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"Filthy Manichees"

Neil Adkin

Towards the end of his *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (epist. 22)¹ Jerome affirms that all the virgin's exertions are only valid if they take place within the church. The virginity of the heretic on the other hand is worthless. Here Jerome expresses himself in the following terms: *ceterum virgines, quales apud diversas hereses et quales apud impurissimum Manicheum esse dicuntur, scorta sunt aestimanda, non virgines* (38,7).²

It would seem that here we have a good example of the peculiar talent for coarse abuse which resulted from Jerome's unusually violent and

¹ Citation of Latin works follows the method of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index Librorum Scriptorum Inscriptionum*, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1990. For Latin Fathers the editions used are those given in H. J. Frede, *Kirchenschriftsteller: Verzeichnis und Sigel*, Freiburg 1981 (*Vetus Latina* 1/1), and in the same author's *Kirchenschriftsteller: Aktualisierungsheft* 1984, Freiburg 1984 (*Vetus Latina* 1/1A), and *Kirchenschriftsteller: Aktualisierungsheft* 1988, Freiburg 1988 (*Vetus Latina* 1/1B). Greek patristic works are cited according to the conventions adopted in G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961-8, xi-xlv; the editions used are those given in M. Geerard and F. Glorie, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, I-V, Turnhout 1974-87.

² Jerome's phraseology in the first half of the sentence (*apud diversas hereses et...apud impurissimum Manicheum*) reflects a general tendency to distinguish Manichees from other heretics in this period; cf. (e. g.) Ambrose, in psalm. 1,33,7 (*nobis, non haereticis, nobis, non Manicheis*); (?) Basil, calumn. Trin. 4 (ἀίρετικῶν ἐκκλίσεις καὶ Μανιχαίων μανίαί); Pseudo-Chrysostom (= Severian of Gabala), Chan. 2 (ἡ διὰ Μανιχαίους ἢ διὰ αἰρετικούς); Quodvultdeus, haer. 7,20 (*Manichaei confunderentur...haeretici comprimerentur*); ib. 7,26. Manichees are of course regularly described as "heretics" themselves; cf. (e. g.) Philaster 129,1 (*sunt quidam heretici, ut Manichei*). They are mentioned along with Arians, Marcionites and Novatianists in a definition of "heretic" by Cresconius that is quoted in Augustine, c. Cresc. 2,3,4. For the collective singular (*Manicheum*) which Jerome employs here cf. C. Mohrmann, *Quelques traits caractéristiques du latin des chrétiens*, in *Miscellanea G. Mercati*, I, Vatican City 1946 (*Studi e Testi* 121), 953 (= C. Mohrmann, *Etudes sur le latin des chrétiens*, I, Rome 1958, 37).

aggressive nature.³ Opelt has devoted a monograph to Jerome's invective.⁴ In it she omits his Letters; here too however there is abundant evidence of Jerome's gift for vituperation. The ingenuity and viciousness he achieves are particularly well exemplified by Letter 40 (Ad Marcellam de Onaso).⁵ The same epistle contains a review of recent abuse that had caused offence (2,lf.); one of the passages mentioned is from the *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (27,8).

Jerome's *Libellus* includes a number of noteworthy specimens of invective. The first of them concerns loose-living virgins (chs. 13f.); in particular the institution of "spiritual marriage" is assailed. Here Jerome uses the following language: *unde in ecclesias agapetarum pestis introiit? unde sine nuptiis aliud nomen uxorum? immo unde novum concubinarum genus? plus inferam: unde meretrices univirae?* (14,1). Condemnation of this practice was widespread.⁶ However the abuse to which Jerome treats it is marked by a pungency that is unique. The idea itself of "spiritual marriage" as indistinguishable from ordinary wedlock had already occurred in Basil of Ancyra: εἰ γὰρ καὶ μὴ γάμος ἐστὶ τὸ ὄνομα, ἀλλ' ἡ φροντὶς τῶν γεγαμηκότων αὐτοῖς ἐμφυεῖσα... (virg. 43). Jerome proceeds to invest the concept with a vituperative verve of his own: *sine nuptiis aliud nomen uxorum*.⁷ He also adds two further formulations of the same idea that are even more caustic (*novum concubinarum genus* and *meretrices univirae*)⁸. The same phenomenon is to be found in the passage quoted at the start of the present article. When Jerome asserts that heretical virgins are not virgins at all, but rather whores, he is simply taking over

³ S. Seliga, *Quibus contumeliis Hieronymus adversarios carpserit*, *Eos* 34 (1932-3) 395, n. 1, quotes Grützmaker's assessment: "Seine Natur war ihrem ganzen Wesen nach durchaus aggressiv, er hatte geradezu Freude daran, andere zu kränken und zu verletzen" (G. Grützmaker, *Hieronymus: Eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte*, I, Leipzig 1901, repr. Aalen 1969, 275). Cf. also S. Seliga, *De invectiva Hieronymiana*, *Collectanea Theologica* 16 (1935) 145.

