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MIDDLE IRANIAN TERMS IN THE XIAPU CHINESE TEXTS: FOUR ASPECTS OF THE FATHER OF GREATNESS IN PARTHIAN

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Abstract

The Chinese Manichaean texts discovered in Xiapu, Fujian contain several Middle Iranian forms transcribed into Chinese characters. In this paper, the forms in question are collected from the published texts and an attempt is made to identify them with their original forms. Then, the system of transcription is inquired into, which will shed light on the date when the transcription was made. Slight differences are noted between the forms attested in the Dunhuang texts and those in the Xiapu texts, including that of Mani's mother's name.

INTRODUCTION

Since October 2008 a considerable number of Chinese Manichaean texts originating from Xiapu 霞浦 district, Fujian 福建 in China have come to light and a number of articles discussing them have been published.¹ These manuscripts have been kept by the descendants of local priests and many of the manuscripts seem to date back to the Qing Dynasty (1616-1912). Remains of the Manichaean temples and inscriptions found in Fujian as well as historical records concerning the local Manichaeism are extensively discussed by Ma Xiaohe.² However, as far as I can see, no exhaustive list of the entire corpus has been made public and none of them has been edited entirely. Thus, at least for the time being, those who have no access to the originals do not know even the exact number of these very late Chinese Manichaean texts.

1. TWO ASPECTS OF XIAPU MANICHAEAN TEXTS

So far two aspects of these materials seem to have been highlighted. One is to emphasize how faithfully they preserve the texts they inherited from the Tang time. In particular, some hymns of the so-called Hymnscroll discovered in Dunhuang have almost identical counterparts in one text entitled Moni Guangfo 摩尼光佛, cf. Lin Wushu, 'Xiapu Keiben "Xiabuzan" Shiwen Bianyi [Textual Differences of the

¹ Kósa Gábor circulated an exhaustive list of the relevant publications during his presentation at IAMS 2013: Bibliography of the new findings from Xiapu (Fujian)". I have greatly benefited from the bibliography. Unfortunately, as one can see from the bibliography, no report of the materials in the languages other than Chinese has so far been published. For the brief overview of the manuscripts and their discovery see YANG Fuxue, 'Leshantang Shenji yu Fujian Monijiao 《乐山堂神记》与福建摩尼教 — 霞浦与敦煌吐鲁番等摩尼教文献的比较研究 [The 'Spirit Records of the Leshan Hall' and Manichaeism in Fujian – a comparative study of the Manichaean literature from Xiapu, Dunhuang and Turfan]', *Wenshi* 97 (2011), no. 4, 135-73, esp. 137-38.

² Cf. MA Xiaohe 馬小鶴, 'Remains of the Religion of Light in Xiapu (霞浦) County, Fujian Province', *Ou-Ya Xuekan* 歐亞學刊 9 (2009) 81-108. [Republished in: S.G. Richter, C. Horton and K. Ohlhafer (eds.), *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*, NHMS 88 (Leiden, 2015) 228-58.]

Hymnscroll in the Xiapu Ritual Documents]’, *Shijie Zongjiao Yanjiu* 2012(3) 170-178.³ Moreover, as I drew attention in my article on Mani’s birth scene published in 2012, this text describes Mani’s boyhood as follows:⁴

四歲出家十三歲成道⁵

Mani renounced his secular life in his age of four and when he was thirteen years old he attained enlightenment.

