Remarks on the Manichaean *Book of Giants*

Once Again on Mahaway’s Mission to Enoch

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Vengir žinir tifá òtt, bera
žig svo yfir haf og land

Wings of yours that beat so fast, soaring
Over mountains and ocean waves

--- Ólaf Arnalds, *Súf birki*

I. Introduction

The Manichaean *Book of Giants* is found in several lists of Mani’s canonical works.\(^1\) We have evidence that the mythical accounts that have parallels in the *Book of Giants* from Qumran were subjected to a meticulous Manichaean interpretation, linking the macrocosmic events to microcosmic psychological observations.\(^2\) In a groundbreaking paper Henning was the first scholar who identified fragments surviving in Middle Persian and Sogdian and one Old Uyghur leaf\(^3\) from the *Book of Giants* and several excerpts from this work and allusions to it in Manichaean literature.\(^4\) A Parthian version was discovered later.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Werner Sundermann, “Giants, the Book of,” *Elr* 10:592a–94b (592a).


\(^3\) For further Old Uyghur fragments see Jens Wilkens, “Neue Fragmente aus Manis Gigantenbuch,” *ZDMG* 150 (2000): 133–76.


The most well-known Old Uyghur fragment from the Book of Giants is the one bearing the signature Mainz 317 (T I; TM 423d.4). It was first published by Le Coq and later re-edited by Bang, but it was Henning who identified it as belonging to the Book of Giants. Henning also provided a fresh translation into English. Bang reversed the order of the pages in Le Coq's edition but with good reasons Henning re-established the original sequence of the recto and verso. Henning also identified for the first time the person called horb urbaran in the text with Enoch. Bang had speculated that horb urbaran could perhaps refer to Mani.

The manuscript Mainz 317 is damaged but most sentences are clearly legible. This does not mean that the leaf does not pose several philological problems. In the following the fragment is re-examined and, at the end of this essay, a new transcription and translation are provided. In addition, the contents of Mainz 317 are interpreted with reference to a broader context. Some new readings have to be discussed in greater detail. Many open questions remain and alternative explanations are sometimes possible.

III. Preliminary Textual Remarks

1. The verb āsr(u) - āsr(u)-

The first problematic word is to be found in the third line which is now best interpreted as āsr(u)lmattu or āsr(u)lmattu, "without being carried over." The verb āsr(u)- is attested in the eleventh century Islamic work of Mahmūd al-Kāshgārī entitled Diwān Ḭūyat at-Turk (Compendium of the Turkic Languages). The Diwān Ḭūyat at-Turk is written in Arabic with copious examples from several Turkic languages and dialects. The verb under discussion is quoted in the following sentence: yūk Ḭūyāt āsruldi ("The load was carried over the pass").

6 Deutscher der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Orientabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz.
7 Albert von Le Coq, Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho III (APAW.PH 1922.2; Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1922), 23.
8 Willi Bang, "Manichäische Erzählter," Le Muséon 44 (1931): 1-36 (13-14). A facsimile of the verso (recto according to Bang) is provided on Taf. 1.
9 It is fragment B in his edition. See Henning, "The Book of the Giants," 65 (128) (the second page number refers to this article in Henning's Selected Papers, Volume I). Note also the essay in this volume by Matthew Goff.
10 Bang, "Manichäische Erzählter," 15.
12 Le Coq, Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho III, 23 (text no. 8, VIII).
13 Klaus Röhborn (Uigurisches Wörterbuch. Sprachmaterial der vorsamischen türkischen Texte aus Zentralasien. Neubearbeitung I. Verben. Band I: Ab - azigiqa [Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010]), 96, s.v. āsr(u) - tentatively interprets this word as āsr(u)- II ("hängen, aufgehängt sein") (correcting Henning's assumption that the verb should be āsr(u)- I ("to increase"). On p. 88 the sentence is understood as follows: orð(os) āsr(u)lmattu tagēn tār[i] ("der Palast [der Sonne] begann zu rollen, ohne oben aufgehängt zu sein [7]”).
19 Fragment XXI (U258 verso) in Peter Zieme, "A Turkish Text on Manichaean Cosmogony," in Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale di Studi "Manichesimo e Oriente Cristiano".

II. The Old Uyghur Fragment Mainz 317

In chapter 72 of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch six doors each on the eastern and the western horizon, through which the sun has to pass every day, are mentioned. Henning has already remarked in a footnote to the Manichaean Uyghur text that according to chapters 72 and following of 1 Enoch "there are 182 doors in the east one of which is opened each morning for the sun to pass through." The number of doors should, however, be reconsidered. In a cosmological text in Old Uyghur, six thresholds each and thirty bazaars and twelve rows are mentioned. The editor compares this information with the Middle Persian hymn M67 dedicating