⁴ I. Opelt, *Hieronymus' Streitschriften*, Heidelberg 1973.

⁵ On this letter cf. J.-G. Préaux, *Procédés d'invention d'un sobriquet par saint Jérôme*, *Latomus* 17 (1958) 659-64. In it Jerome scoffs at a deformity of his victim's nose.

⁶ Cf. (e. g.) P. de Labriolle, *Le "mariage spirituel" dans l'antiquité chrétienne*, *Revue Historique* 137 (1921) 204-25.

⁷ It is significant that Jerome's phrase is imitated twice; cf. Pseudo-Jerome, *epist.* 42 p. 291^A (*unde sine nuptiis genus novum uxorum?*); Asterius of Ansedunum, *ad Renat.* II. 564-5 (*aliud inducitur nomen uxorum*).

⁸ *Univira* had a strong cachet of commendation; cf. (e. g.) Jerome, *epist.* 77,3,4 (*sub gloria univirae*). Here it produces a stinging oxymoron. The effect is further enhanced by the inversion of Behaghel's law.

an idea that was already traditional, while at the same time imparting to it an entirely novel abusiveness. Chrysostom in particular was fond of stressing that the virginity of the heretic was not merely pointless but also abhorrent. He had opened his *De virginitate* by denying that there was such a thing as a heretical "virgin" (1,1).⁹ Later in the same treatise the chastity of heretics was said to be ἀσελγείας ἀπάσης...χείρων (5,1): the latter involved only men, whereas the heretic's conduct was an affront to God himself. Elsewhere Chrysostom goes so far as to assert that heretical virgins deserve to be punished "like fornicators", because they defame God's creation: τῆ τῶν πορνευόντων δίκη γέγονασιν ὑπεύθυνοι (hom. in Phil. 2,3). It is however noteworthy that neither Chrysostom nor any other Father matches the grossness with which Jerome formulates the idea: *scorta sunt aestimanda*.¹⁰ Again the vehemence of Jerome's vituperation is unique. Erasmus rightly observed that the subject of heresy provoked Jerome to particular mordancy: *Hieronymus haud alibi dicit melius quam ubi male dicit haereticis aut calumniatoribus*.¹¹ This is certainly true here.

It might therefore be supposed that the application of *impurissimus* to the Manichee earlier in the same sentence is a similar instance of Jerome's incomparable talent for abuse. This is evidently Opelt's view.¹² She opens her discussion of anti-Manichean polemic by remarking that "die Ausgliederung des polemischen Wortfeldes ist gegenüber dem anderer Häresien weniger umfangreich, und auch die Termini werden weniger häufig angewendet".¹³ Opelt then examines Jerome's use of *impurus* in the present passage of the *Libellus*. She qualifies the adjective as "grob" and translates it as "dreckig" (144f.). No example from any other author is cited. The final section of Opelt's book then draws together the results of

⁹ The same point is made at exp. in Ps. 44,12.

¹⁰ The occurrences of the idea elsewhere in the Fathers may be enumerated. According to Pseudo-Chrysostom (= Severian of Gabala), hom. in Ps. 95:1,6 heretics cannot win the crown of virginity. Augustine states that a catholic wife is superior to a heretical virgin (in psalm. 90, serm. 2,9); at bon. viduit. 15,19 he goes further and asserts that she is still superior even if married several times. Finally Basil is not prepared to condemn a heretical virgin who subsequently marries (ep. 199,20).

¹¹ The dictum is cited as an epigraph by W. Süss, *Der heilige Hieronymus und die Formen seiner Polemik*, Giessener Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie 60 (1938) 212.

¹² The passage is not discussed in Süss, art. cit. (n. 11), who limits himself to just "die Sphäre des Stinkens" (236f.). It is likewise ignored by Seliga, artt. citt. (n. 3); he merely observes that "adiectivum *impurus* perraro occurrit apud Hieronymum" (art. cit. [n. 3 (1932-3)] 405).

¹³ I. Opelt, *Die Polemik in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur von Tertullian bis Augustin*, Heidelberg 1980, 143.

her study. Here she affirms that "*impurus* trifft die Manichäer bei Hieronymus" (239). The implication of these statements is that Jerome is alone in calling the Manichees "filthy" and that his choice of language is due to the unique virulence of his polemical style.¹⁴ It is the purpose of the present article to show that neither of Opelt's suggestions is correct. On the contrary Jerome is merely availing himself here of a conventional form of expression: it was customary to characterize the Manichee as "filthy".

