

*In memory of Alessandro Oreste Leurini
and Gherardo Gnoli
in everlasting gratitude and devotion*

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Claudia Leurini

The Manichaean Church

An Essay Mainly Based on the Texts
from Central Asia



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FOREWORD

The Manichaean Church. An Essay Mainly Based on the Texts from Central Asia comes out of a complex and troubled editorial history. Exactly in the form we read it today, with the exception of the indexes, it was presented by the Author to the Scientific Committee of the Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient (IsIAO), and was accepted for publication in the Serie Orientale Roma (SOR) in 2009. The last two years of life of IsIAO were characterized by deep economic problems, mainly due to the decision by the Italian Government to reduce public support to the Institute below the subsistence level, condemning it to death. This caused a suspension of all scientific and editorial activities of IsIAO. That is why the publication of the work has been delayed for so long. The new ISMEO (re-established in Rome on 19 november 2012 as ISMEO – Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente), that claims a right to the cultural legacy of that prestigious Institute, sets itself in full scientific continuity with the tradition of the late IsIAO also by the publication of this volume, by which a new series continuing the Serie Orientale Roma is inaugurated.

The present monograph by Claudia Leurini is the outcome of her activity during a three-years research fellowship she obtained at the University of Bologna, Dept. of the Cultural Heritage (formerly Dept. of Histories and Methods for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage). During that period she also collaborated with the Turfanforschung at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin, where almost all analyzed materials are stored. This monograph thoroughly deals with the Manichaean Church, its structure, functions and characters, and through the analysis of texts mainly coming from Turfan and Central Asia it shows that Manichaeism was a universal religion that exploiting

the legacy of other religious traditions (Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and, last but not least, Christianity) successfully produced a completely new system and paradigm for the interpretation of life, universe, death and ultimately the destiny of humanity. Under this respect this very accurate work actually offers new perspectives and stimulating clues. This monograph shall be placed in an international context of renovated attention to this subject.

We are certain that The Manichaeian Church fulfils the wish of Gherardo Gnoli, President of IsIAO (and previously of IsMEO), who, after supervising with great patience and generosity its elaboration, was given just the time to attend the suppression of the Institute he had directed for 32 years, but was not able to see the publication of a volume he deeply admired.

MARCO MANCINI
President

ADRIANO V. ROSSI
Scientific Director

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CLAUDIA LEURINI

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