This information agrees very well with the western traditions found in the *Cologne Mani-Codex* (= CMC) and in al-Bīrūnī’s *Athar*. Thus, one reads in page 12 of the CMC as follows: “In this way from the age of four until the time when I reached my physical prime, I was (secretly) kept in safe ...”, cf. Ian Gardner and Sam Lieu, *Manichaeism: Texts from the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 49. For the age of thirteen, al-Bīrūnī, referring to the *Shābūraqān* or *Shābuhragān*, states as follows: “Revelation came when he was thirteen years old ...”.⁶ Curiously, however, one does not find this information in the relevant part of the *Compendium*, the Dunhuang Chinese text of 731 CE.⁷ Thus, it is reasonable to suppose that during the Tang Dynasty there existed more Chinese Manichaean texts than the three discovered in Dunhuang and several small fragments unearthed from Turfan; the detailed narrative of Mani’s birth must have been included in one of them, which had later lost or destroyed as the result of severe persecution. The most likely candidate is the *Erzong jing* 二宗經 “Sūtra of the two principles” or the *Erzong Sanji jing* 二宗三際經 “The Sūtra of the two principles and three moments”, which is supposed to be the Chinese version of Mani’s *Shābuhragān*. The scripture in question, which was brought to China as early as in 694 CE, is known to have once been included in the Taoist canon, cf. Sam Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 114, 148.⁸

In this connection it is worth mentioning that the fourth Chinese Manichaean text from the Dunhuang cave has recently been discovered among the Chinese manuscripts housed in the National Library of China, Beijing. See Cao Ling, ‘Dunhuang Yishu “Foxing Jing” Canpian Kao [A Study of a Fragment of “The Sūtra on Buddha-Nature” Discovered among the Dunhuang Chinese Texts]’, *Zhunghua Wenshi Luncong* 中華文史論叢 2012(3) 309-37.⁹ As Cao Ling 曹凌 argues, the text, though not complete, contains the title *Foxing jing* 佛性經 and is to be identified with one sūtra entitled *Mile Moni foshuo kaiwu foxing jing* 弥勒摩尼佛說開悟佛性經 “Sūtra expounded by Maitreya Mani the Buddha for explicitly

³ For this observation see also YUAN Wenqi 元文琪, ‘Fujian Xiapu Monijiao Keyi Dianji Zhongda Faxian Lunzheng 福建霞浦摩尼教科儀典籍重大發現論證 [On a Significant Discovery of Manichaean Ritual Documents from Xiapu (Fujian)]’, *Shijie Zongjiao Yanjiu* 世界宗教研究 2011(5) 169-80.

⁴ YOSHIDA Yutaka 吉田豊, ‘Mani no Kôtanzu ni tsuite マニの降誕図について [On Mani’s Birth-Scene]’, *Yamato Bunka* 大和文華 124 (2012) 1-10, esp. 10.

⁵ The Chinese text is found in YUAN Wenqi, ‘Fujian Xiapu’, 177.

⁶ The English translation is cited from J.C. REEVES, *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism* (Sheffield–Oakville, 2011) 28.

⁷ See G. HALOUN and W.B. HENNING, ‘The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light’, *Asia Major*, NS, 3/ii (1952) 184-212, with 4 plates.

⁸ On the introduction of this scripture into China see E. CHAVANNES and P. PELLIOU, ‘Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine’, *Journal Asiatique* (1913) 99-199, esp. 151.

⁹ I am grateful to Dr. Ma Xiaohe who drew my attention to this article.

understanding the Buddhahood". The latter is listed among the titles of apocryphal Buddhist sūtras collected in the *Kaiyuan Shijiao Lu* 開元釈教錄 compiled in 730 CE.

Another aspect of the Xiapu texts highlighted by the Chinese scholars is how much these texts have been Sinicized and have adopted elements of the local Chinese cultures and religions, in particular Taoism. Many of the texts are collections of prayers called *keyiben* 科儀本 "ritual manual" and employed for incantation and funeral ceremonies. In one text studied by Ma Xiaohe, Manichaeic deities such as *Moni* 摩尼 or Mani, *Yishu* 夷数 or Jesus, *Tianguang Wangfo* 電光王佛 "Buddha King of Lightening", the Chinese designation of Light Maiden, etc. are invoked side by side with other Taoist, Buddhist and local deities and guardian spirits.¹⁰ This is no wonder, if one takes into consideration more than thousand yeas of severe persecution without being acquainted with first hand Manichaeism, while almost intact survival of some ancient texts and traditions is more than astonishing. One may well be curious to know how faithfully Iranian terms phonetically transcribed in Chinese characters like *Moni* and *Yishu* for *yišō* are represented in these materials.