The "filth" metaphor had of course a wide range of application. Pagan examples of the terms *impurus* and *impuratus* are assembled by Opelt.¹⁵ She also notes Tertullian's use of the "Schmutzmetapher" with reference to the heathen because of their association with unclean spirits.¹⁶ The Jew is also described as *impurus*; however the single instance which Opelt adduces¹⁷ is suggested by the biblical text that is being expounded (John 2,6 *secundum purificationem Iudaeorum*).

"Filthy" is moreover a term of abuse that is applied to other heretics besides the Manichees. The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae cites three passages in which heretics are said to be *immundi* (VII,1 col. 502,72ff.); however the first two of these cases are again allusions to scriptural texts (Numbers 19,22 *quicquid tetigerit immundus, immundum faciet*; II Cor. 6,17 *immundum ne tetigeris*).¹⁸ Opelt does not mention the "filthiness"

¹⁴ No reason is given why the Manichee should have been singled out for such treatment. It might be suggested that Jerome's motive is to be sought in the circumstance that the ascetically-minded were themselves accused of being "Manichees"; earlier in the *Libellus* Jerome had said *quam viderint tristem atque pallentem, miseram et monacham et Manicheam vocant* (13,3; cf. also [Pseudo-]Jerome, epist. 18 p. 57,100-2 *quod si vilibus abstinueris carnibus et non crebro balneas frequentaveris, tunc fere per omnes columnas Manichei tibi titulus adscribetur*). The same charge was later made by Jovinian against Jerome himself: *ex quo manifestum est vos Manichaeorum dogma sectari, prohibentium nubere et vesci cibis, quos deus creavit ad utendum* (adv. Iovin. 1,5). However the supposition that this was Jerome's reason for abusing the Manichees in particularly strong terms will be seen to be unwarranted in the light of the evidence to be adduced below. It was in any case a recognized ploy to label the orthodox with the names of specific heresies; cf. Opelt, op. cit. (n. 13) 172. Jerome himself accuses his opponent of being a "Manichee" at adv. Pelag. 2,1.

¹⁵ Cf. I. Opelt, *Die lateinischen Schimpfwörter und verwandte sprachliche Erscheinungen: Eine Typologie*, Heidelberg 1965, index ss. vv.

¹⁶ Op. cit. (n. 13) 13f.; cf. also ib. 20.

¹⁷ Op. cit. (n. 13) 114; the passage in question is Gaudentius, serm. 9,26.

¹⁸ *Coinmundus* as a term for the heretic in Lucifer of Cagliari, non parc. 7 1. 2 is recorded by I. Opelt, *Formen der Polemik bei Lucifer von Calaris*, Vig. Christ. 26 (1972) 216; again the word has been suggested by a text of scripture (II Chron. 26,19: Uzziah's leprosy).

metaphor in the section she devotes to "Ausdrücke der moralischen Disqualifizierung" in anti-heretical polemic after Tertullian.¹⁹ She does however note that "die Schmutzmetapher gebraucht Cyprian als Bild für die Häretikertaufe" (ib. 124); two passages are cited.²⁰ Elsewhere Opelt observes that Athanasius calls the Arians μεστοὶ ῥύπου.²¹

A number of further instances may be adduced in which the application of the "filth" metaphor is to heretics other than Manichees. Jerome himself calls the heresy of Basilides *spurcissima* (epist. 75,3,1); here he is describing the bizarre cosmology associated with the sect, which he thinks is rife in Spain.²² Eusebius of Caesarea had spoken of the μυσαρωτάτη αίρεσις of the Simonians (h. e. 2,13,8); Rufinus translates *inquinatissimae huius haeresis*. Montanus is labelled ἀκάθαρτος in a work of the Pseudo-Chrysostomic corpus (pseud. 5);²³ this passage also refers to μοιχαλίδες. In addition the same adjective describes the μυστήρια of the sect (ib. 6). A final instance may be cited that is related to the "filth" metaphor, though strictly speaking not an example of it: Theodoret of Cyrhus mentions ἡ Μαρκίωνος σηπεδών.²⁴

This use of "filth" vocabulary in connection with a variety of other heresies is no more than sporadic. The Manichees on the other hand have such language applied to them with a regularity that is remarkable. While moreover in the above cases the opprobrious epithets tended to be employed predicatively, their application to the Manichee is frequently attributive; this is of course the case in the passage from Jerome's *Libellus* with which we began (*impurissimum Manicheum*). "Filthy Manichee" accordingly turns out to be something of a cliché.

¹⁹ Op. cit. (n. 13) 120f.

²⁰ In fact neither is by Cyprian. The first (epist. 75,23) comes from Firmilian of Caesarea and the second (sent. episc. 42) from Iambus of Germanicana (*non...lotos, sed sordidatos*).

