘A Christian Letter’.

22 Gardner, ‘Once More on Mani’s *Epistles*’, 307–8. Assisting the Elect is equal to helping Christ himself, since the Elect participate in liberating the divine.

23 Ibid.

well as on the order of cosmic Light divinities.²⁴ The officials were ordained by a 'laying on of hands' (χειροτονία) by superiors, as for instance evinced by keph. 9 of the Berlin *Kephalaia*.

As to their practical tasks and functions, the sources are not explicit, but some information can be gleaned. The leadership had an important role in supervising groups and disciplining Elect. In the 'Sickness letter' found at Kellis, Mani asks to be informed of disbelieving subordinates, writing: 'And any presbyter whom you ... and he does not take from you my teaching: Write to me and tell me who or where he is, so that I myself will know him' (P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,81.2–6). Several passages from the Medinet Madi indicate that, at the time of their authorship, the entire leadership was to gather in order to deal with Elect discipline. This is the case in keph. 38, which depicts the four grades of officials gathering in order to counsel an errant Elect and prevent his defection (1 Ke. 97.30–98.3). Such a 'corrective' gathering is also described in keph. 149, where a sinning Elect is brought into the midst of the church (1 Ke. 360.17–20). The final decision to punish Elect may have resided with higher officials, at least at the time of Mani: a passage from his 'Sickness letter' (quoted in Chapter 7) implies that it was specifically in the Teacher's power to 'divest' Elect of their ministry, based on reports he obtained from other Elect (P.Kellis VI Copt. 53,61.12–16). It is no wonder that the circulation of false rumour and slander was considered a grave sin by Manichaean authorities, as made explicit in several Medinet Madi texts.²⁵

One office that has been of particular interest is that of presbyter. The most frequently used term for this office in Iranian texts is *mānsārār*, 'house-master', and in the Chinese *Compendium* this title is glossed as 'masters of the halls of law'.²⁶ Presbyters have therefore often been linked to the leadership of Manichaean monasteries in the east. In the CMC (e.g. 89.9–10), Mani's father Pattik is titled οἰκοδεσπότης, 'house-master', which literally corresponds to MP *mānsārār*. It has been argued that this term may reflect the terminology of the 'Elchasaite' community, rather than that of the Manichaean author(s) of the CMC.²⁷ Yet it seems unlikely that the usage of *mānsārār* in Iranian sources

24 A theological explanation for these numbers has now been found in a passage attributed to Mani in the Dublin *Kephalaia*. See Jason D. BeDuhn, 'Parallels between Coptic and Iranian Kephalaia: Goundesh and the King of Touran', in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, ed. Iain Gardner, Jason D. BeDuhn, and Paul Dilley (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 69–70.

25 See, in particular, the SGW (Hom. 30.6–15) and keph. 73 (1 Ke. 179.30–180.18).

26 It may be added that, in Iranian texts, presbyters are often described as a 'treasurers', although it is not clear in what sense this epithet is to be understood. Leurini, *The Manichaean Church*, 219.

27 John C. Reeves, 'The "Elchasaite" Sanhedrin of the Cologne Mani Codex in Light of Second Temple Jewish Sectarian Sources', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42 (1991): 68–91.

chapter, based on keph. 85, that individual Elect could be sent out by a superior to gather alms on behalf of the brethren. In contrast to the alms-supervisor in the Iranian material, it is not described as an office, and was likely not institutionalised as such in the west. However, the passage does alert us to the role of 'superiors' in coordinating alms-gathering.

2.2 *Augustine*

Augustine himself is among our sources for the hierarchical structure sketched above, depicting its officials in his late work, *De haeresibus*. He here adds the statement that even normal Elect were sent 'to strengthen and support this error where it exists, or to plant it where it does not'.³² That Elect were sent out to establish or reinforce local groups implies a degree of central coordination of their activities, if his words can be taken at face value. The example of Felix, who travelled to Hippo to preach and so replaced Fortunatus, may provide an example of this happening in practice. Elect itinerancy, as argued above, was part of the Church's strategy. The bishop Faustus, moreover, emerges from his writings as a central authority among North African Manichaeans.

Yet, it is frequently argued that the organisation evident in Augustine's writings cannot have been particularly effective. Decret, taking Faustus to have been the only bishop in North Africa, argued that his absence shows the lack of Manichaean leadership there, in contrast to the plethora of Christian bishops.³³ W. H. C. Frend noted that 'the dropping of the senior Manichaean grades in favour of two categories only, Elect and Hearers, is an African specialty.'³⁴ Lim, in particular, has criticised the idea that Elect officials were of any importance in North African communities. He has argued that:

the whole Manichaean hierarchy in Carthage, if it existed at all in any meaningful way, was at best opaque. The identity and whereabouts of a bishop was so well concealed that he could not even be approached by Manichaean hearers bearing complaints. This situation Augustine says, was occasioned by his fear of being exposed by informers and of being apprehended by the authorities.³⁵

Augustine's assignation of deacons to bishops in particular signifies, cannot be treated here, but deserves further attention, especially in light of the several hierarchy lists found in the CMC and the Medinet Madi texts. As pointed out in Chapter 7, Section 2.3.2, the terminology likely developed somewhat over time.

32 *De haer.* 46.16, trans. Teske, *Arianism*, 45.

33 Decret 'Le manichéisme présentait-il', 12–13.

34 W. H. C. Frend (1953), cited in Lim, 'Unity and Diversity', 238.

35 Lim, 'Unity and Diversity', 241.

The central leadership, then, was absent, even impossible to find. For the lower ranks, Lim considered the freedom of Fortunatus to stay in Hippo to preach, and his replacement as the Elect representative in Hippo by Felix, a *doctor*, as incidents signalling a lack of regard for rank or division of tasks within the church. As a consequence, the hierarchy was unable to restrain rampant unseemly behaviour among the Elect, as indicated by Augustine's aside regarding the emergence of an austere, schismatic group, the *Mattarii*.³⁶ However, this depiction seems to me to rely on a faulty interpretation of Augustine's testimony. We consider each point below: the unavailability of the leadership, the freedom of the lower ranks, and the *Mattarii* schism.

First, whether Faustus was the only bishop (and not just a particularly charismatic and important one), as assumed by Decret, is unclear. At any rate, the very different structures and sizes of the two Churches, which in the case of Manichaeism saw even 'simple' Elect involved in ministering to the flock, makes equating Manichaean and Christian bishops misleading. Furthermore, Lim's argument for the opaqueness of the hierarchy and difficulty in locating high officials is based on an incident described in *De moribus*. The passage concerns an Elect whom Augustine had reported for bad behaviour, but who could not be punished due to fear, within the leadership, of being betrayed to the Roman authorities; a response that Augustine claims he had received also on another occasion when he came with a similar complaint.³⁷ In Teske's translation, it reads:

We also received this response when we reported to the leaders of the sect that a woman had complained to us. In an assembly where she was along with other women, where she felt confident because of the holiness of the Manichaeans, after several of the Elect had entered and one of them had put out the light, she was seized in the dark in the embrace of one of them, though it was not certain who it was ... And this was done on the night when you celebrated the vigil of a feast. But really, even if there was no fear of betrayal, who could bring before the bishop for condemnation a man who had taken such precautions not to be recognised? As if all of them who had entered at the same time were not involved in the same crime! For the light was extinguished while they were all joking rudely.³⁸

36 Ibid., 237–43.

37 See *De mor.* 2.19.68–69.

38 *De mor.* 2.19.70, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 100.

Augustine, then, claims to have participated in reporting bad behaviour among the Elect on two different occasions. Complaints were received by 'leaders of the sect', among whom a bishop apparently presided over the proceedings. As the last sentences make clear, it is not the bishop who was difficult to locate, but the Elect culprit, who had taken care to seize the woman in a dark room while hiding among other Elect (who, in Augustine's estimate, were therefore complicit). Rather than indicating an oblique structure, this passage suggests that Auditors had relatively easy access to the leadership, and that reports of misbehaviour was a routine occurrence – even if the leaders did not always act on it. The passage even suggests that disciplinary matters were handled in a manner that largely agrees with the picture emerging from the Manichaean sources cited above. Admittedly, the Teacher, who plays such an important role in Mani's Sickness letter, is missing from Augustine's account. There may not have been one in North Africa.

The collegial nature of Manichaean leadership in matters of discipline and monastic supervision is again implied in passages concerning the establishment of a monastery in Rome, during which the Auditor Constantius met with the bishops there (see further below). Augustine states that Constantius 'complained that his great efforts were hindered by the corruption of the bishops by whose help he had to carry out his project'.³⁹ The accusation of corruption is unsubstantiated and clearly a rhetorical figure. Even though the project was promoted by a wealthy and influential lay person, episcopal approval was still needed. Only when Constantius managed to persuade one of them to spearhead it was it realised. It is, moreover, again in agreement with the *Kephalaia*; as we saw, keph. 81 indicated that large Elect gatherings were generally supervised by officials of a higher order than presbyter (i.e. bishops or Teachers). Another event related by Augustine could even suggest that the leadership as a collective settled doctrinal questions: at the end of his debate, the presbyter Fortunatus states that he would consult his superiors (*maiores*) in Carthage on the issues raised by Augustine.⁴⁰

Turning to the lower ranks, the freedom that they enjoyed is tied to the particular structure of the Manichaean church, where ordinary Elect were themselves a kind of officials, rather than a lack of structure. Fortunatus' reference to 'superiors' show that he thought himself to operate within the framework of a hierarchy. Felix replacing Fortunatus as nominal leader does not appear very

39 *De mor.* 2.19.74, trans. *ibid.*, 102.

40 *C. Fort.* 37.

significant: Elect officials were necessarily less closely tied to particular localities.⁴¹ That Manichaean patterns do not conform to Christian ones should not lead us to consider them somehow deficient. Still, as Lim points out, it is true that our knowledge of their specific responsibilities remains meagre. One task that might be detected is the presbyters' responsibility for 'walking' with the brethren, found in *keph.* 81. In *De moribus*, Augustine claims that he regularly saw a group of Elect accompanied by a presbyter while in Carthage. The passage runs: 'we very often encountered in theatres, along with an old priest, members of the Elect who were, we thought, quite respectable in terms of their age and their way of life.'⁴² The regularity with which he (and other Auditors) observed this group suggests that they may have constituted a 'company'. Informal friendship among like-minded, 'respectable' Elect can perhaps not be entirely excluded, but the presence of the presbyter was presumably noted by Augustine because it reinforced his rhetorical point: the presbyter was supposed to be supervising and leading by example, and so was failing his duty by taking them to the theatre.

Finally, there is no reason to disbelieve Augustine's testimony regarding the schism of the *Mattarii*. However, it does not prove an inability among Elect in general to adhere to the precepts. A comparable dispute over Elect practice took place in the late seventh-century Manichaean Church, as related by al-Nadim, indicating that the issue was a matter of differences in interpretation, not 'lax morals'.⁴³ One important difficulty that Augustine does highlight, however, is the role of rumour within the movement. His criticisms of the movement in *De moribus* provides the best evidence for this. He and his fellow Auditors had, he claims, heard rumours of misconduct concerning nearly all of the Elect he knew, and he describes specific instances of false rumours being

41 I do not think that Augustine, in describing Felix, uses *doctor* in the technical sense of great Teacher (*Retract.* 2.34.1), as is often assumed – e.g. Decret, *LAfrique manichéenne*, 363; Giulia S. Gasparro, 'The Disputation with Felix: Themes and Modalities of Augustine's Polemic', in *In Search of Truth*, ed. Jacob van den Berg, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011). Lim expresses doubt in this regard ('Unity and diversity', 237), to my mind justified. See also BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma I*, 306 n.23. If Felix had indeed been a 'great Teacher', this point would presumably have been stressed both by Augustine, who claimed victory in the debate, and especially by his biographer Possidius, who claimed that Felix converted afterwards – as is stated in the conclusion of the preserved manuscript tradition, although Augustine does not mention it. In *De haer.* 46.16, the second level of the hierarchy is called *magister*, not *doctor*. The Manichaeans certainly had informal 'teachers' and preachers.

42 *De mor.* 2.19.72, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 101.