2. TRANSCRIPTIONS OF IRANIAN TERMS FOUND IN THE XIAPU TEXT

In one of his articles Ma Xiaohe draws attention to several very intriguing Iranian or non-Chinese designations of deities encountered in a short text called "Zantian wang" 贊天王 "Hymn dedicated to Heavenly God" contained in one of the Xiapu texts, now generally referred to as *Moni guangfo*.¹¹ Among them are the name of Rex Honoris and those of the four archangels, which are as follows:¹²

阿薩漫沙	e sa man sha	*â sât muân ša	'sm'n š'h [asmān šā(h)]
盧縛逸	lu fu yi	*luo b'iwak iēt	rwp'yl, rwf'yl [rufaēl]
彌訶逸	mi he yi	*mjie xâ iēt	myx'yl, myh'yl [mīhaēl]
娑羅逸	suo luo yi	*sâ lâ iēt	sr'yl [sraēl]

Although Ma Xiaohe proposes to see a Sogdian form *'sm'n xšyō* "lit. king of heaven" behind *e sa man sha* 阿薩漫沙, it is a simple *lapsus* for the Middle Persian/Parthian counterpart: **'sm'n š'h*, which, nevertheless, has not been attested in the surviving Western Iranian texts.¹³

Ma Xiaohe correctly noticed that *gbr'yl* has been omitted from the text simply by error. According to him the four angels occur again in two prayers found in another Xiapu text named *Xingfu Zuqing Danke* 興福祖慶誕科 and there they appear in two different

¹⁰ See MA Xiaohe, 'Remains', 94-103.

¹¹ Cf. MA Xiaohe, 'Monijiao Shitianwang Kao 摩尼教十天王考 [A study of the King of Ten Heavens in Manichaeism]' in ZHU Yuqi 朱玉麒 (ed.), *Xiyu wenshi* 西域文史 (*The Western Regions Literature & History*), Vol. 5 (Beijing, 2010) 119-130.

¹² In the list Chinese forms are followed by their pinyin forms, Middle Chinese forms reconstructed by B. KARLGRÉN in his *Grammata Seica Recensa* (Stockholm: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1957), corresponding Middle Iranian names in Manichaeic script accompanied by their transcriptions. Middle Iranian forms are cited from D. DURKIN-MEISTERERNST, *Dictionary of Manichaeic Middle Persian and Parthian*, DMT III/1 (Turnhout, 2004).

¹³ Designations of the Manichaeic deities encountered in the Turfan Iranian texts were exhaustively collected and analyzed by W. SUNDERMANN, 'Namen von Göttern, Dämonen und Menschen', *AoF* 6 (1979) 95-133.

forms, either with or without a final character *luo* 羅. The more complete and, in my mind, correct forms are as follows:¹⁴

盧縛逸羅 lu fu yi luo [rufaēl(ā)]	*luo b'iwak iēt lâ	rwp'yl	rwf'yl
弥訶逸羅 mi he yi luo [mihaēl(ā)]	*mjie_xâ iēt lâ	myx'yl,	myh'yl
業縛羅逸羅 ye fu luo yi luo	*ngiəp b'iwak iēt lâ	gbr'yl [gabraēl(ā)]	
娑羅逸羅 suo luo yi luo	*sâ lâ iēt lâ	sr'yl [sraēl(ā)]	