²¹ Art. cit. (n. 18) 220, n. 49. The passage is h. Ar. 3,4 (Opelt's reference is wrong). There is no mention of the vocabulary of "filth" in D. Schmitz, *Schimpfwörter in Athanasius' Reden gegen die Arianer*, in *Roma Renascens: Beiträge zur Spätantike und Rezeptionsgeschichte I*. Opelt...gewidmet (ed. M. Wissemann), Frankfurt/M. 1988, 308-20.

²² At adv. Rufin. 3,41 Jerome says of himself: *ilico et impurus ero et haereticus*. However the adjectives pertain to two separate topics: *impurus* relates to Rufinus' allegation of immorality and is unconnected with *haereticus*, which refers to the charge of Origenism.

²³ It may be late; cf. J. A. de Aldama, *Repertorium Pseudochrysostomicum*, Paris 1965, 106f. (no. 288).

²⁴ Ep. 146 p. 176,20f. (ed. Azéma; Sources Chrét. 111).

Thirteen years after his *Libellus de virginitate* Jerome again speaks of *impurissimi Manichei* in a letter to Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria (82,10,2). Here the reference of the adjective is entirely general. Jerome is pointing out that Palestine is full of Jews, various heretics, and Manichees; the term "filthy" is significantly reserved to the last group. One further instance may be adduced from Jerome: in his *Contra Ioannem Hierosolymitanum* (21) he says that even to mention the name "Manichee" is a *pollutio*. In this passage Jerome is referring specifically to the Manichean view that the soul is of the same substance as God.

Jerome, who published his *Libellus de virginitate* in 384, was certainly not the first Latin to attach the "filth" metaphor to the Manichees. At some time between 366 and 378 Ambrosiaster produced in Rome his commentary on the Pauline epistles. In dealing with II Timothy 3,6f. (*ex his sunt enim, qui inrepunt in domos et captivas ducunt mulierculas...*) he notes that this text is especially applicable to the Manichees. The author then proceeds to denounce their hypocrisy, which according to him manifests itself in various forms. Finally he observes that the sect is of recent origin and refers in this connection to the edict of Diocletian which had condemned it in 302.²⁵ The original wording of the relevant section of the decree runs: *audivimus eos (sc. Manichaeos) nuperrime veluti nova et inopinata prodigia in hunc mundum de Persica adversaria nobis gente progressa vel orta esse* (coll. Mos. 15,3,4). Ambrosiaster however paraphrases the text as follows: *quippe cum Diocletianus imperator constitutione sua designet dicens: sordidam hanc et impuram heresim, quae nuper, inquit, egressa est de Persida* (in II Tim. 3,7,2). Here the adjectives *sordida* and *impura* form a very conspicuous addition; in the original decree on the other hand the "filth" metaphor is absent.²⁶

Further evidence is provided by the Donatist schism. When at the very beginning of the fifth century Petilian, the Donatist bishop of Constantine, answered Augustine's reply to his earlier letter warning his clergy against the new catholic bishop of the city, Petilian's response included the assertion that Augustine himself still maintained a secret connection with the Manichees. In dealing with this allegation Augustine

²⁵ For the date cf. S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey*, Manchester 1985, 287, n. 1.

²⁶ At in Phil. 1,1,1 Ambrosiaster calls Manes *immundus* (along with Photinus), because he denies Christ's manhood. There however the word is merely the opposite of *sanctus* in the text under discussion (*omnibus sanctis in Christo Iesu*).

starts with a reference to *Manicheorum immunditiae*: let Petilian do his best to maximize these and try to fix them on his opponent (c. Petil. 3,16,19).²⁷ Augustine then rehearses the various arguments that Petilian had adduced against him. One of them concerns a gift of bread: *eulogias panis simpliciter et hilariter datas ridiculo nomine venenosae turpitudinis ac furoris infamet*. Here Frend compares Augustine's Enarratio in psalm. 140,12, which deals simply with the purgation of the divine substance in bread by the Manichean Elect.²⁸ Courcelle however had suspected a reference to the alleged use of semen.²⁹

Augustine refers to the latter practice in De haeresibus 46,9f., where he mentions "a kind of eucharist smeared with human semen", which was thought to promote the liberation of light by analogy with the Manichean doctrine of the mutual concupiscence of male and female spirits.³⁰ He remarks that the practice was denied by the Manichees themselves and refers in this connection to a separate group called "Catharistae". The accusation was in fact baseless and part of a common stock.³¹ However as early as 348 Cyril of Jerusalem had asked in allusion to the supposed rite: μή οἱ πορνεύοντες τούτων ἀκαθαρτότεροι; (catech. 6,33). It may be noted further that *immunditia* has a sexual connotation when it is applied to the Manichees by Gaudentius of Brescia (serm. 8,8); here however the reference is to their putative promiscuity. Finally in another work of the early fifth century the Manichees are said *per impuritates quae vocant sancta conficere*.³²

²⁷ *Immunditiae* is oddly replaced by *impudicitiae* in B. Quinot, Oeuvres de s. Augustin. 4^e sér., III: Traités anti-donatistes, Paris 1967 (Bibliothèque Augustinienne 30), 812 and id., C. *Litteras Petiliani* III, XL, 48 et le monachisme en Afrique, Rev. Et. Aug. 13 (1967) 23; there is no manuscript authority for this reading. In neither passage does Quinot discuss the precise import of these words.

