According to al-Nadim’s *Fihrist*, “Mānī wrote seven books, one of them in Persian and six in Syriac, the language of Syria”.¹ Also Titus of Bostra and a number of other authors testify that Mani wrote in Syriac,² which could signify a somewhat different form of East Aramaic than the classical Syriac.³

So the first and original language of Manichaeism was Syriac. It therefore seems paradoxical that almost no texts in Syriac are preserved—except, of course, Manichaean quotations in authors like Ephrem or Theodore bar Kö-nai.⁴ Otherwise, the agenda for the study of Manichaeism has constantly since the end of the nineteenth century been set by new finds and editions of manuscripts in a number of different languages.⁵ Small remnants of the lost

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⁵ It should be mentioned here that Y. Yoshida, in 1983, showed that the Turfan fragment m 260 contains an Aramaic text corresponding to a transcription in the Manichaean Chinese Hymn-
world of Syriac-Manichaean literature and Syriac-speaking Manicheans, however, have come to light. I will now present such fragments—hitherto almost unknown—but first of all a short overview.

It was James Montgomery who, in the beginning of the twentieth century, first observed that the characters on certain incantation bowls from Nippur in the present Iraq had many similarities with the so-called “Manichaeanscript” used on the newly found Turfan texts from Central Asia.6 Other magical bowls in Manichaean or Proto-Manichaean script have since then been published, but it remains controversial whether they really stem from Manicheans.7

Besides the bowl-inscriptions, there exists a short Syriac inscription in Manichaean script on the so-called “seal of Mani”8 but most importantly, as far as my research is concerned, is the find of fragmentary literary texts.

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