43 See Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 264–66.

spread by the Elect themselves.⁴⁴ While his stories may be hyperbole, the difficulty of verifying rumour would certainly have caused much anxiety and distrust within the Church. These conflicts must have contributed to Augustine's own, eventual disillusionment, and they show the potential negative effects of reliance on their system of mutual scrutiny. Elect officials clearly faced great difficulties, compounded by the threat of persecutions in the 370s, 380s, and onwards. Yet Augustine's evidence highlights the extent to which they managed to maintain a Church organisation in spite of such problems.

2.3 *The Kellis Evidence*

Given that the evidence from Kellis reflects the Church from the point of view of the laity, it is unsurprising that the evidence for Elect officials and their practical concerns is limited. It is not non-existent, however. The hierarchy and its responsibilities would have been well-known to the laity through its depiction in Mani's *Epistles* found at the site. There is, moreover, one preserved letter by a certified Elect official: despite his busy itinerary, the Great Teacher found time to address the presbyters, Ploutogenios and Pebos, and other 'children', presumably located in the Oasis. The letter is notable for its concern with discipline. The chief preserved part is the opening, with a prayer which reads: 'I pray always to Jesus Christ: That he will guard you for me with this fragrance ((excellent conduct)) as you are [honoured] by everyone corresponding to [your] conduct' (P.Kellis VII Copt. 61, ll.9–13).⁴⁵ The following lines, although very fragmented, continue the theme of protecting their virtue (ll.15–16).⁴⁶ The length of the letter indicates that he discussed other matters as well, but it is notable that the incipit puts such a great stress on exhortations to good conduct. The Teacher was clearly expected to show concern even for the behaviour of Elect far beyond his immediate purview.

Turning to 'bishops', the only occurrence of this office is in Apa Lysimachos' letter to Horos I, P.Kellis V Copt. 30, in its largely lost first half. At the end of this discussion, Lysimachos mentions 'the bishops' (ἐπίσκοποι), perhaps shortly after having mentioned (the) Teacher (σαξ). He follows up by expressing amazement (ο[τ]ῆ]ρ̅ϩ̅π̅η̅ρε), presumably dismay, about some events involving 'our children who are among [our?] kindred' (ll.3–5). He is clearly discussing matters pertaining to the Manichaean hierarchy, and perhaps specifically to the 'death of Joubei', mentioned at the end of the letter (l.24tr). Unfortunately,

44 See *De mor.* 2.19,68, 2.20,74. In the latter, a rumour of misconduct had travelled from Rome to North Africa.

45 For the relation of 'fragrance' to 'excellent conduct', see Chapter 5, Section 4, n.69.

46 *P.Kellis VII*, 33. Compare, perhaps, P.Kellis VII Copt. 84.

the thrust of his discussion is lost. Bishops are otherwise not mentioned in the material.⁴⁷ Only the Teacher in the Valley and the (local) presbyters are seen interacting with the Manichaeans connected to Kellis.

More remarks can be made concerning the presbyter, the most frequently mentioned office in the material. First, we may briefly consider the figure of Saren the presbyter. As we have seen, he was closely involved with Horion, appearing in both of the letters to Tehat/Hatres, where he is found receiving a plurality of cowls, strongly suggesting that he was acting on behalf of a group. Saren is himself responsible for sending the order to Horion, and for retrieving the clothes. If he is acting in his capacity of presbyter, we have an example of a presbyter responsible for a group of Elect and a strong indication that this office included a responsibility for alms gathering. Secondly, it is noteworthy that the Teacher singled out presbyters specifically as his addressees among other 'children' in P.Kellis VII Copt. 61. Presumably, they were the highest-ranking Elect in their area. Not least, one of these presbyters, Pebos, can be identified elsewhere in the archive. A Pebos linked to matters of religion features in two other letters: P.Kellis VII Copt. 111 and 120. The latter deals with religious scripture located with a 'father' Pebos. The author, a certain Pekos, asks Pamour III to collect texts from Pebos:

About this book that Lamon has: Let the *Acts* be copied. But the *Gospel*: Let them bring it to me from father Pabo. These 5 *maje* of figs [...] you let them bring it to me. As for the other ones: Wait until I send them to you. If <you> did not receive this letter,⁴⁸ make him give it and send it to the house of father Pebo.

P.Kellis VII Copt. 120, ll.3–15

'Father' Pebos/Pabo, then, was head of a 'house' and involved with keeping religious texts. It seems not unreasonable to link him to the presbyter greeted by the Teacher: although the name Pebos occurs with some frequency in the Greek material from other parts of Kellis, it is rare in the House 1–3 texts. The same letter speaks of other activities relating to 'the father', presumably Pebos, in relation to a 'cell' (πιε) and to a 'place of convalescence/rest' (πρωτο). Pebos occurs again as an authority involved with religious texts in P.Kellis VII Copt. 111. Here, Pebos is the primary author, addressing Psais III, whom he

47 However, very tentatively, one could note inv. P93.103 (ll.18–19), in Gardner and Worp, 'A Most Remarkable letter'.

48 Or 'the *Epistle*'? See P.Kellis VII, 256.

greets ‘in the lord’ as his ‘brother’. There is no explicitly Manichaean cue in the letter. However, Pebos writes:

Since I told you: “Bring 10 tetrads north of the ditch” – I have come south. I asked Olbinos. He said “We do not want all these”. I said: “Surely not, why would we want to destroy all these things?” Is it now to stop writing the tetrads? Also, everything I have spoken to you about: Do not neglect it!

P.Kellis VII Copt. 111, ll.5–14

The passage strongly suggests that Pebos was a leader of some sort, responsible for ordering and collecting ‘tetrads’. Tetrads were copied by Psais 111, presumably in Kellis, but they were brought ‘south of the ditch’ and given to Olbinos. This Olbinos adds a postscript, where he indicates that he is located in Hibis, and so the ‘tetrads’ were sent from Kellis to Hibis.⁴⁹ Olbinos, moreover, is careful not to contradict Pebos’ orders or infringe on his writing (although spelling his name ‘Pabo’),⁵⁰ he was evidently a subordinate of Pebos. He adds requests concerning textile work and ends with a formula: ‘I ask you, my brothers, my masters, that you will take on this burden (C. ⲡ-ⲉⲡⲓⲄⲉⲙ, Gr. ἐπιγεμίζω, ‘lay as a burden’) and do these things for me’ (ll.41–44). A similar request to take on a ‘burden’ (C. ⲱⲧⲧⲏ) occurs in P.Kellis VII Copt. 73: there it is used for the donation of two girls as a ‘service for the church’ that will be ‘a hard burden (ⲱⲧⲧⲏ ⲭⲁⲃⲁⲧ) at the judgement’ (ll.17–18) – i.e. presumably a deed that will weigh heavily in the person’s favour after death.⁵¹ Olbinos’ request similarly implies religious reward for undertaking a task. It suggests that the textile work is a form of alms, giving further reason for assigning Elect status to him, or at least to his superior, Pebos. It is indeed likely that the tetrads themselves were alms, as broached in Chapter 7.⁵² Psais 111’s task of writing ‘tetrads’ appears to be part of a larger effort to produce religious literature. If the identification of the presbyter Pebo addressed by the Teacher with the Pebos’ in P.Kellis VII Copt. 111 and 120 is accepted, we have important testimony for how Elect officials worked to secure the production of Manichaean literature in the Oasis by ordering and collecting texts. Furthermore, it would support the proposition that presbyters

49 For a discussion of the ‘ditch’, a local geographical marker, see *ibid.*, 229.

50 The editors note: ‘It is noticeable that Olbinos writes this extra text only down the side of his own ‘letter’, as if anxious not to intrude on what Pebo has said.’ *Ibid.*

51 *Ibid.*, 87.

52 An exception may be the occurrence of another ‘brother’ Psais in both letters. See further Chapter 8, Section 1, n.18.

were responsible for alms collection on behalf of Elect groups, already seen in the case of Saren.

Finally, we can consider how Elect more generally sought to maintain the cohesiveness of the Church, especially vis-à-vis the Auditors. BeDuhn has argued that mutual scrutiny between Elect and Auditors characterised the movement. He focuses especially on the Auditors' supervision of the Elect and its role in reinforcing Elect commitment to the regime, citing the complaint made by Makarios in P.Kellis v Copt. 19 about the behaviour of a certain deacon.⁵³ Many letters attest to the other side of this coin, namely concerns of the Elect for upright behaviour of the Auditors. An emphasis on virtuous behaviour pervades the rhetorical performances of the preserved Elect letters to the laity. For instance, in P.Kellis I Gr. 67, we find Lysimachos exhorting Theognostos to heed his sobriety. The author of P.Kellis v Copt. 32 showed great concern for the spiritual state and continued commitment of his addressee, Eirene. The authors of P.Kellis v Copt. 31 and P.Kellis I Gr. 63 praised the 'good reputation' of the lay recipients, earned through their deeds, along with other virtues. It might be objected that we (at least in some cases) are dealing with a stock topos, not necessarily real concern, but this rather reinforces its status as a presumably core value to the Church. Moreover, concerns for good reputation and righteous behaviour trickled down to some of the Auditors. Thus, in P.Kellis v Copt. 19, Makarios exhorted Matthaïos to good behaviour by citing Mani on respecting teachers even when they are distant: 'Now, be in worthy matters; just as the Paraclete has said: "The disciple of righteousness is found with the fear of his teacher upon him (even) while he is far from him, like (a?) guardian"' (ll.8–11).

To summarise, concerns for Elect discipline pervaded the community's religious discourse. That members of the hierarchy played a role in maintaining discipline seems clear, even if their responsibilities are not directly discussed. Apart from the Teacher, the most visible figures are the presbyters, who appear to have been responsible for smaller Elect groups, presumably ones active in the Oasis, as evinced by the activities of the presbyters Saren and Pebos. The material suggests that the office involved organising alms collection. Finally, the Elect paid great attention to 'good behaviour' within the community at large.

53 BeDuhn writes: 'One of the recently discovered letters from the Manichaean cell in Kellis refers to a conflict arising out of the conduct of a "deacon" as observed and faulted by the layperson Makarios. As a result, the deacon was "turned away" and complained to Makarios, "What do you have against me?" The latter remonstrance was made "during his practice", either of fasting or receiving confession, and Makarios adds this to his faults, that he was angry during his religious observances.' BeDuhn, 'Domestic Setting', 264–65.

3 Communal Spaces and ‘Monasteries’

3.1 *Literary Traditions*

Having argued that Elect regularly acted in groups, and that they sought to maintain a cohesive organisation, we now have to face an oft-recurring question in Manichaean studies, namely the existence of monasteries in the west. Church historical texts from Turfan relate that the early disciples founded monasteries in the Roman Empire already during the time of Mani.⁵⁴ These could be retrojections reflecting later practices, however. It has been argued that monastic institutions were only adopted under the influence of Buddhism in Central Asia, even if this has not won universal acceptance, and the issue remains contested.⁵⁵

The term ‘monastery’ occurs in a Coptic translation of passages from Mani’s own *Living Gospel*.⁵⁶ The ‘monasteries’ in this passage seem to belong to the baptists of Mani’s youth, and so may not be relevant for understanding Mani’s community. However, there is certainly much evidence for the notion of specifically religious buildings set aside for the Elect in other Medinet Madi texts.⁵⁷ The SGW predicts a time when worldly institutions are replaced by holy ones, when ‘temples of the gods of this world will become a dwelling place ([ΜΑΝΩΩΠ]Ε) for the Elect and the Holy Church’ (Hom. 26.11–12). In the Berlin *Kephalaia*, the construction of buildings for the Church is considered part of the Auditors’ alms-obligations. Keph. 80 exhorts the Auditors to ‘build a dwelling (ΜΑΝΩΩΠΕ) or construct some place (ΤΟ[ΠΟΣ])’ (1 Ke. 193.12) for the Holy Church as alms.

More often, it seems, the term ‘church’ (ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ) is used to designate physical spaces built and ‘set apart’ for Elect activities. Most explicitly, keph. 158 lists ‘churches and houses’ (ΝΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ Μῆ Νῆσι) among alms to be given to the Elect (1 Ke. 396.7–9).⁵⁸ A similar text from Turfan exhorts the Auditors to build

54 M 2, M 216c, and M 4579. See Werner Sundermann, ‘Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer III’, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 14, no. 1 (1987): 71–72.