²⁸ W.H.C. Frend, *Manichaeism in the Struggle between Saint Augustine and Petilian of Constantine*, in *Augustinus Magister*, II, Paris 1954, 863.

²⁹ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, Paris 1950, 239, n. 2 (2nd ed., Paris 1968).

³⁰ Cf. also nat. bon. 47 and mor. Manich. 18,66 (*quod de vobis homines suspicantur*).

³¹ Cf. H.-Ch. Puech, *Sur le manichéisme et autres essais*, Paris 1979, 241f. The Manichees had also been charged with using menstrual blood; cf. C. H. Roberts, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, III: *Theological and Literary Papyri*, Manchester 1938, no. 469, ll. 33ff. (the date is c. 300). Both practices are attributed to Gnostics in Epiphanius, haer. 26,4,5ff.

³² Pseudo-Pacian (= Eutropius Presbyter), *sim. carn.* p. 125,21f. Their *impuritas* is also mentioned in Priscillian, tract. 1,26.

One other work that is inspired by the Donatist controversy may be cited for the application of the "filth" metaphor to the Manichee. This time the reference is quite general. The work in question has been preserved in the anonymous treatise *Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam*, which was written at some time after 411;³³ its author has incorporated the Donatist text, to which his own work is a direct response. This undistinguished³⁴ Donatist identifies the presence within the Catholic church of *manicheorum detestanda sordium feculenta* (p. 201,6). The phrase is part of a list and occurs in conjunction with *diversa schismatum semina* and *haereticorum multimodas pestes*. The "filthiness" metaphor has again been reserved to the Manichee; here it is expressed with the redundancy and inelegance that are characteristic of the writer. This testimony is all the more significant, inasmuch as it represents a level of writing which is considerably inferior to that of the other texts to be considered.

Augustine himself tends to avoid the vocabulary of "uncleanness" in works addressed directly to the Manichees;³⁵ such language is also absent from the *Acta Archelai*, which describe a disputation between a Catholic and a Manichee. In the Pelagian controversy on the other hand Augustine makes copious use of the phraseology of "filth" in connection with the Manichees. His adversary, Julian of Eclanum, also employs the same language. In his *Ad Florum* Julian had alleged that Augustine's teaching coincided with that of Manicheism; Augustine replied with the *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*, in the course of which he made the same charge against Julian. The text of the *Ad Florum* is preserved in Augustine's treatise.

In his opening book Augustine quotes a passage of Saint Ambrose: *omnes homines sub peccato nascimur, quorum ipse ortus in vitio est* (1,115).³⁶ He then adds the following gloss: *hoc non dixit haereticus immundus Manicheus, sed catholicus sanctus Ambrosius*. Here *haereticus immundus Manicheus* forms a striking antithesis to *catholicus sanctus*

³³ Cf. C. Lambot, *L'écrit attribué à S. Augustin Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam*, Rev. Bén. 58 (1948) 184-6; he surmises 430-50.

³⁴ "Demi-lettré" according to P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, VI, Paris 1922, repr. Brussels 1966, 231.

³⁵ At c. Faust. 31,4 he identifies the *inmundi et infideles* of Tit. 1,15 with the Manichees, because they think that matter is unclean and that God is implicated in it (for the same application of the text cf. also ib. 6,3 and 6,8).

³⁶ The Ambrosian passage in question is *paenit.* 1,3,13.

Ambrosius; at the same time this description of the Manichee has an almost formulaic ring that is particularly noteworthy. Augustine employs the same antithesis later: *eligitis adiumenta praeberere impurissimo Manicheo quam sancto acquiescere Ambrosio* (3,187); the topic at issue here is the Manichean view of creation. The collocation *impurissimus Manicheus* is of course the same as occurred in the passage from Jerome's *Libellus* cited at the outset. The superlative of this adjective had also been used by Julian: *Manicheorum scorta dogmatum impurissimorum* (2,9). Julian twice uses *spurcus* of Manichean dualism (3,216 and 5,2); he also refers in this connection to *illuviem sordesque Manichaeas* (5,4).³⁷ Finally Julian had spoken of *pollutissimo Manichaeorum dente* in a discussion of human nature (5,23).