Since I myself once collected and studied all the phonetically transcribed Middle Iranian terms attested in the three Dunhuang Manichaean Chinese texts, this report of Ma Xiaohe was really astonishing; the Xiapu texts now provide fresh materials for the study.¹⁵ As a matter of fact the five forms just discussed have not been encountered in the Dunhuang texts. But the system of the phonetic transcription is basically the same in that its basis of transcription is the pronunciation of Middle Chinese rather than later Chinese like early Mandarin. This is clearly seen in *ye fu luo yi luo* 業縛羅逸羅 standing for *gbr'yl*, because the character *ye* 業, whose Middle Chinese form is **ngiəp* and early Mandarin **je*, represents a syllable [gab].¹⁶ As a whole the transcriptions are correct and accurate. Therefore, they are most likely to originate from the texts once existent in the high Tang time or in the 8th century. In fact another form *ju fu* 俱孚 **kiu p'iu* cited from one of the Xiapu texts is identified with *y'kwb* “Jacob” by Ma Xiaohe, who assumes abbreviation of 耶俱孚 **ia kiu p'iu* found in the *Hymnscroll*.¹⁷ For that matter *moni* 摩尼 and *yishu* 夷教 mentioned above are identical with those found in the Dunhuang texts.

3 PHONETICALLY TRANSCRIBED HYMNS IN THE XIAPU TEXTS

3.1 Text of the *Sijizan* 四寂讚

All these phonetic transcriptions of Iranian terms certainly raise the hope that real Iranian hymns are also found in the Xiapu texts. In fact one hymn entitled *Sijizan* 四寂讚 “Hymn of Four Calmnesses” was already mentioned by Ma Xiaohe in his earlier article published in 2010; he cites a few forms from the hymn and compared them with some transcriptions found in the second phonetically transcribed hymn of the Dunhuang *Hymnscroll* once studied by the present author.¹⁸ Later I came to know

¹⁴ For discussion of the word final [ā] see below.

¹⁵ See YOSHIDA Yutaka, ‘Kanyaku Manikyō Bunken ni okeru Kanjionshasareta Chūsei Irango ni tsuite 漢訳マニ教文献における漢字音写された中世イラン語について [Remarks on Manichaean Middle Iranian Terms Transcribed in Chinese Script]’, *Studies on Inner Asian Languages* 2 (1986 [1987]), 1-15 with tables.

¹⁶ For the Early Mandarin form see E.G. PULLEYBLANK, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver, 1991).

¹⁷ Cf. MA Xiaohe, ‘Remains’, 98. It is equally possible, in my opinion, to see the former as the corruption of the latter in the course of textual transmission.

¹⁸ Cf. MA Xiaohe, ‘Remain’, 93-95. Ma repeats his observation in yet another article published in the same year: MA Xiaohe, ‘Monijiao “Xiabuzan” Diershou Yinyishi Yishi 摩尼教《下部讚》第二首音譯詩譯釋 [Interpretation and Commentary of the Second Phonetic Hymn of the Manichaean “Hymnscroll”]’, in *Tianluluncong – Beimei Huaren Dongya Tushuguan Yuan Wenji 天祿論叢 – 北美華人東亞圖書館文集 [Collected Essays on Chinese Studies by East Asian Studies Librarians in North America]* (Guangxi, 2010) 65-89. For my work on the *Hymnscroll*, see Y. YOSHIDA, ‘Manichaean Aramaic in the Chinese *Hymnscroll*’, *BSOAS* 46 (1983) 326-331.

that a small photograph of the hymn was already published by Chen Jinguo and Lin Jun in 2009.¹⁹

As noticed by Ma Xiaohe and the two joint authors just mentioned “the four calmnesses or tranquilities” represents the four well-known aspects of the Father of Greatness: God, Light, Power, and Wisdom.²⁰ Thus, there seem to be a good chance to restore the corresponding Iranian verses from the transcriptions. First I give my text of the entire hymn. As far as I can see from the photograph there is practically no problem in identifying the Chinese characters except for the second character in column 12, which looks like either *sha* 沙 or *bing* 冰. The published photograph is so reduced in size that I cannot read three small characters in column 1 placed under the title of the hymn 四寂讚, which are not likely to be a part of the hymn itself but a kind of commentary for those who recite it.²¹

