CHAPTER FIVE

THE LITERARY CONTEXT OF THE DISPUTATIONES

A. Introduction

1. Relevance

Adimantus had the reputation of being a prolific writer. Both the adherents and the opponents of Mani’s Church referred to his considerable literary output. As to the Manichaean sources, the ones discovered in Iran (which we discussed in chapter II) mention the writings that Adimantus produced in order to attack the tenets of other religions. Moreover, Faustus, who during Augustine’s lifetime seems to have been the most important Manichaean bishop in the West, treated Adimantus as the most important author to be studied apart from Mani himself. Adimantus’ writings regularly provoked a negative reaction from Catholic Christian authors, which can be deduced from some references we find in Photius of Constantinople’s Bibliotheca. In this work, Photius († 895 CE) quoted i.a. from an anti-Manichaean work of a certain Heraclianus of Chalcedon (supposedly 5th century CE), which references demonstrate that Addas’ writings were attacked by Christian authors:

... and Titus, who thought to write against the works of Manichaeans, actually wrote against the treatises of Addas ...  

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1 E.g. Mz: ‘... Addâ laboured very hard in these areas, founded many monasteries, chose many Elect and Hearers, composed writings and made wisdom his weapon. He opposed the “dogmaś” with these (writings), (and) in everything he acquitted himself well. He subdued and enchained the “dogmaś” ...’; Mz16: ‘... [And he composed …] and the writings of Light. [And] (he grasped) (?) [wisdom for] the refutation of the dogmas. In many [ways] he made and fashioned them [as weapon] against all the dogmas. And he defeated the teachings and put them all to shame like somebody who [wielded] a powerful weapon …’

2 c. Faust. 1, 2.


4 Photius, Bibliotheca, 85, 6ff.: καὶ Τῖτων δὲ ἔδοξε μὲν κατὰ Μανιχαίων γράψαι
According to Heraclianus, Addas’ writings were, on occasions, also confused with the works of Mani. This can be inferred from a following line in the *Bibliotheca*: Diodore of Tarsus († 390 CE) supposed that he was refuting the *Living Gospel* of Mani. Actually, however, he was fulminating against a writing of Addas, called *Modion*:

> ... and Diodoros, disputing Manichaeeans in a collection of twenty-five books, thought to reject the *Living Gospel* of Manichaeeus in the first seven books, but he actually dealt with the writing of Adda, which is called *Modion*.  

In addition to such historical traces of Adimantus’ literary activity, it may be mentioned that students of Manichaeism seriously allow for the possibility that Adimantus could well have been the editor of the *Kephalaia*. In addition to such historical traces of Adimantus’ literary activity, it may be mentioned that students of Manichaeism seriously allow for the possibility that Adimantus could well have been the editor of the *Kephalaia*. 

All this evidence clearly suggests that the *Disputationes* was not the only one of Adimantus’ literary products. In order to avoid premature conclusions about the precise aim of Adimantus when he wrote the *Disputationes* and vented his opinions about the Holy Scriptures, it is important to produce an overall picture of Adimantus’ literary output.

So, the purpose of this particular chapter is to examine the direct literary context of the *Disputationes*. A preliminary examination of the other writings of Adimantus will make it possible to evaluate the significance of the discussion about Scripture for Adimantus’ ideas and works, and, more specifically, to ascertain whether (and how) the views that can be inferred from his *Disputationes* are related to what can be deduced from his other works. Furthermore, a comparison of the *Disputationes* with

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