Over twenty years before Augustine's *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* he had attacked Manichean animism and in particular their use of John 1,4 (*in ipso vita erat*) to support the theory that wood and stone contain divine substance and therefore have "life" (in evang. Ioh. 1,16); here he had employed the words *sordidissima secta Manichaeorum*. At an undetermined date Augustine had apostrophized the Manichees' *inmundissimae impietatis insania* in *De continentia* 9,22, where he was combatting their view that the flesh is to be associated with the principle of evil. Earlier in the same work (5,14) he had remarked: *haec Manichaeorum est inmundissima insania*. Here the reference is simply to the sect's teaching: God allowed himself to be contaminated by matter. At the same time Augustine takes the opportunity to insert the following conceit: *quid autem flagitiosae contaminationis et corruptionis de istis merito non creditur, a quibus deus...contaminabilis et corruptibilis creditur?* It would seem that here we have a further allusion to the alleged use of semen.

This last piece of Augustinian vituperation (*inmundissima insania*) is in fact noted by Opelt in her discussion of anti-Manichean polemic.³⁸ However she merely uses it in order to exemplify the "Wahn-sinnsmetapher".³⁹ The employment of the "filth" metaphor on the other

³⁷ Julian also uses the phrase *Manicheorum sordes* (1,9); here however the wording is suggested by Matth. 23,27 (*intus vero plena sunt...omni spurcitia*).

³⁸ Op. cit. (n. 13) 144, n. 253. The passage is erroneously located at "conf. 5,14"; it actually occurs in *De continentia* 5,14.

³⁹ This terminology was of course supported by the similarity of Manes' name to the aorist participle of *μαίνομαι* (*μανεΐς*). It was widely used; cf. Opelt, op. cit. (n. 13) 145.

hand is ignored. Opelt does register the "ironische Apostrophe" of the Manichees as *casti et mundi homines* at Contra Secundinum 23 (ib. 145f.): they find it abominable that the son of God should be born from a virgin's womb, although they themselves consider God to be locked in the flesh of beasts and prostitutes. Augustine's sarcasm acquires all the more point when understood in relation to the conventional description of the Manichee as "filthy". Opelt fails to mention that Augustine employs the same gibe at De continentia 10,24 in regard to the Manichees' denial of the reality of Christ's flesh: *videlicet hominibus nimium mundis malum est caro vera*. Finally it is perhaps pertinent in this connection to note the Manichees' own view of themselves as *nimis mundi*, because they scorned the sexual organs as *immunda*.⁴⁰

The Pseudo-Augustinian treatise *Adversus quinque haereses* was attributed by Morin to Quodvultdeus, who became bishop of Carthage about 437;⁴¹ this Quodvultdeus was further identified with the deacon to whom Augustine's *De haeresibus* is addressed. Quodvultdeus opens chapter five of the work by saying that he has dealt fully with Christ's divinity; his main targets have been Jews and Arians. He goes on to announce that he will now treat the incarnation, *cui Manichaeus obsistit impurus* (5,1). The reason given for this opposition is the Manichee's unwillingness to have the son of God called the son of man as well. Quodvultdeus then provides an extensive discussion of the scriptural evidence and rebuts the Manichee's rejection of the Old Testament (5,2-9). Finally he addresses the Manichean case that the incarnation would be a defilement (5,10ff.). This last topic is well away from the word *impurus*; nonetheless it will account in some degree for the occurrence of the adjective in this particular passage.⁴²

A further example occurs in another work falsely assigned to Augustine. This is the *commonitorium*,⁴³ which gives a list of those

⁴⁰ Cf. Augustine, c. Faust. 6,3.

⁴¹ G. Morin, *Pour une future édition des opuscules de saint Quodvultdeus, évêque de Carthage au V^e siècle*, Rev. Bén. 31 (1914) 156-62.

⁴² Cf. the final sentence of the chapter: *taceat immunda vanitas* (5,15). It may be noted further that of "filth" words *impurus* is the one most often given a sexual reference; cf. Thes. Ling. Lat. VII,1 col. 726,53ff. and Opelt, op. cit. (n. 15) 156, 174f., 179. It is possibly also relevant therefore that the Quodvultdeus to whom Augustine's *De haeresibus* was addressed had first-hand knowledge of all the "confessions" of immorality reported at 46,9 of that work (*sicut scis*).