- 1 四寂讚
- 2 奧和匄賀廬訖嵯鶻羅²²而哩
- 3 弗哪嵯里能阿淡渾湛摩和夷
- 4 数謹你門乎弥特末羅摩尼弗
- 5 里悉德徒那代醯潭摩阿訶
- 6 特伽稽羅縛居陣那南無波耶
- 7 特羅緩步而代醯潭摩阿訶特
- 8 伽稽羅縛居陣那南無波耶馱
- 9 羅緩步而戒月結
- 10 阿佛哩特菩和末羅摩尼里在
- 11 伽度師伽度師勿那阿羅緩那
- 12 菩*沙遮伊但伽度師

3.2 Previous identifications

As Ma Xiaohe has already noticed, several combinations found in phonetic hymn have been attested in the Dunhuang texts. They are *yishu* 夷数 (ll. 2-3) for *yyšw* “Jesus” and *moni* 摩尼 (l. 3) for *m’ny* “Mani”. He also correctly compares *qie du shi* 伽度師 of lines 10 and 11 with *qie lu shi* 伽路師 found in the *Hymnscroll*, which transcribes an Aramaic word *k’dwš* [kādūš] “holy”. While the initial consonant of *lu* 路 (MC **luo*) of the Dunhuang form corresponds to a post vocalic *d*, which was pronounced as a fricative sound, i.e. [ð], the Xiapu counterpart shows *du* 度 (MC **d’uo*) instead. This difference seems to indicate that the system of transcription

¹⁹ See CHEN Jinguo 陈进国 and LIN Jun 林隳, ‘Monijiao de Xinfaxian — Fujian Xiapu Xian Monijiao Shiji Bianxi 明教的新发现 — 福建霞浦县摩尼教史迹辨析 [New Manichaean Discoveries — an Analysis of the Relics of Manichaeism in Xiapu County, Fujian]’, in LI Shaowen 李少文 (ed.), *Bu Zhi Yu Yi — Zhongyang Meiyuan ‘Yiwen Ketang’ Mingjia Jiangyan Lu* 不至于艺 — 中央美术学院“艺文课堂”名家讲演录 [More Than Art — Lectures by famous scholars at the “Literary Master-Classes” of the Central Institute of Art] (Beijing, 2009) 343-389 [378].

²⁰ On the Chinese Manichaean term *siji* 四寂 see also G.B. MIKKELSEN, *Dictionary of Manichaean texts in Chinese*, DMT III/4 (Turnhout, 2006) 65a.

²¹ In his personal communication Dr. Ma Xiaohe was kind enough to share with me his reading of this short comment: *songfo yong* 送佛用 “(used) for sending off the Buddhas”.

²² A few characters provided with an additional radical 口 meaning “mouth” are not found in dictionaries. This practice of adding 口 is often observed among the characters employed to phonetically transcribe foreign sounds, cf. YOSHIDA, ‘Manichaean Aramaic’, 328, n. 17. They are in most cases homophones with those without the radical. In this study, I give the Middle Chinese forms reconstructed for the characters without the radical.

differs from each other, and that the Xiapu system is slightly earlier than the Dunhuang one. Since the voiced stops of early Middle Chinese changed into voiceless counterparts,²³ the Xiapu material showing the voiced pronunciation of the character appears to be somewhat older. Ma Xiaohe identifies *fu li xi de* 弗里悉德 (MC **p̄iuaet lji siēt tək*) of lines 3-4 with *fo yi se de* 佛夷瑟德 (MC **b'iuat i siēt tək*) found in the “Compendium”, which stands for Parthian *fryštḡ* [frēštḡ] “angel, apostle”.²⁴ This is basically correct but the Middle Chinese form **siēt* of *xi* 悉 instead of *se* 瑟 (MC **siēt*) points to Middle Persian word *prystḡ* [frēstḡ] “id.” rather than Parthian *fryštḡ*.