55 Asmussen, *Xuāstvánīft*, 260–61 n.14. This was modified by Sundermann, who (like Vööbus) suggested that while a Buddhist background is plausible, it would have been acquired already by the time of Mani. Werner Sundermann, ‘Manichaeism Meets Buddhism: The Problem of Buddhist Influence on Manichaeism’, in *Buddhavidyasudgakarāh. Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Petra Kieffer-Pülz and Jens-U. Hartmann (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica, 1997), 653.

56 The term is found in a passage from the *Synaxeis* Codex, published by Wolf-Peter Funk, although the Coptic text is not given. See Funk, ‘Mani’s Account’, 120.

57 But cf. Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 241–42.

58 Funk tentatively suggests a different interpretation: ‘Wie sich “die Kirchen und die Häuser” sachlich in die Aussage einfügen, ist nicht ganz klar, viell. (?) hat man zu verstehen: “in

monasteries as alms.⁵⁹ Keph. 81, referred to in Section 2.1 above, described a leader presiding over fifty Elect who gathered daily ‘in the church’ (1 Ke. 193.31–194.1). Keph. 85, quoted in Section 2.1 of the previous chapter, is framed as a question of an Elect who had received orders from a superior of his local church (ΤΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΕΤΗΡΗΤΟΣ). Perhaps these passages could be taken to mean ‘congregation’, rather than to imply a building. However, several passages show an implicit differentiation between the terms ΣΑΥΣΣ (‘congregation’, ‘assembly of adherents’) and ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ. In keph. 70, Mani seats himself ‘in the church, in the middle of the congregation (ΣΗ ΤΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΣΗ ΤΜΗΤΕ ΝΤΣΑΥΣΣ)’ (1 Ke. 169.27–28, my translation). The passage implies two different spaces: a physical space, the ‘church’, and a social space, the ‘congregation’. Another passage, found in the homily on Mani’s last journeys and death (SNC), feature three female Auditors who address a lament to the departed Mani: ‘all the worlds need to grieve over you in the midst of your churches (ΣΗ ΤΜΗΤ[Ε ΝΕΚ]ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ) and weep publicly in your congregations (ΝΕΚΣΑΥΣΣ)’ (Hom. 59.13–17), implying a distinction between closed ‘churches’ and open ‘congregations’. It is clear that a concept of Elect-specific buildings, called ‘dwelling place’ or ‘church’, was known to Manichaean authorities in Egypt.

Rather than the existence of such buildings, the question should be how common they were in the west, and what went on inside them. Regarding the second question, we have to look at the eastern material for comparison. A section of the Chinese *Compendium* (briefly referred to in Chapter 8, Section 2.1) dealt explicitly with the layout of monasteries and provides an idea of their functions. The *Compendium* prescribes five rooms: one for storing religious texts and images, one for fasting and preaching, one for worship and confession, one for religious instruction, and one for sick Elect. It further states: ‘In the five rooms set up as above, the community of monks should live in common, practising good works with zeal. The monks should not build individual rooms, kitchens or storehouses.’⁶⁰ This gives a rather clear idea of what the building was intended for in the east: religious activities such as copying

ihnen genützt werden, das heißt, in den Kirchen und den Häusern, (nämlich) die Kleider” usw.’ Funk, *Kephalaia I* (ff. 17/18), 277 n.8. However, it does not seem so strange in light of keph. 80.

59 A parable text, M 47 11/v/4–5, contains an injunction regarding almsgiving (*ruwānagān*) for the Auditors to build monasteries for the Church (*dēn*): ‘Das sind die Almosenspenden. Die Hörer entrichten sie an die Kirche <und> bauen Klöster’ (*ruwānagān ast niyōšāgān ō dēn kunēnd mānistān dēsēnd*), trans. Sundermann, *Mittelpersische und parthische kosmogonische und Parabeltexte*, quoted in Leurini, *Manichaean Church*, 272.

60 For this translation, see Lieu, ‘Precept and Practices’, 85.

books and fasting, but not (comfortable) facilities for living.⁶¹ Meals were presumably taken in the room for fasting and preaching. A text in Uighur Turkic describes monasteries as ‘the healing place (*otaçılık*) of the element gods’: i.e. the place where Light Elements were purified and released through the Elect ritual meal.⁶² Much uncertainty regarding monastic buildings has revolved around whether Manichaean ‘monasteries’ were intended as communal living spaces. The most frequently used term for ‘monastery’ in the east, MP *mānistān*, had the original sense ‘house, home, dwelling-place’.⁶³ The passage in Uighur Turkic mentioned above also speaks of monasteries as ‘resting places’,⁶⁴ and the Parthian term *ārām*, ‘rest, resting place’, was used for ‘monastery’ in Parthian texts alongside *mānistān*.⁶⁵ ‘Rest’ was tied to the healing of the Light Elements, but monasteries could be ‘places of rest’ and ‘healing’ in a more literal sense: the *Compendium* prescribed a room for the treatment of sick monks.⁶⁶ However, there are good reasons to think that monasteries were intended mainly for religious works and gatherings, not sleeping. The passage from the *Compendium* only includes room for sick monks, and is explicit in that the monastery should not include separate living quarters. The Iranian evidence suggests that the Elect were generally to abstain from extended stays in monasteries.⁶⁷ In a recently published MP

61 See also Lyndon A. Arden-Wong, ‘Some Thoughts on Manichaean Architecture and its Applications in the Eastern Uighur Khaganate’, in *Between Rome and China: History, Religions and Material Culture of the Silk Road*, ed. Samuel N. C. Lieu and Gunnar Mikkelsen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 181–254.

62 T II D. 171R.26–37; see BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, 183–84.

63 Bo Utas, ‘Manistan and Xanaqah’, in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, ed. A. D. H. Bivar, Acta Iranica (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 657. For the possible theological significance of this term as ‘dwelling of the Light-Mind’, see Sundermann, ‘Studien III’, 71–72.

64 The term is *ornangusi*, from *ornan-*, ‘to place or install oneself, to be placed or installed’, which Zieme translates Siedlungsorte. Peter Zieme, ‘Mānistān, „Kloster“ und manichäische Kolophone’, in *Zur lichten Heimat: Studien zu Manichäismus, Iranistik und Zentralasienkunde im Gedenken an Werner Sundermann.*, ed. Team Turfanforschung (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 742).

65 Utas, ‘Manistan and Xanaqah’, 663. It appears for instance in the Parthian hymn-cycle, *Huyidagmān*, which employs both *ārām* and *mānistān*. See M 625^{bv} 1.6a, in Tsui Chi, ‘Mo Ni Chiao Hsia Pu Tsan “The Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichæan Hymns”’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1943): 218.

66 Perhaps spiritual sicknesses, such as isolation, as well as physical ones, such as that described by a doubting Elect in keph. 86. Paul Pelliot suggested that the notion of spiritual trouble and doubt as ‘sickness’ could go back to a specific *Epistle* of Mani no. 67 in al-Nadim’s list, entitled ‘The healthy and the sick’. Pelliot and Chavannes, ‘Un traité manichéen’, 134 (10) n.1; see Dodge, *The Fihrist*, 11, 801.

67 See Zieme, ‘Mānistān’, 749. See also the conclusion of Utas, ‘Manistan and Xanaqah’, 664.

fragment of a letter by Mani, he greets an Elect located in a *'spync*, 'hostel', indicating the temporariness of Elect stays in such places, if a monastery – as is very probable – is intended.⁶⁸ Passages from a Uighur royal decree, the 'Monastery scroll' containing rules for Manichaean monasteries, imply that members of the upper hierarchy may have resided in monasteries at the time of Uighur patronage, although this could be a late development.⁶⁹

Returning to the western material, it is as indicated not explicit, but what can be gleaned overlaps to a large extent with the eastern material. Communal dining was clearly a central function. That meals took place in churches is clear from keph. 85, cited in Chapter 8, where the Elect who went to gather alms was expected to bring them back to a local church. The church described in keph. 81 was the location for the daily fasts of fifty Elect, and an important location for the 'healing' of the Light: the author describes how 'angels' were released during their fasting. Presumably, these buildings facilitated scribal activities, festivals, and gatherings (ϙⲁϣϣ̅) involving the laity, such as prayer meetings, as well, even if this is not made explicit. With regards to sleeping, however, the SGW describes how female Elect, in an idealised future, will sleep in the palaces of the aristocracy, not monastic buildings (Hom. 24.9–10). Keph. 91 cited in Chapter 8 describes the ideal Auditor as treating his house like a lodging house (ⲙⲁⲛ̅ⲃⲁⲓⲗ[ⲉ]) for temporary residence. The term ⲙⲁⲛ̅ⲃⲁⲓⲗⲉ, 'lodging house', literally translates to 'place of rest', similar to the term *ārām* (and *'spync*). Perhaps the metaphor likens the house of a perfect Auditor to the monastic buildings of Elect and their temporary function.⁷⁰

Western traditions, then, clearly did prescribe the use of buildings dedicated to the Church as regular gathering points for Elect. The evidence, while not extensive, indicates that Elect were supposed to gather daily at 'monasteries' for meals and other rituals, but probably had to make sleeping arrangements elsewhere. It may be that travelling Elect could spend nights there while journeying, making them literal 'lodging houses'. This conception was clearly an early development, and is consistent across different Manichaean traditions, although some functions – including, perhaps, sleeping arrangements – may have varied.

68 M501p+R6. Sundermann, 'A Manichaean Collection', 272 n.94.

69 Takao Moriyasu, *Die Geschichte des uigurischen Manichäismus an der Seidenstrasse*, trans. Christian Steineck (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 75–77; and see Arden-Wong, 'Some Thoughts', 186–87.

70 The term is found in 2 Ps. 173.22, as a metaphor for the soul, and a fragmented passage of the SNC (Hom. 65.25).

3.2 *Augustine*

The testimony of Augustine has been taken to show that ‘monasteries’ were a novelty among Manichaean Elect, at least in Roman North Africa. This is usually seen as demonstrated by an episode in Rome, described in *De moribus*. Augustine narrates how a wealthy Auditor (who is later revealed to be Constantius, a later ‘Catholic’ convert)⁷¹ often had to defend the morals of the Elect in discussions, as they were criticised for their practice; they ‘lived here and there as vagabonds in a very wicked manner’, and so he decided to gather them into his home. Although he was first rebuffed by the Manichaean bishops in Rome, he found a rustic, unlearned bishop who agreed to participate in the project. Augustine relates how the Elect first gathered in the house, although many subsequently left:

The bishop praised him and agreed. He chose to be the first to live in his house. After he did this, all of the Elect who could be found in Rome assembled there. When the rule of life from the letter of Mani was proposed, many found it intolerable and left. But out of shame, nonetheless, more than a few remained.⁷²

The project did not end well. Quarrels erupted between the remaining Elect, with several making accusations against Constantius and claiming that they could not endure the rules, to which he replied that they should either overhold all the commandments or none. The project collapsed when the bishop was disgraced: it was revealed that he had food brought to him in private, paid for from a private purse. Augustine retold this story in his polemic against bishop Faustus, while attacking the Elect lifestyle:

Faustus went so far as to dare to say that you do not carry money in your wallet. We would not criticize this in your case if it were not that you profess one thing and live in another way. Or did he perhaps speak the truth that you do not carry money in your wallet, though you have gold in chests and bags? There is still living that Constantius, who is now our brother as a Catholic Christian. He gathered many of you together in Rome into his house in order to carry out the commandments of Mani ... And when your weakness caved in under these commandments, you were scattered, each on his own path. Hence, those who wanted to persevere in them

⁷¹ *C. Faust.* 5.5, see below.