⁴³ On the question of authorship cf. F. Châtillon, *Sur Saint Augustin et le manichéisme médiéval: Deux suggestions*, Revue du Moyen Age Latin 10 (1954) 207f.

doctrines the Manichee must renounce. At the end it also includes the draft of a letter guaranteeing immunity to ex-Manichees who have recanted. The former adherent is here said to have cursed *inpiissimae atque inmundissimae haeresi eorum* (10). Use of the adjective *inmundus* to characterize Manicheism is particularly interesting in this brief document, which consists of a single sentence. The reference here is completely general.⁴⁴

In the following century Caesarius of Arles makes very extensive use of the "uncleanness" metaphor in dealing with Manicheism. He uses the collocation *inmundissimi Manichei* on no fewer than six occasions.⁴⁵ In each case it is Manichean objections to the Old Testament that are at issue. Caesarius observes in Sermon 83,7: *solent nos hinc inpugnare pagani et maxime inmundissimi Manichaei dicentes: ecce nesciebat deus legis, quid ageretur in Sodomis*. Elsewhere the context is God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (serm. 101,1 *de hac re inmundissimi Manichaei sacrilego furore scripturam veteris testamenti reprehendere solent*) or the expulsion of the Canaanites (serm. 114,1 *solent...inmundissimi Manichaei ore sacrilego blasphemare*). In the latter Sermon Caesarius also expresses his anxiety to see the Manichee silenced: *ut habeatis quid respondere possitis inmundissimis et sacrilegis Manichaeis* (114,2). He makes the same point elsewhere: *ut...vobis praesentibus inmundissimis Manichaeis contra scripturam sacram murmurare non liceat* (serm. 125,3). The final passage deals with the Manichee's strictures concerning Elisha's curse on the children who had called him "Thou bald head" and had in consequence been torn to pieces by a she-bear: here Caesarius refers to *inimici dei et hostes animae suae inmundissimi Manichei* (serm. 127,1). In these examples Caesarius' partiality for the attributive use of the adjective with the proper noun is noteworthy; it is even more striking that the epithet he employs is always the same. Here "filthy Manichee" is indeed a cliché.

The Greek evidence for the application of such language to Manicheism is a good deal less abundant. It would seem in fact that only

⁴⁴ It is tempting to posit the use of such terminology in a similarly official context in Greek as well. The formula of abjuration in the appendix to the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions anathematizes all Manichees and their "mysteries", which are qualified as *μυστὰ καὶ ἀκάθαρτα* (Clem. recogn. suppl. 3,3). Some indication of the sense the two words are here intended to bear may be supplied by the third term used: *γοητείας πλήρη*. Unfortunately the text is inadmissible as evidence; cf. Puech, op. cit. (n. 31) 236f.

⁴⁵ All the sermons in question are classified as Caesarius' own by G. Morin, *S. Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis opera omnia, I: Sermones seu admonitiones*, Maredsous 1937.

one Father uses the "filth" metaphor in the strictest sense to describe the Manichees. In the late fourth century Amphilochius of Iconium has occasion to refer twice to their abstinence from meat: in this connection he speaks of τῆς ... ἀκαθάρτου αἰρέσεως τῶν Μανιχαίων (exerc. 19) and of ἀκαθάρτων Μανιχαίων (ib. 28).

At the same time a number of examples may be adduced that are closely linked to the "uncleanness" metaphor. Basil had called Manicheism σηπεδὼν...τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν in a discussion of Genesis 1,2 ("darkness was upon the face of the deep"); he was rebutting the view that this darkness is the principle of evil (hex. 2,4). In the same passage reference is made to Marcion and Valentinus; however the offensive language is again reserved for the Manichee. In similar terms John Chrysostom speaks of τοῦ σεσηπότος τῶν Μανιχαίων στόματος with regard to their view that the soul is of the same substance as God (hom. in I Cor. 7,5). Μυσαρός had already been employed by Cyril of Jerusalem in one of his Catecheses (6,35); two chapters earlier he had referred to the use of human semen.⁴⁶ The same word describes Manichean explanations of scripture in Theodore of Mopsuestia: τὰς μυσαρὰς γλώσσας (Mt. 80). It also occurs in the preface to Theodoret of Cyrrhus' Eranistes (p. 61,14); there the application is quite general.

From the foregoing analysis it is evident that the use of the "filth" metaphor in relation to the Manichee was conventional. This same investigation may also have suggested some of the reasons. In the first place there was the accusation of immorality and in particular the allegation concerning the employment of human semen. Here it must however be admitted that in the majority of cases where the terminology of "uncleanness" occurs the reference is either unspecified or clearly to something else. It may also be noted that Leo the Great, though he deals at some length with the alleged practice,⁴⁷ nowhere happens to call the Manichees "filthy". As a further reason for such language one might also

⁴⁶ Rather different is catech. 6,20, where Manes is described as τὸ δοχεῖον παντὸς ῥύπου. Here however Cyril is referring to the eclectic nature of his teaching, which is alleged to have been a hotchpotch of all other heresies; cf. also Leo the Great, serm. 16,4 *hoc* (sc. what is worst in other heresies) *in istos* (sc. Manichees) *quasi in sentinam quamdam cum omnium sordium concretione confluit*. Leo's phraseology is inspired by Sallust, Catil. 37,5 (*ii Romam sicut in sentinam confluxerant*).