Comparing line 2 of the hymn with the Middle Persian terms of the second phonetic hymn of the *Hymnscroll* once studied by the present author, he proposes to identify *he lu shen* 賀廬訖 (l. 1) (MC **yâ luo siēn*) with *wu lu shen* 烏廬訖 (MC **uo luo siēn*) standing for *rwsn* [rōšn], *cuo hu Luo* 嗟鶻囉 (l. 1) (MC **dz'â yuæt lâ*) with *zuo lu* 祚路 (MC **dz'uo lu*) representing *zwr* [zōr] “power”, and *er li* 而哩 (MC **ńzi lji*) with *yu xi* 于呬 (MC **j̄iu xji*) corresponding to *whyh* [wihh] “wisdom”. Since the terms for God, Light, Power, and Wisdom are expected to appear in the hymn, this assumption must in principle be correct. Ma Xiaohe suggests that the combination of three characters *ao he fu* 奧和訖 (MC **âu yuâ b'juk*) preceding *he lu shen* 賀廬訖 should represent “god”, and that it is to be compared with *yi Luo he* 醫羅訖 (MC **i lâ xâ*) of the *Hymnscroll*. It is proved to be the transcription of what is spelled ‘yl’h’ in Manichaean script, which most likely means “god”.²⁵

Although his assumption to equate *he lu shen* 賀廬訖 with *wu lu shen* 烏廬訖 seems to be correct, one cannot still explain the difference of the first two characters the two terms: *he* 賀 and *wu* 烏. As I discussed elsewhere, in the Dunhuang texts the Iranian initial *r-* is always preceded by one extra character beginning with a glottal stop, e.g. *e Luo suo di fu duo* 阿羅所底弗多 (MC **â lâ siwo tiei p̄iuaet tâ*) for *r'styft* “righteousness, truth”.²⁶ The characters *e* 阿 and *wu* 烏 represent a prothetic vowel added for making it easy to pronounce the initial *r-* sound, which was not existent in Middle Chinese. If one considers the simple fact that *ao he fu* 奧和訖 and *er li* 而哩 differ so much from *yi Luo he* 醫羅訖 and *yu xi* 于呬 respectively in terms of their both Middle and Modern Chinese pronunciations that something is wrong with Ma Xiaohe’s presumption, and that it is fitting to reconstruct the underlying verse quite differently.

3.3 New approach to the hymn

Now, let us see line one and the first two characters of line 2:

奧	和	訖	賀	廬	訖	嗟	鶻	囉	而	哩
ao	he	fu	he	lu	shen	cuo	hu	luo	er	li
·âu	yuâ	b'juk	yâ	luo	siēn	dz'â	yuæt	lâ	ńzi	lji

弗	那
fu	nuo
p̄iuaet	nâ

²³ On this sound change see E.G. PULLEYBLANK, *Middle Chinese. A Study in Historical Phonology* (Vancouver, 1984) 63-68.

²⁴ On this identification see MIKKELSEN, *DMT* III/4, 103b.

²⁵ This understanding of ‘yl’h’ is basically correct but not without problem. On this term see YOSHIDA ‘Manichaean Hymnscroll’ and DURKIN-MEISTERERENST, *DMT* III/1, 96b.

²⁶ Cf. YOSHIDA, ‘Kanyaku’ 5.

Before investigating the underlying Iranian verse, let us remember that the Middle Persian and Parthian terms for the four aspects the Father of Greatness are *yzd rwšn zwr whyh* [yazad rōšn zōr wihīh] in Middle Persian and *bg rwšn z'wr jyryft* [bag rōšn zāwar žīrīft] in Parthian. It is known from the Dunhuang texts that the Middle Chinese initial sound **ɣw-* or **ɣu-* followed by a vowel as reconstructed by Karlgren often corresponds to Middle Iranian semivowel [w] plus a vowel as in *he* 活 (MC **ɣuât*) representing *w'd* [wād] “wind, spirit”.