⁷² *De mor.* 2.20.74, trans. Teske, *The Manichaean Debate*, 102.

created a schism from your society and, because they sleep on mats, they are called Mattarians.⁷³

Augustine, then, seems to depict the Elect as dispersed and isolated, with only the 'Mattarians' continuing to live together in congregations. This presentation has often been accepted by scholars. It has, moreover, been taken as proof of the collapse of Manichaean ascetic discipline. Decret, for instance, took it to show a certain degree of neglect by the busy Church officials.⁷⁴ More strongly, it led Lim to conclude that:

From these various accounts we can catch glimpses of the diversity within the rubric of the "something" we call Manichaeism. We sense the powerlessness of any central authority to regulate the activities of the itinerant elect, as well as the absence of a "central place", especially during the times when the sporadic persecutions were particularly intense, where the Manichaeans in a city, both the elect and the hearers alike, could meet face to face on a frequent and regular basis.⁷⁵

However, the picture is more complex. The passage from *Contra Faustum* in fact shows that the Elect possessed communal treasuries, if Augustine's assertion regarding their possession of gold 'in chest and bags' is to be believed (it would certainly be in agreement with evidence for temple treasuries in Turfan).⁷⁶ Another passage shows that they were not as scattered as this excerpt has been taken to imply. In a less rhetorically loaded passage from *De moribus*, Augustine speaks of an Elect gathering in Carthage, 'the place where the meeting of all of them had been held', where the Elect gathered for meals on a regular basis, as argued above.⁷⁷

What, then, are we to make of this incidence? We should certainly not believe Augustine when he says that the Elect in Rome were unaware of Mani's 'true' commandments regarding monastic life, but it may well be that there was room for interpretation. As pointed out above, while the authoritative Manichaean tradition clearly did have a concept of 'central places' for the Elect, it probably did not include individual rooms and sleeping arrangements. This did not mean that the Elect did not in some sense 'live' together: when

73 *C. Faust.* 5.5, trans. Teske, *Answer to Faustus*, 88.

74 Decret, 'Le manichéisme présentait-il', 13.

75 Lim, 'Unity and Diversity', 243.

76 See Lieu, 'Precept and Practices', 86, 90–96. Very speculatively, one may compare P93.104 (ll.23–27) in Gardner and Worp, 'A Most Remarkable Papyrus'.

77 *De mor.* 2.19.68, cited more fully above.

not travelling, they would eat, pray, sing, and practice together in such places on a daily basis. But they did not have ‘monasteries’ in the sense of permanent living quarters for large Elect groups, like those developing in Pachomian communities in Egypt. This was the novelty of Constantius’ project, representing an attempt to reform Manichaean places along the lines of Pachomian monasteries, as already pointed out by Decret.⁷⁸ Augustine is exploiting a disagreement among the Manichaeans concerning how to organise Elect asceticism, specifically regarding sleeping arrangements, in order to criticise their practice. While presenting the Elect who rejected Constantius’ rule as unfamiliar with Mani’s commandments, it is in fact Constantius who attempts a novel interpretation.⁷⁹ As Augustine readily admits in *De moribus* (albeit with an eye for exonerating his friend of ever ‘really’ having been a Manichaean), Constantius’ chief motivation was not the commandments of Mani, but a concern for Elect reputation. Most of the Elect leadership, as well as the majority of the Elect themselves, rejected it outright, presumably because it was contrary to their own interpretation of Mani’s letter. Even those who decided to follow Constantius disagreed concerning the details, causing conflict and the eventual collapse of the monastery. Augustine, of course, presents it as if the Elect were not able to endure the new regime, as per their usual wickedness. He may well have found support for this view among the Mattarian fraction, those who ‘wanted to persevere in them [i.e. the commandments]’. Presumably, they slept collectively on mats, while the ‘mainstream’ Manichaean Church continued to reject such sleeping arrangements. However, this does not mean that they did not maintain communal meeting places, facilitating daily Elect interaction.

3.3 *The Kellis Evidence*

The question of Manichaean monasteries in Egypt had already been broached by scholars before the excavations at Kellis, as Mani’s disciple Adda, who based himself in Alexandria, was depicted as founding monasteries in material from Turfan.⁸⁰ Textual material from Kellis has been taken to provide definite proof: the editors of *P.Kellis V*, based on the evidence of Tithoes I and of the KAB (see below), maintained that ‘it seems certain that there was a Manichaean monastery in the environs of Kellis’, and argued that such a monastery would

78 See Decret, ‘Le manichéisme présentait-il’, 15. This tension can perhaps be found in prescriptions similar to the one found in the Chinese *Compendium* (quoted above), which stated that the Elect were to ‘live in common’, but also that they were forbidden from having their own sleeping compartments.

79 As also argued by Decret, *ibid.*, 16–20.

80 See Koenen, ‘Manichäische Klöster’, and, in particular, Stroumsa, ‘The Manichaean Challenge’.

have been the ‘central focus of Elect life ... where they lived whilst not away on evangelical work’.⁸¹ Still, there does not yet seem to be consensus among scholars on the issue regarding either their existence or their function. The former has, for instance, recently been rejected by Mattias Brand.⁸² Moreover, the material from *P.Kellis VII* needs to be taken into account. We therefore need to review the evidence in some detail.

Three main pieces of evidence may be put forward. First, and most evidently, there is the explicit mention of a monastery in the correspondence of Tithoes I and his son, Samoun. On the request of Samoun, Tithoes I states that he has sent the young Tithoes II to a ‘monastery’ – C. $\xi\eta\eta\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ (*P.Kellis V* Copt. 12, l.6), Gr. $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}[\rho\iota\omicron\nu]$ (*P.Kellis I* Gr. 12, ll.18–19) – together with ‘father’ Pebok, so that he may learn linen weaving.⁸³ Brand states, regarding these letters, that ‘without strong Manichaean language in the letters, and with only weak prosopographical connections, it is most problematic to read these letters as evidence for the existence of a Manichaean monastery.’⁸⁴ However, he does not take into account the Manichaean literary composition found in House 2, *P.Kellis II* Copt. 8, nor the strength of the ties between the Tithoes and Pamour families discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 1). Shared intimates included Psenpnouthes I and Kyria I, called ‘brother’/‘sister’ by both Tithoes and Makarios and explicitly addressed as co-adherents by the latter, and Tapshai II, who herself uses cues indicating shared affiliation with Psais III in *P.Kellis VII* Copt. 116 (Chapter 6, Section 2). There is in other words strong evidence for the Manichaean affiliation of this family. A ‘Pebok’, furthermore, recurs in *P.Kellis V* Copt. 47, where the account author has acquired ‘wool of/for Pabok’ ($\zeta\alpha\rho\tau\ \bar{\eta}\ \bar{\rho}\alpha\beta\omega\kappa$, l.24). The editors state that there is no particular reason to identify the two.⁸⁵ Contra this, the contemporaneity of these two occurrences, the shared link to Tehat (by way of Tithoes I), and even shared involvement with textiles are all factors that support identifying them. There is, moreover, only one other occurrence of the name Pebok/Pabok at Kellis.⁸⁶ The wool Tehat has acquired for(?) Pebok in *P.Kellis*

81 *P.Kellis V*, 76.

82 See Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 243–46.

83 See furthermore Iain Gardner, “He Has Gone to the Monastery ...”, in *Studia Manichaica: Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Manichaean Studies, Berlin 1997*, ed. Roland E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, and Peter Zieme (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000).

84 Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’, 245.

85 *P.Kellis V*, 35. The difference in variant of the name is unlikely to be significant: see for instance the variants of Pekysis ($\bar{\rho}\alpha\beta\omega\alpha/\bar{\rho}\epsilon\beta\omega\alpha$) or Pebos ($\bar{\rho}\epsilon\beta\omicron/\bar{\rho}\alpha\beta\omicron$).

86 The only other instance of this name is on an undated and otherwise unscribed ostrakon from Shrine 3 at the Main Temple, *O.Kellis I* 250.

v Copt. 47 may have been for a garment intended as alms, considering Tehat's extensive concerns with *agape* elsewhere.⁸⁷

It might be objected that a Manichaean institution is not thereby demonstrated. Pebok does not feature in other House 1–3 texts with Manichaean cues, and we cannot exclude that undogmatic Manichaeans cooperated with Christian monks, for instance for business purposes. Perhaps the fact that weaving was practiced in the monastery to which Tithoes II was sent could be taken as contrary to Elect prescripts, as they were ideally not to perform any profane work. This issue was not settled, however: some Elect considered textile work legitimate, as evinced by a letter found at Turfan by a local, 'eastern' Church official who complains about a newly-arrived, Syrian Electa who stitched garments.⁸⁸ Elect supervision of textile work is evinced by the Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 32 and Saren in P.Kellis VII Copt. 58. The western Elect, at least those in more peripheral areas, may not have had the luxury of their brethren in Turfan to remain above every form of manual labour.

A second piece of evidence is the occurrence of a *topos Mani* in the KAB. It is mentioned twice in the KAB's income accounts for olives and dates, showing that the *topos* leased land for cultivation from the KAB owner. In later entries, Petros 'the monk' pays rent for olives and dates on its behalf.⁸⁹ Gr. τόπος was often used for shrines, and from the fourth century on it became a common term for monastic institutions.⁹⁰ A monastic context here is clearly implied by the presence of Petros the 'monk' as a middleman. As previously argued, Petros can be identified as the man by that name occurring in the Petros letters from House 1–3, and so a specifically Manichaean monk. Questions remain regarding the form and significance of the term 'Mani' here, as Choat and Pedersen have pointed out.⁹¹ To be sure, we cannot be absolutely sure that the *topos* and the 'monastery' discussed above were one and the same, although both Petros and Pebok shared a connection with Tehat, who was responsible

87 Alternately, Pebok may have provided the wool himself, as did, perhaps, Saren in P.Kellis VII Copt. 58 (l.25).

88 M112 + M146a + M336c (l.16), in Werner Sundermann, 'Ein Re-Edition zweier manichäisch-soghdischer Briefe', in *Iranian Languages and Texts from Iran and Turan: Ronald E. Emmerick Memorial Volume*, ed. Maria Macuch, Mauro Maggi, and Werner Sundermann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 408.

89 KAB 320 (Τόπ(ι) Μανι), 975–976 (Πέτρος μοναχ(ι) αντι Μανι); see also 1109, 1433.

90 *P.Kellis IV*, 81–82.

91 Mani in Greek was usually written Μάνης or Μανιχαιος, not Μανι. It might be an abbreviation, e.g. Τόπ(ος) (τῶν) Μανι(χαιών), as suggested by Pedersen, although it lacks an abbreviation marker. See Pedersen, 'Manichaean Self-Designations', 189; Choat, 'Monastic Letters', 57 n.228.

for agape.⁹² But on balance it seems more likely than not that we are dealing with a Manichaean institution.

While maintaining that the term *topos Mani* is not in itself sufficient, Choat has noted that ‘along with the reference in P. Kell. v Copt. 39.35 to “a little cell” (ἄκογι ἄρι, which can also refer to a room in a house, CD 288a), the confluence of evidence hints that the editors may be correct.’⁹³ This ‘confluence of evidence’ constitutes the third argument for a monastic institution in Kellis or its vicinity. The editors highlighted two bodies of letters that may evince monastic settings: the letters of Ouales to Psais/Andreas (P.Kellis v Copt. 35–36) and the aforementioned Petros letters (P.Kellis v Copt. 38–41). The latter involve several ‘fathers’ and ‘brothers’, including ‘our brother’ Petros and ‘our brother’ Timotheos. Some passages may in fact contain explicit references to monks: the term ἄλλο, which can mean both ‘old man’ and ‘monk’, appears twice in the correspondence.⁹⁴ The letters in which ἄλλο appears have other features that suggest a religious context. In P.Kellis v Copt. 40, the son says that he has arrived at a place where he is not able to rest, and refers (metaphorically?) to a quarrel with the ‘old man’ / ‘monk’: ‘For, since the day when I came, my body is restless; I have not given myself to sleep, for it is not the place! Like another one, with whom the old man (ἄλλο) also fights [...]’ (ll.9–13). The following passage is fragmented, but the son appears to be discussing an ongoing event related to the ‘other one’ and the ‘old man’. Further on, he says that he is ‘sick, since the day that I came’ (l.24). Then he makes an enigmatic statement suggesting healing: ‘[... another] year I will stay like this. I will come. There is no great [...] disturbance, and not the body either, we being well of blindness (βλῆε) [...]’ (ll.29–30). It is unfortunately difficult to get a coherent picture from the two fragmented passages, one claiming a state of restlessness,⁹⁵ the other seemingly referring to recovery from ‘blindness’ (spiritual sickness?). There is clearly a link between the son’s physical location and his spiritual state. To this we can add that in P.Kellis v Copt. 39, he discusses ‘the small cell’, noted by Choat above, but also a ‘charm’ (φύλαξ-τηρην) and the writing of a letter and of ‘fragments’ (νῆπασε)⁹⁶ (ll.34–38). At the same time, the son is involved in selling textiles produced by the ‘mother’ (P.Kellis v Copt. 41) and making sure

92 Their names may, furthermore, occur together in O.Kellis I 121 from the West Church, which lists Petros and Bok (presumably for Pebok) alongside Psais the ‘monk’. See Chapter 4, Section 6.2 n.66.