⁴⁷ For the relevant passages cf. A. Chavasse, S. Leonis Magni Romani Pontificis Tractatus septem et nonaginta, Turnhout 1973 (Corp. Christ. Ser. Lat. 138) CLXXVIII-CLXXXI.

point to the belief of the Manichees themselves that the divine substance existed in a state of defilement, from which it could only be "cleansed" by the Manichean Elect. It may however be doubted whether these two factors are alone sufficient to account for such extensive use of the "filthiness" metaphor. Its frequency would also seem to be an indication of the particular abhorrence which Manicheism as a whole inspired.

By way of conclusion it will be appropriate to return to the text from which the present study began. It has been noted above that the charge of immorality was made against the Manichees. When therefore in his *Libellus de virginitate servanda* Jerome calls the Manichee *impurissimus*, does he intend the epithet to have a specifically sexual reference? The word could certainly be used in this way.⁴⁸ On the other hand Opelt also classes it simply as an "Allerweltsadjectiv".⁴⁹

The description of Manichean virgins as *scorta* at the end of the same sentence is merely intended to provide the most striking possible antithesis to *virgines*: it was noted above that here we simply have a particularly drastic formulation of the traditional idea of the worthlessness of heretical virginity. The charge which Jerome makes elsewhere against heretical virgins is in fact not one of "immorality", but rather of insincerity.⁵⁰ Moreover the argument which Jerome adduces to justify his use of the word *scorta* is a purely theological one, which has nothing to do with morality: *si enim corporis earum auctor est diabolus, quomodo possunt honorare plasticam hostis sui?* On the other hand Jerome at once goes on to assert that *turpitudinem vitae falso nominis honore convestiunt*. Both these arguments had in fact been used recently by other Fathers. The first had occurred in Basil, who pointed out the Manichees' inconsistency in imposing chastity on a body which they considered to be the work of the devil.⁵¹ Likewise Ambrosiaster had already employed the antithesis

⁴⁸ Cf. n. 42 above.

⁴⁹ Op. cit. (n. 15) 262.

⁵⁰ Cf. epist. 49,8,2 (*si Manicheorum sequamur errorem et simulatae pudicitiae retribus implicemur*); in Os. 7,13 ll. 354f. (*quicumque pudicitiam simulant se amare, ut Manichaeus*); ib. 9,10 ll. 270-3 (*difficile est enim haereticum reperire, qui diligit castitatem; non quod eam praeferre desistat in labiis, sed quod non servet in conscientia, aliud loquens, et aliud faciens*); in Am. 5,21 l. 763; in Zach. 8,11 ll. 321-5; in Matth. 7,15 ll. 948-50; ib. 19,12 ll. 812-3 (*persuasione heretica simulant castitatem*). The same view is expressed at the end of the present chapter of the *Libellus*: *quod aliae simulant, tu vere esse coepisti* (38,7).

⁵¹ The point is made in a work against the Manichees that has not survived; the fragment in question is however preserved by Augustine, c. Iulian. 1,5,17. Here Basil expresses

between the Manichees' disgusting way of life and their veneer of sanctity: *sanctimonium defendunt et...turpiter vivunt*.⁵² It was Jerome's custom to string together arresting formulations that had been appropriated from elsewhere; nor were they always completely harmonized.⁵³ In the present passage of the Libellus therefore it is not quite clear whether *inpurissimus* has a sexual connotation or not. What is absolutely certain on the other hand in the light of the foregoing enquiry is that here Jerome is merely repeating a cliché. The epithet is not an example of the unique vigour of his vituperation: Opelt is quite wrong.

himself with a fullness and subtlety which contrast markedly with Jerome's rather asthmatic but more striking argumentation.

⁵² In II Tim. 3,7,1. For their *turpitude* cf. also Philaster 61,3 (*nefandae turpitudini servientes*).

⁵³ On this characteristic feature of Jerome's method of composition cf. the present writer, Some Notes on the Content of Jerome's Twenty-second Letter, Grazer Beiträge 15 (1988) 177-86 and id., Some Features of Jerome's Compositional Technique in the Libellus de virginitate servanda (Epist. 22), Philologus 136 (1992) 234-55. Between the formulations which would appear to have come from Basil and Ambrosiaster respectively Jerome has inserted two further borrowings: *sub ovium pellibus lupos tegunt. Christum mentitur antichristus*. The first would seem to have been suggested by Lactantius, inst. 5,3,23: *voluit lupum sub ovis pelle celare*. The second is evidently an adaptation of Cyprian, unit. eccl. 3: *antichristum sub vocabulo Christi (mentiuntur* occurs three words later; as in Jerome the reference is to heretics). Jerome imitates Cyprian's phrase more closely at in Ion. 2,7 ll. 285f. D.: *sub persona Christi mentiantur antichristum (sc. haeretici)*.