Already the Middle Chinese forms of the characters strongly suggest that the underlying verse is not in Middle Persian but Parthian. The following correspondences suggest themselves:

匄賀 *b'juk ɣâ: bg [baɣ]²⁷
 盧訖 *luo ʃien: rwšn [rōšn]
 嵯鶻羅 *dz'â ɣuət lâ: z'wr [zāwar]
 而哩弗那 *ńzi lji piuət nâ: jyryft [žīrīft]

It seems to be obvious that something is wrong with the last character *nuo* 那 (MC **nâ*) of the form representing *jyryft*, and one may assume a miscopying of *duo* 多 (MC **tâ*) as with the transcription of *r'styft* in the Dunhuang text just mentioned above. One may also notice that three out of four transcriptions seem to end with a vowel –*ā*, such as [baɣā], [zāwarā], and [žīrīftā]. This kind of pleonastic final vowel –*ā*, which Henning calls Ruf-Alef, is quite common in the Middle Iranian hymnody.²⁸ In fact difference between the above cited *mi he yi* 弥訶逸 and *mi he yi luo* 弥訶逸羅, etc. appears to be concerned with this vowel. Thus, I venture to propose that originally *lu shen* 盧訖 was followed by such a character as *nuo* 那 or 𠂔那, and that the above assumed miscopying of *nuo* 𠂔那 for *duo* 多 in the transcription of *jyryft* was influenced by that. If I am correct in supposing in this way it is likely that the enigmatic first element also ends with a pleonastic vowel –*ā*. If one remove this element from *ao he* 奧和 (MC **âu ɣuâ*), which could be reconstructed as *awā/ōwā*, we get [*aw] or [*ō(w)] and the solution seems to be obvious: It is a preposition 'w [ō] accompanied by a pleonastic vowel.²⁹

This opportunity may be taken to mention that another version of these four Parthian words, though badly corrupt, is found among magic spells written on a talisman of the Xiapu collection called *qu sha fu* 去殺符 “talisman against murder”:³⁰ ? *wu lu shen chao fa shi li* (MC *? ·uo luo ʃien tʃ'au b'iwet ži lji) [真+天]

²⁷ The postvocalic [g] was pronounced as a fricative [ɣ].

²⁸ Cf. W.B. HENNING, ‘Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch’, *APAW* 1936, No. 10 (Berlin, 1937) 21, n. 1. Boyce calls the vowel “exclamatory final –*ā*, cf. M. BOYCE, *A reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, *AI* 9 (Leiden, 1974) 192-193. In the Xiapu texts, Jesus often appears as *yi shu he* 夷数和 rather than simple *yi shu* 夷数. As it stands, *yi shu he* 夷数和 (MC **i ʃiu ɣwâ*) is likely to stand for [yīšōwā] and I assume it to be provided with a Ruf-Alef. In fact *yyšw'* is actually encountered in a late hymn, cf. BOYCE, *ibid.* and DURKIN-MEISTERERNST, *DMT* III/1, 376a. Differently, LIN Wushu 林悟殊, ‘Xiapu keyiben “Zoujiaozhu” xingcheng niandai kao 霞浦科儀本《奏教主》形成年代考 [On the date of a ritual manuscript from Xiapu: “Memorial to thr religion’s founder”]’, *Jiuzhou Xuelin* 九州學林 31 (2012) 102-135 [115-117].

²⁹ Incidentally, *ao* 奧 also transcribes the same preposition in the second phonetic hymn in the Hymnscroll, cf. YOSHIDA, ‘Manichaean Aramaic’, 327.

³⁰ The talisman is reproduced in CHEN and LIN, ‘Monijiao de Xinfaxian’, 388. This part of the talisman has also been discussed by MA Xiaohe, ‘Monijiao Xiapuzan’.