93 Choat, ‘Monastic Letters’, 57 n.228.

94 P.Kellis v Copt. 39 (ll.26–27), 40 (l.13). The editors prudently translate both as ‘old man’, but see *P.Kellis V*, 240.

95 See *P.Kellis V*, 244.

96 The term can also mean ‘(book) section’, see Crum 286a.

she pays for goods (P.Kellis v Copt. 38, 40), and so it could be argued that he is unlikely to be a monk himself, although the case of Petros and of the Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 32 show that Elect did not always shy away from economic matters. The monastery of the Tithoes correspondence was itself a place for producing textiles, and so is unlikely to have needed textiles shipped from the 'mother'; but, then again, the 'son' is away from the 'place' where he can rest.

Turning to Ouales' letter to Psais III, P.Kellis v Copt. 35, it has already been argued that he is situated in a specifically Manichaean scribal context, indicated by the oath he swears on the Paraclete, the spell he copied by his own hand, and the implications that he has other texts around him. To these we can add his great need for papyri, that he appears to have superiors responsible for ordering the 'tetrads', and that a 'blessed one' is responsible for mediating between Ouales and Psais. A Manichaean monastic scriptorium must be implied.⁹⁷ It is linked to the other request for 'tetrads' by Pebos and Olbinos in P.Kellis VII Copt. 111, also to Psais III, a letter that shows centrally directed scribal activities for the production of religious texts, as discussed in Chapter 7. Furthermore, in P.Kellis VII Copt. 120, 'father' Pebos is associated with a place referred to as πϞΤΟ, 'the place of convalescence'.⁹⁸ The author, Pekos, having first asked Pamour to send for the *Gospel* from father Pebo, asks him regarding certain items: 'Take them down and put them inside the cell (ϱιϵ). Do not delay to go to the place for convalescence (πϞΤΟ) to see the man, for they have gone after the father' (ll.19–25). The father, clearly tied to this place, could well be father Pebos referred to initially. This indicates that we are dealing with a location of a religious function, where the *Gospel* is stored, congruent with the argument for an identification of Pebo as a presbyter (above). The term πϞΤΟ can furthermore be restored, albeit uncertainly, in the Petros letter P.Kellis v Copt. 41, for a place where the mother is supposed to send someone.⁹⁹ Admittedly, it is not, to my knowledge, found elsewhere for a Manichaean institution, but it is clearly reminiscent of the notion of 'places of rest' and 'healing' discussed above. The evidence strongly suggests that the letters to Psais III concerning tetrads emanate from Manichaean authorities, situated in a 'house' where alms and religious literature were stored. Presbyters

97 Reservations are expressed in Mirecki, Gardner, and Alcock, 'Magical Spell', 30–31; but see *P.Kellis V*, 223.

98 For the term, probably derived from χΤΟ, meaning 'lying down', see *P.Kellis V*, 240; and Crum 595b, 792a.

99 *P.Kellis V*, 257. To this we can add that there are firm prosopographical links between the letters of Psais III and the Petros circle: notably 'father' Pini and 'our brother' Hom, but also Lammon and Heni.

were involved in this work. If they were primarily responsible for smaller groups of Elect, as suggested above, Pebos' institution was probably not very large. It might have been situated in Hibis, as implied by P.Kellis VII Copt. 111.

Finally, some evidence for communal spaces is found in the Maria/Makarios circle. Makarios speaks of our 'temple' or 'sanctuary' in a fragmented passage: 'How many [...] these or our sanctuary (πῆρηται)?¹⁰⁰ Are not you yourself a catechumen? For we are not retaliating against anyone in this place for what they are doing to us' (P.Kellis V Copt. 22, ll.61–62). This was taken by the editors as a lay communal institution, akin to a church, rather than a monastery.¹⁰¹ But in the fragmented line immediately preceding this statement, Makarios quotes someone saying 'I will rest' (†ΝΑΪΤΑΝ, l.60), and the lines immediately following discuss the copying of a book and the theft of a book (ll.63–66). The distinction between Elect monasteries and lay churches may not have been very rigid. In relation to this, we should consider the passage from Matthaïos in P.Kellis V Copt. 25, where he related how the Teacher made Piene 'read in church (κατὰ ἐκκλησίαν)' in Alexandria.

To recapitulate: two letters provide explicit mentions of a monastery, and there is a suggestive occurrence of a *topos Mani*.¹⁰² In addition, several letters contain spatial terms associated with rest and recovery,¹⁰³ the production and/or storing of religious texts,¹⁰⁴ and Elect activity,¹⁰⁵ all of which are suggestive of a monastery, but none of which are without some ambiguity. Terms such as 'place' or 'house', while featuring in Manichaean ecclesiastical discourse, are in and of themselves too ambiguous to prove the existence of monastic buildings. This vagueness of terminology may caution against drawing too strong conclusions, although the absence of technical terms in informal discourse should not come as a surprise, given the lack of technical vocabulary in the authoritative, Coptic Manichaean sources themselves. Nonetheless, the wealth of references to shared spaces, involving 'rest', and where religious literature is kept, strongly indicate that we are dealing with buildings reserved for the Church. It is supported by the fact that the instances of almsgiving from Kellis were intended for Elect collectives, as argued in Chapter 8, Section 2.5.

100 For πῆρηται, lit. 'temple' (sometimes used for 'church'), see Crum 298b. At the end of the same letter, Makarios greets 'all at Pouapo' (ΠΟΥΑΠΟ, i.e., 'the great sanctuary'), which the editors take to be a toponym. *P.Kellis V*, 181.

101 *Ibid.*, 78.

102 P.Kellis V Copt. 12, P.Kellis I Gr. 12, and the ΚΑΒ, respectively.

103 P.Kellis V Copt. (22?), 40, [41?], P.Kellis VII Copt. 120.

104 P.Kellis V Copt. 22, 35, 39, P.Kellis VII Copt. (111?), 120.

105 P.Kellis V Copt. 25, 39, 40, P.Kellis VII Copt. (111?), (120?).

On balance, then, there is good evidence in the Kellis material for the existence of Manichaean communal centres, both in the vicinity of Kellis and elsewhere, as the editors of *P.Kellis V* maintained. The nature of this institution still raises questions. As we saw above, the editors suggested that the Elect spent their time in the monasteries. However, they also considered the possibility that they mainly interacted with the Auditors in church-buildings such as those excavated at Kellis, and broached the issue of two possible institutions:

[The question of agape deliveries] raises the question as to whether the Manichaeans in fourth century Egypt had two distinct types of religious building, i.e. monasteries and churches. The eastern literature certainly uses two parallel terms; and in this present volume we perhaps (the passage is fragmented) find Makarios making mention of 'our sanctuary' ... Still, in general it seems reasonable to suppose that the Kellis Manichaeans *may* have had a religious building in the village, and that such a 'church' could have been in broad terms similar to that of the Christians.¹⁰⁶

Yet, the terminology does not seem to be consistent enough to allow us to infer a clear division between lay and Elect buildings. It seems rather more likely that both Elect and laity met in the same 'sanctuaries'. Here they stored literature and other communal valuables, and the Elect presumably spent most of their time (perhaps the better part of the day) performing the 'work of the religion', writing, praying, and eating, in the company of other Elect – when not preaching, visiting Auditors, or away on other travels. Whether the Elect also slept there cannot be known on present evidence, although it seems less likely, in light of the evidence from Medinet Madi and Augustine.

4 A Networked Manichaean Church

From the above sections, it emerges that the evidence from authoritative traditions, Augustine, and the papyri from Kellis complement each other well. Together, they suggest a larger degree of cohesion among Manichaean Elect than is often allowed for. A question that has hitherto only loomed in the background can now receive our attention: to what extent was the community evinced by the Kellis material linked to others? To put it another way, are

¹⁰⁶ *P.Kellis V*, 78.

we glimpsing one part of a single, interconnected Church, known respectively from Kellis, Medinet Madi, Augustine, and Mani's own foundation?

The question may be considered somewhat speculative. It cannot be excluded that there were other, competing Manichaean groups in Egypt, taking their cue from Mani's texts and proclaiming themselves *the* 'Holy Church'. The evidence of Augustine concerning the Mattarians shows that such splinter groups did exist. But at the very least, the Kellis evidence indicates that the local community here belonged to an important strand: one that must have established itself reasonably early, extended across Egypt, and drew on practices and literary traditions very similar to those documented at Medinet Madi and by Augustine. It seems reasonable to assume that the extensive network led by Makarios' Teacher represented the earliest and dominant Manichaean organisation in Egypt, even if it cannot be proven beyond doubt.

However, another challenge to an answer in the affirmative relates to whether, given ancient conditions of communication, it was in fact possible for the Church to have extended beyond Egypt, to other Manichaean groups in the Middle East and Roman Empire at large. That any voluntary, 'non-state' organisations could have maintained such a far-flung network may, on the face of it, seem unlikely. But there is to my mind no reason *a priori* to reject the existence of a trans-regional church network maintained into at least the mid – late fourth century. There are also, as we shall see, good reasons to think that there *was* such a network, highly organised by the standards of contemporary private religious associations. However, both the evidence for and the mechanisms that may have facilitated such a network need to be considered more closely.

4.1 *The Literary Tradition*

Attention has recently been re-focused on the issue of links between 'eastern' and 'western' Manichaeans, in particular by the work on the Dublin *Kephalaia*. In a preliminary publication on the contents of this codex, BeDuhn signalled that it sheds new light on important questions regarding the coherence of the movement, at least on the level of reproduction of literary traditions.¹⁰⁷ A far-flung Church was certainly the ambition of Mani and his disciples. It is evident in Mani's 'international' list of prophetic forerunners, found in the passage which introduced Chapter 1, as well as elsewhere, for instance in an oft-quoted passage from the Berlin *Kephalaia*:

¹⁰⁷ BeDuhn, 'Parallels', 52.

I have chosen you, the good election, the holy church that I was sent to from the Father. I have sown the seed of life. I have [...] from east to west [...] my hope has gone toward the sunrise of the world, and every inhabited part; to the clime of the north, and the [...] Not one among the apostles did ever do these things [... my hope] will remain in the world until [the return of Jesus in judgement, and he will place my] church on the right side [and the evildoers] on the left.¹⁰⁸

The same work contains another frequently cited chapter, listing ten reasons why Mani's Church is superior to all others. The first justification reads: 'In this first matter my church surpasses the first churches: Because the first churches were chosen according to place, according to city. My church, mine: It is provided for it to go out from all cities, and its good news attains every country'.¹⁰⁹ An 'international' outlook was of primary importance to the early Manichaean Church, also the one operating in Egypt. At the same time, we do not know whether any of the adherents in Kellis ever read or heard these words, or exactly how far they thought their 'Church' reached. Conversely, a worldwide 'imagined community' is certainly not dependent on the existence of an actual organisation seeking to maintain such contact in practice.

Yet, there is evidence that the Manichaeans worked to maintain trans-regional contact well beyond the initial missionary efforts, even if it did not attain every country. Manichaean texts from Turfan provide evidence for maintenance of trans-regional ties eastwards. From the early period, a letter from a church official (perhaps the archegos Sisinnios), located in Mesopotamia, to one of Mani's disciples located in Merv (Mary in today's Turkmenistan), Mar Ammo, shows close contact between the 'central' Church and its travelling missionaries in the late third century.¹¹⁰ Contact between the hierarchy in Mesopotamia and the churches established in Central Asia continued, although later 'tainted' by schism, and is found in sources as late as the ninth century.¹¹¹

108 1 Ke. 15.24–16.17, trans. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 2.

109 1 Ke. 37.15–20, trans. *ibid.*, 266.

110 Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*, 23–24.