烏盧誥[言+少]罰時哩.³¹ The first character is supposed to denote “god” but is not attested in the authentic dictionaries.³² Consisting of *zhen* 真 “true” and *tian* 天 “heaven”, it seems to be a vulgar character peculiar to either the locality or to the religious group.³³ The Middle Persian counterpart, i.e. *yzd rwšn zwr* (’wd) *whyh*, is also encountered in one of the Xiapu texts entitled *Moniguangfo* 摩尼光佛 and is cited by Ma Xiaohe: *yi zai lu shen su lu he xi* (MC *i dz’âi luo şjen suo luoywâ xiei) 夷在盧誥蘇路和醯. As Ma Xiaohe has noted, this is quite similar to that found in the *Hymnscroll* once reconstructed by me: *yi sa wu lu shen zuo lu yu yu xi* (MC *i sât ·uo luo şjen dz’uo luo ·iuət jiu xji) 夷薩烏盧誥祚路鬱于四.³⁴ It is interesting to note that a Middle Persian syllable [zad] of *yzd* [yazad] is represented either by *sa* 薩 (MC *sât or by *zai* 在 *dz’âi, and that [zō] of [zōr] is transcribed with *zuo* (MC *dz’uo) 祚 or with *su* (MC *suo) 蘇.³⁵ The transcribers seem to have been hesitant between Middle Chinese initials *dz’- and *s- in representing the foreign sound [z] nonexistent in Middle Chinese. Yet another transcription of Middle Persian [yazad] appears in the *Weishu*, where the information imparted by the envoy of 518 CE dispatched by a Sasanian king Kawād (*juheduo* 居和多) is recorded. There the title of king in Middle Persian is transcribed *yi za* 醫贊 (MC *i dz’ât).³⁶

4. CONCLUSION

In this paper I discussed the introductory phrase of the phonetically transcribed hymn entitled *Sijizan* 四寂讚 found in one of the very late Chinese Manichaean texts recently discovered in Xiapu, Fujian. It has turned out to be the transcription of a Parthian phrase ’w’ *bg’ rwšn’ z’wr’ jyryft’* “To god, light, power, (and) wisdom”, well-known four aspects of the Father of Greatness preceded by the preposition ’w’ “to”. It is also to be noticed that each word is followed by a pleonastic “Ruf-Alef”. Although the text itself was copied sometime during the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), the system of transcription is largely the same, though not identical, as that employed in the Dunhuang Chinese Manichaean texts produced almost thousand years before, most probably in the eighth century. Thus the prototype of the hymn was first composed in the eighth century and has been copied and handed down almost intact to the present day. There remains to restore the rest of the hymn to its original Parthian spelling, but it will require much more space than is allowed in this proceeding and I shall take another occasion to publish my study of the rest of the hymn, part of which is to be identified with a short hymn found in M1367.³⁷

³¹ 時哩 is followed by two characters *hou gan* 喉感 and *suo po he* 娑婆訶 standing for Sanskrit *svāhā*. Although MA Xiaohe neglects the two characters, the entire 時哩喉感 could be a corruption of the original *時哩弗多 standing for *jyryft*.

³² In the talisman it is preceded by 伽度師 standing for *k’dwš*.

³³ One may envisage another possibility that this character was in fact invented in Tang time for representing the Manichaean god. It is well known that *xian* 袂, a unique Chinese character designating the Zoroastrian god, was invented in the seventh century by combining a radical 示 and a character *tian* 天 meaning “heaven”.

³⁴ Curiously, *yu* 鬱 (MC *·iuət) standing for Middle Persian ’wd [ud] “and” does not appear in the Xiapu version, but its reason escapes the present author.

³⁵ Employment of *yi* (MC *ji) 夷 for the initial [ya] seems to indicate such a palatalized pronunciation of the first syllable as [*yizad], etc.

³⁶ Cf. Y. YOSHIDA, ‘Sino-Iranica’, *Seinanajia kenkyū* 西南アジア研究, 48 (1998) 33-51 [34]. Differently, B. LAUFER and other scholars, on which see YOSHIDA, ‘Sino-Iranica’, 34.

³⁷ It will be published in the volume dedicated to the late Professor W. Sundermann.