111 A Mesopotamian dominance in the early Church was asserted by the appointment of Sisinnios of Kashkar (on the Tigris River) as the first archegos; see Michel Tardieu, 'La nisba de Sisinnios', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 18, no. 1 (1991). Mesopotamia long retained primacy. Al-Nadim describes a schism that occurred in the late sixth century between Mesopotamian leaders and Central Asian (*dināwariya*) Manichaeans over the location of the archegos: according to established Manichaean tradition, as related by al-Nadim, the archegos had to be located in Mesopotamia (Dodge, *The Fihrist*, 11, 792). A reconciliation was arranged in the seventh century, but a new division occurred shortly after. The practical role of the central leadership is unknown. It could not have asserted

As for the western sphere, a church historical text from Turfan relates that Mani sent books – among them his own work, *The Treasury of Life* – to the disciple Adda who was working in Alexandria.¹¹² The main piece of evidence for continued contact between Sasanian Mesopotamia and Roman Egypt is, however, the Medinet Madi archive itself. The *Psalm-book* contains psalms praising the archegos Sisinnios (Psalms 234, 241). A passage from the SNC refers to the death of Sisinnios under Bahram II (c.276–93) and the appointment of his successor, Innaios (Hom. 82.21–22).¹¹³ Preserved leaves from the *Acts Codex* recount narratives of the persecution of the Church and activities of Innaios in Mesopotamia during the reign of king Hormuz II (c.302–309).¹¹⁴ As the first Manichaean mission had arrived in Egypt at least by 270 CE, such literature must have been disseminated from Mesopotamia at a later date.¹¹⁵ They demonstrate that translation into Coptic of material stemming from the Mesopotamian hierarchy extended well into the fourth century.

It might be objected that the evidence cannot be taken to show regular links between Egypt and other areas. Gardner and Lieu suggested that the dissemination of the Medinet Madi texts could be attributed to Manichaeans fleeing persecutions in the Sasanian Empire.¹¹⁶ To my mind, this explanation is insufficient. The Syriac original of the *Acts Codex* – or at any rate the

authority very effectively, probably having to rely on the prestige and ordinances (whether real or invented) of Mani. On the other hand, ruptures would hardly have taken place if there was no preexisting coordination between these groups. A Sogdian letter, published and dated to the ninth century by Sundermann ('Ein Re-Edition', 408), shows that the Mesopotamian and the Central Asian communities still considered each other part of the same 'Church' despite the schism, and still had contact (or renewed their contact) in that century.

112 M 2 in Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*; T II D + T II K in Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte*, 34–36; and id., 'Studien III', 70. For an argument for extensive contact between the communities at the time of Mani, see François Decret, 'Le manichéisme en Afrique du Nord et ses rapports avec la secte en Orient', *ARAM* 16 (2004).

113 For the date of Sisinnios' death, see Iain Gardner, 'New Readings in the Coptic Manichaean *Homilies Codex*', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 205 (2018): 124–26.

114 See Pedersen, 'A Manichaean Historical Text'.

115 Some texts (such as the Thomas psalms) were composed in Mesopotamia, while for instance the Berlin *Kephalaia* has been taken as an organically growing tradition that may have been edited in Egypt itself. See Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, xxiii–xiv. However, the Dublin *Kephalaia* contains material that must have been composed by people familiar with Sasanian social and political conditions, thus likely located in Mesopotamia, and there is moreover little reason to assume that the two *Kephalaia* codices belong to different traditions, as earlier proposed by Tardieu ('La diffusion'). See Gardner, 'An Introduction'; Dilley, 'Mani's Wisdom'.

116 Gardner and Lieu, 'From Narmouthis', 152.

traditions contained within it, in case of later redaction in Egypt – can only have arrived in the second quarter of the fourth century, at the earliest, and likely later, depending on how far the narrative went and allowing time for composition and dissemination. Although little is known of the conditions for Manichaeans in the Sasanian Empire at this time, it is not particularly noted for persecutions.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Manichaeans fleeing persecution in the Sasanian Empire must have had contact with those in the Roman Empire in order to have been able to shelter there.

4.2 *Kellis and the Wider Church*

The Kellis texts both shed light on the maintenance of contact within the Church, and provide a model for conceptualising it. To the first point, there is evidence to support the existence of trans-regional ties in the material from the village. The finds of Syriac – Coptic word-lists and remains of Syriac literature show that texts from the Manichaean centre were still being circulated and translated by adherents in Kellis around the mid-fourth century. The community apparently had a need for training Syriac ‘readers’ like Ision.¹¹⁸ I would suggest that these activities can be related to a continued effort to disseminate (relatively) recently-arrived books in Syriac from Mesopotamia, authored by disciples and church authorities who continued to maintain links to the Roman Empire, at least into the mid-fourth century.¹¹⁹ The occurrence of a book called *Acts* in P.Kellis VII Copt. 120 could even provide an example of such a text, if the church historical work known from the *Acts* Codex is intended.¹²⁰ The Kellis material may indicate that Egypt provided a bridge for transmission

117 An exception might be the persecution of Christians by Shapur II in 379, which might have hit Manichaeans as well; see Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 81–83.

118 An alternative explanation could be that Syriac remained a sacred language in the Church, as proposed by e.g. Leurini, *The Manichaean Church*, 79–85; and the discussion in Pedersen and Larsen, *Manichaean Texts in Syriac*, 11–12. Yet this seems unlikely, in light of the great emphasis on translation into local languages expounded by Manichaean authorities, by the Syriac-Coptic word-lists from Kellis as well as the finds of Manichaean literature (including Mani’s *Epistles*) translated into Coptic there. More tentatively, one may note the lack of care in preserving Syriac texts at Kellis, as evinced for instance by P.Kellis VII Copt. 57: a letter written in Coptic on a wooden board that had previously been used for a longer Syriac text. See *P.Kellis VII*, 18.

119 It may be that the differences in terminology pointed out by Lindt (*Mythological Figures*, 221–22), rather than different routes (see Chapter 2, Section 1, n.7), could reflect different periods of translation.

120 Unfortunately, the title of the Medinet Madi work is, to my knowledge, not preserved, while the term used by Pekos in P.Kellis VII Copt. 120 (ⲙⲓⲡⲣⲁⲗⲉⲓⲥ) may not necessarily reflect the official title of that work.

of literature to, or support for, communities in the Latin-speaking parts of the Roman Empire: a westward connection could be inferred from the Teacher's education of Piene in Latin, or at least in the Teacher's own knowledge of that language, as documented by P.Kellis v Copt. 20. That Piene was to travel westward himself is unlikely, but he may have participated in translating literature. The editors note that Latin might have been of use for interaction with important Roman officials in Egypt, but this seems to me less probable.¹²¹

Secondly, the Kellis network provides a model for how we should conceptualise such inter-regional contact. As we have seen, the local networks of family, trade, and patronage at Kellis, and the regional trade in which they participated, was extensive. We find ties to local groups, such as the family in Thio and Ammon in Psbthesis, but also to groups in Hibis in Khargeh Oasis, and groups in Aphrodito, Antinoopolis/Hermopolis, perhaps Lycopolis, and even Alexandria in the Nile Valley.¹²² Stronger ties between Upper and Lower Egypt would have been maintained by networks analogue to these, and likely much denser, considering the greater population and ease of transportation there. Contact was not only maintained by the laity: crucially, the documents demonstrate coordination by religious authorities in different localities. The Teacher travelled from Upper to Lower Egypt and back, visiting local congregations along the way, and his letter to Pebos and Ploutogenios shows concerns for maintaining contact with more distant officials that he could not meet in person. Saren the presbyter and the Father in P.Kellis v Copt. 31 used their ties to request alms from Oasis to Valley. This Elect activity was facilitated by the lay networks, as Elect could participate as social mediators, carrying news, blessings, and greetings, while also receiving shelter and alms. In turn, this enabled them to maintain regular links between distant communities.

Such local and regional networks could form the basis for far-flung communication networks. Trade and traffic between Alexandria and Antioch was frequent, and would have allowed the Manichaean network in Egypt to link up with that in Syria, while trade on the Red Sea could, for a while, have provided

121 *P.Kellis V*, 170. All the highest civilian governors of Egypt known for the period 345–370 (from Nestorius 1 to Fl. Eutolmius Tatianus) were native to Greek-speaking areas; excepting only Italicianus, governor for three months in 359 – whom Libanius still addresses in Greek (*Ep.* 238) – and Gerontius 2, governor in 361/2, who was a native of Armenia, not the Latin-speaking west. See A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 1094–95, and their individual entries. Presumably, their staffs were also Greek-speakers.

122 A 'house of Aristakenia' associated with Assiut/Lycopolis is mentioned by Makarios in P.Kellis V Copt. 19, but she is not explicitly invoked as a religious affiliate (although see, perhaps, P.Kellis v Copt. 17).

a more direct route to Mesopotamia.¹²³ As for the Latin west, Augustine clearly implies that contact between Manichaeans in Rome and Carthage was a mundane affair.¹²⁴ Faustus and the other African Elect visible in Augustine's writings were highly mobile and, as argued above, reasonably well organised. Augustine himself utilised Manichaean ties when he moved from Carthage to Milano, as is often remarked. He may even provide evidence for an adherent from the Greek east who became active in the Latin sphere.¹²⁵

This should suffice to show how series of partly overlapping local and regional clusters of lay adherents, paired with Elect practices, provided a day-to-day environment that could have facilitated long-distance contact, following the model of Mediterranean connectivity suggested by Horden and Purcell.¹²⁶ In the case of Manichaeism, connectivity received impetus from Manichaean authorities who actively promoted long-distance contact, and whose itinerant regime was highly conducive to maintaining it. Higher Elect officials may even have been tasked with managing longer lines of communications: it seems unlikely to be a coincidence that the 'Great Teacher' frequented the route all the way from Antinoopolis to Alexandria, and even taught Latin himself, or that bishop Faustus spent so many years away from Carthage.

We should certainly not imagine that the Teacher(s) in Egypt regularly received orders from leaders in Mesopotamia, or that the latter planned missions or imposed doctrinal interpretations from afar. As a voluntary organisation in an increasingly tense environment, there were limits to how effective such links could be. Only a few groups or individuals would have traversed the entire distance between, for instance, Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the connectivity of the networks operating there was presumably not very high. But even occasional contact can serve to socialise distant groups into a shared cultural field, through what Granovetter has termed 'weak tie diffusion'.¹²⁷ Low intensity contact between different regions, with corresponding diffusion of

123 Settlements such as Qana (Oman), Sumhuram/Khor Rori (Yemen), and sites on Socotra were important hubs that linked Egypt and the regions of the Persian Gulf into late antiquity. Eivind Seland, 'Archaeology of Trade in the Western Indian Ocean, 300 BC to 700 AD', *Journal of Archaeological Research* 22 (2014), 367–402.

124 See, for instance, *De mor.* 2.20.75.

125 When still a Manichaean, Augustine came to admire a Syrian-born rhetorician named Hierius, who had taught himself Latin and whose works circulated among Augustine's friends (*Conf.* 4.14.21). This Hierius may well have been a Manichaean, based on his reputation in the circles that Augustine frequented as well as on the nature of the work that Augustine dedicated to him, as suggested by Brown, 'Diffusion of Manichaeism', 97.

126 See Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, esp. Ch. 5.

127 See, in particular, Granovetter, 'Weak Ties Revisited', 215–16.

information and text, would have been sufficient to create an inter-connected Manichaean world, a sense of belonging to a single Manichaean 'Holy Church'.

5 Conclusions

In the previous chapter we saw that, as far as can be determined from the Kellis texts, alms were consumed collectively and at a distance from the Auditors, while also keeping regularly in touch with them. In the current chapter, we have found that Elect were committed to the familiar norm of itinerancy, but at the same time had mechanisms to ensure regular peer interaction. The Teacher concerned himself with internal discipline, while presbyters were involved in gathering alms, including, perhaps, religious texts. Moreover, there are ample indications from Kellis that the 'Church' maintained buildings set apart for religious purposes. This picture is complemented by the literary traditions. Adducing Manichaean traditions and Augustine's writings, it has been argued that the upper officials, i.e. teachers and bishops, had overall responsibility for discipline and for larger Elect congregations, while presbyters supervised smaller Elect groups. Such groups probably made use of communal buildings, representing a Manichaean take on 'monasteries', for their everyday practice, while remaining highly mobile, travelling between such monasteries and between monasteries and lay homes. In turn, this Elect mobility would have intensified the connectivity of the Manichaean network, and helped to integrate the Kellis community into a larger Manichaean Church.

Conclusion: A Church in the World

Our study opened with a seemingly simple question: what was Manichaeism to Horos and Horion? We proposed to answer this question by approaching ‘Manichaeism’ primarily as social practice, and by exploring the intricate ties between the people of the House 1–3 archive. In this concluding chapter, we shall pull together some threads and sketch some of the answers yielded by this approach. At the same time, we shall consider the implications of these answers for two broader issues, issues that we have already touched on in some of the foregoing chapters: the dichotomy between ‘lived religion’ and authoritative religious institutions, and the emergence of ‘religion’ as a separate social sphere in late antiquity.

First, to summarise the findings, this study has argued that the House 1–3 material evinces a vibrant religious community active in Kellis. Religious ties were intertwined with familial ties, neighbourhood ties, and ties of trade within the network of the Pamour family of House 3. The community included artisans and tenant farmers as well as traders, and at least one patron from the curial class. In terms of size, the group of adherents that can be glimpsed in the House 3 texts was extensive, relative to the village at large. The literary remains indicate that the group held gatherings for religious service, such as psalm singing, although we do not know where or how often they met for service, or how many attended regularly.

Equally, it has been argued that the material provides evidence for the *trans-local* dimensions of the community, the ways local adherents were linked to a wider Manichaean world. They alluded to their membership in a wider church community with phrases drawn from Manichaean literature. They made use of prayers and psalms which brought them into contact with the Manichaean cosmos, and *Epistles* wherein Mani described how he founded this new Church as distinct from other ‘sects’. Not least, they had actual ties to such a community, through extensive interaction with adherents in other parts of Egypt – including several Elect. While our sources do not chiefly relate to Elect activities, the glimpses we *do* get suggest that they sought to reinforce ties to the local community while maintaining a wider church organisation.

1 Manichaean Identity and 'Manichaeism'

Let us now turn to the central issue that arose from the letter of Horion. As we have seen, recent scholarship has used the Christian aspects of the Kellis material to support the argument that Manichaean laity considered their affiliation as a form of higher 'Christianity', supported by an assumption that the Auditors at Kellis mainly engaged with the Christian elements of Mani's teachings. The implications appear to be that the Elect either consciously withheld more 'Manichaean' aspects from the laity, or that the laity were uninterested in them.¹ At the same time, it has been proposed that Mani's original Church was essentially a Christian movement, which developed and solidified into a separate 'Manichaeism' through the work of later church authorities.² On this view, the primarily Christian identity of the Kellis laity represents a more original strain, one which church authorities presumably strove to replace with a more 'Manichaean' identity.

Neither proposition is satisfactory. Roman Manichaeans certainly saw themselves as in some sense 'Christian', but 'Christian' as conceptualised by Mani and his early followers. In terms of 'belief', this involved an original battle between Light and Darkness, a series of gods that emanated from the primeval Light, a world soul partitioned and imprisoned in matter through transmigration, and the purification of Light through natural and metabolic processes, buttressed by the revelations and authority of Mani. In terms of practice, it involved a variety of self-techniques (such as daily prayers), communal rituals, and mutual cooperation between Elect and Auditors. In the course of this study, we have seen that while their knowledge was certainly not as thorough as that of the Elect, distinctly Manichaean ideas and practices were appropriated by the fourth-century laity in Kellis. They should not be seen as practicing a form of 'Christianity' opposed to an Elect 'Manichaeism'.

Nor does it seem that it was primarily later Manichaean authorities who consciously made the notion of 'Manichaeism' in an attempt to distance themselves from 'Christianity'. On the one hand, the term 'Manichaean' was not a prerequisite for the development of what we, in scholarly parlance, term a Manichaean identity. The term 'Manichaean' has, in fact, not been found

1 So for instance *P.Kellis II*, ix–x; Nongbri, *Before Religion*, 72.

2 Thus Pedersen, 'Manichaean Self-Designations', 193.

even in the much later Central-Asian evidence.³ On the other hand, a categorisational scheme that implied a separation of 'Manichaeism' from 'Christianity' was already present in early Manichaean literature. The process of differentiating the two must have begun with Mani in the Sasanian Empire, as he encountered resistance to his claims of supercession among other Christians as well as Mazda-worshippers (and perhaps Buddhists?). This would have marked his 'Church' off as a distinct social entity at an early date: an entity constituted by distinct notion of belief and practices, or 'a group that holds opinions far different from others and has established for itself a worship of the deity with a far different ritual', in the words of the Manichaean bishop Faustus.⁴ This did not stop Manichaeans from asserting their own primacy, and so it is no surprise that Mani's adherents maintained their claims to be superior 'Christians' in the Roman Empire and 'Mazda-worshippers' in Central-Asia, even as their point of reference for understanding these traditions remained Mani, his teachings, and his Church.⁵ But, for the sake of analytical clarity, it does imply that modern scholars cannot simply adopt their self-designations.

2 The Elite-Lay Dichotomy

The question of Manichaean identity is related to wider questions, questions concerning how we are to understand the concept of 'religious identity' in late antiquity. It is particularly relevant to the question of how we are to conceptualise lay resistance to religious authorities, and the fluid, situational nature of identities more broadly. Scholars focused on these aspects of ancient religion have provided a necessary corrective to older scholarship, which often dogmatically transplanted practices and interpretations from canonical texts onto the lives of lay people, creating images of solidified, doctrine-centred 'religions'. At the same time, some recent scholarship within the 'lived religion' tradition has ascribed a much too limited role to religious institutions. While rejecting an absolute distinction between 'popular' and 'elite' religion, the general tenor has been to consider religious authorities and the practices they promoted as having little influence on everyday religious expressions. In a recent volume, Jörg Rüpke and Erik Rebillard cite with approval the rejection of the dichotomy elite-lay by Virginia Burrus and Rebecca Lyman, but propose that we need to

3 As pointed out by Pedersen, 'Manichaean Self-Designations', 193 n.38.

4 C. Faust, 203, trans. Teske, *Against Faustus*, 264.

5 Pedersen, 'Manichaean Self-Designations', op. cit.

emphasise ‘individual innovations, variations, manipulations, or deviances.’⁶ David Frankfurter, while repeatedly pointing out the co-dependence between lay expressions and authoritative institutions,⁷ nonetheless focuses almost exclusively on creative appropriation of such institutions, paying little attention to the processes that gave rise to their ‘authority’ in the first place.⁸ Mattias Brand similarly points out the inadequacy of the conflict model of lay contra institutional religion, but concludes that religious identity was chiefly important for the Elect and only had limited relevance to the everyday life of lay adherents at Kellis.⁹

As we have seen in the course of this study, this does not properly capture the life of the community there. The evidence rather suggests lay people who actively appropriated and expressed shared Manichaean identity in their day-to-day lives. Appropriation entailed a large degree of reproduction of practices drawn from authoritative traditions: practices such as church readings, psalm singing, individual prayer, book copying, and almsgiving to the Elect. Elect authorities made great efforts to assist in this reproduction by maintaining close ties to the laity, through religious services and frequent visits. Of course, it should not be taken to mean that Manichaean identity superseded or replaced all other identities. The inhabitants of House 1–3 probably considered ‘religion’ to be irrelevant in many settings, de-emphasised or disregarded norms and ideas when it suited them, produced idiosyncratic takes on Manichaean institutions, and at times came to blows with the Elect. Communal institutions would have had to adapt to circumstances, and at times been neglected or even collapsed, whether because of external pressure or internal factors. Yet, for the most part, the modes of identification and practices that we do find at Kellis agree well with what we know from ‘canonical’ Manichaean texts. The fact that identities are, to some extent, situational and fluid should not therefore lead us to exclude a degree of continuity in the maintenance of group boundaries, or to consider religious norms and ideas as inherently irrelevant to – or, as has often been the case for Manichaeism, incompatible with – the laity’s mundane world.

6 Erik Rebillard and Jörg Rüpke, ‘Introduction’, in *Group Identity and Religious Individuality in Late Antiquity* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 6.

7 See e.g. Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 52.

8 As noted in a recent review by the anthropologist Candace Lukasik (‘Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity’, *Political Theology* 19, no. 6 (2018), 545).

9 Brand, ‘Manichaeans of Kellis’ 337–45.

3 Reordering 'Religion'

Finally, this discussion brings us to our study's implications for the shift in ancient religiosity: the emergence of 'religion' as a distinct social sphere in late antiquity. That such a shift occurred is widely, although not universally, acknowledged.¹⁰ Yet disagreements remain over its nature and extent. Scholars focused on the fluid nature of identities and the opposition authorities contra laity have argued that it was primarily one of elite discourse, driven by religious specialists, which had little effect on the lives of ordinary people.¹¹ However, it seems to me that we cannot understand this shift without at the same time locating it in concrete social structures – new institutions and organisational forms – which in turn disseminated new forms of religious identification in broader society.¹²

To get a sense of what characterised this institutional development, we may briefly compare the features identified for the Kellis community to those generally found in the so-called voluntary associations of classical and early Roman antiquity, the dominant model of private religious organisations in the time before Manichaeism.¹³ Certainly, 'voluntary associations' is a modern concept, subsuming a heterogeneous range of group formations from different times and places in a single category, but some features seem sufficiently common to provide an 'ideal type' for comparison.¹⁴ Voluntary associations ranged from cultic to occupational ones, but all featured cultic practice in one form or another.¹⁵ Many kept membership lists, which show that they could range in size from only a few to several hundred members, although on average

10 See North, 'The Development of Religious Pluralism'; Stroumsa, *End of Sacrifice*; James Rives, 'Religious Choice and Religious Change in Classical and Late Antiquity: Models and Question', *ARYS* 9 (2011): 265–80; BeDuhn, 'Mani and the Crystallisation'.

11 Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities*, 93–94; Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*.

12 In line with the argument of James Rives, 'Religious Choice'.

13 For the term, see Stephen G. Wilson, 'Voluntary Associations: An Overview', in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996).

14 For the debate about the usefulness of this term as a heuristic model, see Richard S. Ascough, 'Paul, Synagogues, and Associations: Reframing the Question of Models for Pauline Christ Groups', *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 2 (2015); Eric S. Gruen, 'Synagogues and Voluntary Associations as Institutional Models: A Response to Richard Ascough and Ralph Korner', *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 3 (2016); Richard S. Ascough, 'Methodological Reflections on Synagogues and Christ Groups as Associations: A Response to Eric Gruen', *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 4 (2017).

15 See Wilson, 'Voluntary Associations'; Harland, *Associations*, 30–38.

the number was somewhere between 20–60.¹⁶ Specialised cultic associations could be based in households or centred on households of wealthy benefactors. Widely shared functions included organising communal meals and cultic observance, and funerals for members.¹⁷ Members contributed to financing these activities, elected and/or served as officials, and participated in communal gatherings. Their meetings could be held in public spaces, in the houses of wealthy patrons, or in buildings owned by the association as an entity.¹⁸ They involved banqueting, but also prayers and in some groups speeches about the divine.¹⁹ Associations often sought to regulate social behaviour among its members, rewarding generous members with statues or honorific inscriptions, and imposing punishments such as shaming inscriptions, fines, or expulsion for breaches of good conduct.²⁰

This short sketch should suffice to show some broad similarities between voluntary associations and the Manichaean community discernible in the Kellis material. It lacked some features, such as membership lists, but shared in most others, such as mechanisms for collecting and distributing resources, communal spaces, official supervision, and norms to regulate group relations. But it also evinces traits that were previously uncommon or marginal: communal textual practices, frequent and regular (in theory, daily) communal meetings, mobile officials with institutionalised, trans-local ties, and strong concerns for internal conformity (even if, as is often pointed out, never achieving this unattainable ideal in practice).²¹ There may exist earlier parallels, for instance

16 John S. Kloppenborg, 'Membership Practices in Pauline Christ Groups', *Early Christianity* 4, no. 2 (2013).

17 Harland, *Associations*, 28.

18 *Ibid.*, 53–56; for the spread of associations as evinced by the expansion or acquisition of buildings, see Richard S. Ascough, "A Place to Stand, a Place to Grow": Architectural and Epigraphic Evidence for Expansion in Greco-Roman Associations, in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians and Others. Festschrift for Stephen G. Wilson*, ed. Zeba Crook and Philip Harland (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007). For the assembly place of an early 'Christ group', see David G. Horrel, 'Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre', *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004).

19 See IG II² 1368 = AGRW 7 (L115).

20 Kloppenborg, 'Membership Practices', 195–202; Venticinque, 'Family Affairs', 280–88.

21 So, while textual practices may have played a role in Graeco-Roman associations (Richard Last, "Communities That Write": Christ-Groups, Associations, and Gospel Communities', *New Testament Studies* 58, no. 2 (2012)), one should compare the distinct Christian book culture that emerged in the third and fourth century. See Lane Fox, 'Literacy and Power'; Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 70–72. For concerns for conformity, contrast the use of inscriptions to honour or shame

among Jewish groups, or philosophical schools such as the Epicureans.²² The Manichaeans' own institutions were certainly assembled from a range of different influences.²³ Rather than 'innovation' per se, what characterised the late antique shift in religion is perhaps better described as the assemblage of 'packages' of institutionalised practices, integrated into and disseminated by new religious organisations. Such organisations are not least exemplified by the 'mainstream' Christian Church, which developed partly in parallel with the

members with the level of scrutiny discussed in Chapter 9 (Section 2), and see the use of confession discussed in BeDuhn, 'Manichaean Weekly Confession'. Confession is not documented at Kellis, but mention of it occurs in Psalm 222, a psalm partly preserved in T.Kellis 11 Copt. 4a. Some evidence for trans-local ties, mostly informal, can be found for associations, but it is very sparse. See Richard S. Ascough, 'Translocal Relationships among Voluntary Associations and Early Christianity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1997).

22 Richard S. Ascough, 'Greco-Roman Philosophic, Religious, and Voluntary Associations' in *Community Formation in the Early Church and in the Church Today*, ed. Richard N. Longnecker (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 7–8.

23 Its structure clearly drew on a variety of sources, both for the hierarchy and for the Elect-Auditor division. The Marcionite community has been suggested as a central mediator of Christian influence, and an inspiration for its bipartite division and use of 'bishops' (e.g. Puech, *Sur le manichéisme*, 253–54; Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 32–37). But Manichaean 'cosmic' concerns have also been suggested: Tardieu (*Manichaeism*, 59) pointed to a possible astrological aspect to the division 12 Teachers, 72 bishops, and 360 presbyters (the latter number found in the eastern tradition), an argument that has been more fully developed by Leurini, who links it to Manichaean divinities ('The Manichaean Church between Earth and Paradise', in *New Light on Manichaeism*, ed. Jason D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2009); *The Manichaean Church*, 91–157). Both interpretations now receive support from the Dublin *Kephalaia*, which contains a chapter where Mani is asked by Gundesh, a sage, to explain the structure of the community (specifically, the institution of 12 Teachers and 72 bishops). BeDuhn notes: 'Mani connects these ranks both with the two groups of disciples that Jesus selected (in Luke and the Diatessaron), and with hierarchies of angels.' BeDuhn, 'Parallels', 70. The 'Elchasaite' sect of Mani's youth (or similar groups of 'baptists') was also a source of influence. The Abbasid historian al-Ma'sūdi claimed that 'the Christians took some of these (ecclesiastical) offices from the Šābians; the Manichaeans did (likewise) with that of "priest," "deacon," and the rest, although not those of the "electi," "auditores," etc.' Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 208; see also Koenen, 'Manichäische Klöster', 99–100; Reeves, 'The "Elchasaite" Sanhedrin'; Stanley F. Jones, 'The Book of Elchasaï in its Relevance for Manichaean Institutions', *ARAM* 16 (2004). The leadership structure found in some Qumran texts has been considered the closest parallel for the early Christian church structure as well, providing perhaps a common source for Christians and Manichaeans (Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 495). There are good reasons to see the main feature, Mani's division between 'Elect' and 'Auditor', as influenced by Indian traditions, either by way of writers like Bardaisan or by his own encounters with Indian ascetics, as seen in the particular way the role of the Elect was developed. See Deeg and Gardner, 'The Case of Jainism'; Dille, 'Mani's Wisdom', 50.

Manichaean one – and which, when later paired with the Roman state apparatus, developed into a highly effective organisation for its time.²⁴ Others, such as the Jewish patriarchate, represent a similar tendency in the same period.²⁵

These developments had consequences on the level of the individual, not least in that the emergence of new social institutions is strongly linked with the production of religious identities. As James Rives has pointed out:

With respect to religious identity, then, what really distinguished classical antiquity from late antiquity, the world of Plutarch from that of Julian, was thus not a change in the inner experience of the individual or even the availability of religious choices that entailed profound implications for a person's worldview and way of life; it was rather the existence of social structures that forced individuals to accept those implications, publicly if not always personally.²⁶

This should not be taken to mean that religious identity was only a question of imposition from above. It must be remembered that authoritative discourses are always produced by specific institutions located within wider networks of power, which, in the case of the Manichaeans, required voluntary participation. While Christian bishops, in the later fourth century, could use the tools of the Roman government to bolster their authority, other movements never attained such influence. The authority of Manichaean

24 For the growth of Christian institutions up to the fourth century, see Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 493–517; Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 304–6; Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 24–37. The growth of episcopal power in the wake of Constantine's support for the Church can for instance be seen in the subordination of funerary associations to bishops by Constantine and later emperors, see Sarah E. Bond, 'Mortuary Workers, the Church, and the Funeral Trade in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6, no. 1 (2013). For episcopal influence in the fourth century in general, see e.g. Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion*.

25 It is generally agreed that the Jewish patriarchate began to assert itself within the Jewish community by the final quarter of the second and early third century CE at the latest, under Yehudah ha-Nasi (Judah the Patriarch), although there is considerable disagreement concerning its development and influence. See David M. Goodblatt, 'The Political and Social History of the Jewish Community in the Land of Israel, c.235–638', in *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 417–23. Whether the patriarch succeeded is of lesser import here; the central argument is that the patriarchate's development parallels attempts among Christians and Manichaeans to develop nominally centralised, trans-local organisations (originally) outside a political framework, using religious authorities – Rabbis – as officials, even if the relationship between the patriarchate and the Rabbis is also a somewhat contentious matter; see *ibid*.

26 Rives, 'Religious Choice', 280.

Elect was dependent on the laity's voluntary appropriation of their institutions: they had no mechanisms for imposing almsgiving, prayer, confession, or belief in Light Souls. The laity themselves must have found appeal in what these institutions offered: new forms of individual and communal self-practices, new techniques for gaining access to divine power, and participation in wider social networks with a shared sense of identity. And while Frankfurter is correct in pointing out that local appropriation would often be driven by local concerns,²⁷ we should not underestimate the dialectical relationship through which institutions could shape the way such concerns were conceived of.

Certainly, there were limits to their ability to shape identities and practices, as has previously been discussed. We should be careful not to mistake the 'Manichaean Church' of Egypt for a bounded or finished entity, an identical copy of the 'mother church' in Mesopotamia. The spread of religious movements always involves processes of 'interpretation, localisation, and indigenisation', to borrow a phrase from Frankfurter.²⁸ Re-making 'Manichaeism' in a Roman, in an Egyptian, or in an Oasite context entailed translations and compromises, conscious and unconscious adaptations, in which local networks played their part. Maintaining what authorities took to be central features would have required constant attention to local conditions as well as boundaries of identity. Yet, 'localisation' was not the only force at work. The interlinked nature of the organisations, and the reproduction of texts and institutional templates, made sure that change happened in continuous dialogue with existing traditions, as the finds from Kellis attest to. They also highlight how widespread this process was. The existence of a Manichaean community in a remote area of Egypt, established without state support and less than a century after the movement's founding in distant Mesopotamia, showcases the wide reach of these social organisations. The emergence of the new social sphere of 'religion' was felt even on the village level. Its consequences would ripple through the Mediterranean world and beyond.

4 The Fate of the Church

As one of the reasons for why his Church was superior to all others, the Berlin *Kephalaia* presents Mani as saying: 'My church will remain henceforth and be unveiled through the world ... it has attained its fastness and cannot be shaken,

²⁷ Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

continuing on till the end of the world'.²⁹ Despite its relative success, the Church did not remain fixed, nor did it last until the end of the world. Its dissolution may have begun already in the fifth century. Peter Brown was probably correct in identifying changes in trading patterns and the growth in Christian episcopal power in the fifth and sixth centuries as central factors in the decline, along with hostility from the Roman state.³⁰ Such changes made it increasingly difficult for adherents to disseminate literature, for Elect to find gathering places or safe havens of support, and for the maintenance of trans-regional or even trans-local contact between communities. It is highly unlikely that contact between Manichaeans in, for instance, Egypt and Mesopotamia would have survived long into this period. Nonetheless, much work on Manichaeism remains to be done. Forthcoming volumes of the remaining Medinet Madi codices will undoubtedly add much to our knowledge of the history, ideas, and self-understanding of the Manichaean Church. Textual material from Kellis remains unpublished and perhaps undiscovered, as do material from neighbouring sites such as Ain el-Gedida, Mut, and Amheida. New finds may occasion a need to revisit the prosopography and other arguments proposed here.

Kellis appears to have been abandoned around 400 CE. What happened to the Manichaean community there remains unknown. The people we have glimpsed in the House 1–3 archive probably lived on, settling elsewhere in the Oasis, or in Aphrodito or other places in the Nile Valley, but we do not know whether or for how long they maintained support for the 'Holy Church'. The evidence for Manichaeans in Egypt in general fades away at this time. The later developments and eventual demise of Manichaeism in Egypt go undocumented. A seventh-century patriarch of the Coptic Christian Church, Benjamin of Alexandria, recounts a story about two travelling Manichaeans who were executed by the dux of Egypt in 643 CE, but its veracity cannot be ascertained.³¹ According to ibn al-Nadim, an 'African' named Abu Hilal al-Dayhuri was appointed leader (i.e. *archegos*) of the Manichaeans in Iraq during the caliphate of al-Mansur (754–775 CE). His epithet probably signifies an origin in Egypt: it does not, however, prove the continuous existence of the Church here from the fourth century.³²

In 527, during the last major persecution of Manichaeans in the Roman Empire, a leader of the Manichaeans named Photeinos was brought out in chains and forced to debate a leading theologian, Paul, in the city of

29 1 Ke. 371.31–372.10 (abbreviated), trans. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 266.

30 Brown, 'Diffusion of Manichaeism'.

31 See Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 123.

32 See Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 266 n.78.

Constantinople.³³ If this account has historical veracity, as is generally accepted, Photeinos likely presided over the last vestiges of a Manichaean Church in the Roman Empire. The Church survived in Mesopotamia and Iran for yet another three centuries. Persecutions under the Abbasids weakened it, made it increasingly reliant on ties to Central Asia, and in the end put it to flight.³⁴ But even if the larger 'Church' disappeared, pockets of adherents may have survived in specific localities; remains of networks similar to those of the Manichaean families in fourth-century Kellis.

33 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Roman Empire*, 171–73; Byard Bennet, 'Paul the Persian', *Encyclopedia Iranica Online* (2003), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/paul-the-persian>.

34 For persecutions of Manichaeans by Abbasid authorities as described in Arabic sources, starting with those of the caliph al-Mahdi (775–785), see Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 235ff. The later history of the Manichaean Church in Mesopotamia and Iran is chiefly known from the reliable account of al-Nadim. He recounts a schism between the Mesopotamian and Sogdian branches in the early seventh century, in continuation of a conflict from the sixth century, that was only finally healed under the *imam* (archegos) Abu Sa'īd Raha (see Dodge, *The Fihrist*, II, 793). Flügel quotes an Iranian Muslim scholar, Shahrastani, who put Raha as active in 884 (Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre*, 328). According to al-Nadim, the *imam* left Mesopotamia altogether shortly afterwards. He had, however, still known 'about three hundred of them (i.e. Manichaeans)' in Baghdad at the time of the governor Mu'izz al-Dawlah (946–67), i.e. in the mid-tenth century CE; but says that at the time of writing (c.990 CE): 'there are not five of them in our midst', trans. Dodge, *The Fihrist*, II, 803. At this time, the Manichaeans were mainly located in Rustaq (in northern Afghanistan?), Samarkand, Sughd (Sogdia), and especially Tunkath (near Tashkent). The leadership had apparently re-located to Samarkand.

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