APOCALYPTICISM AND ESCHATOLOGY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Encounters in the Abrahamic Religions, 6th-8th Centuries

edited by

Hagit Amirav, Emmanouela Grypeou, and Guy Stroumsa

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APOCALYPTICISM AND ESCHATOLOGY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

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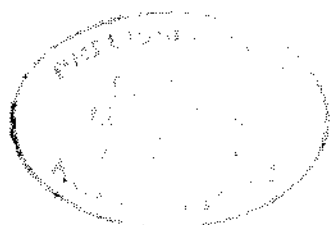Hagit Amirav, Emmanouela Grypeou, and Guy Stroumsa

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume of collected essays on the subjects of apocalypticism and eschatology in Late Antiquity is the result of an international workshop which was organised by the editors in cooperation with Dr Yannis Papadogiannakis (King's College, London), and held in the spring of 2013 in Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Echoing Bernard McGinn's magisterial *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, the workshop was entitled *Visions of the End: Apocalypticism and Eschatology in the Abrahamic Religions*. The event was the second in a series of four workshops, which were funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) in collaboration with the following academic institutions: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of Oxford, Central European University, Budapest, and Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (www.beyondthefathers.org). Together, these four universities ran between 2011 and 2014 an international project under the overarching theme: 'Beyond the Fathers: In Search of New Authorities. Mapping and Analysing Christian Intellectual and Artistic Activities under Early Byzantine and Islamic Rules (5th-8th centuries)'. In all four consecutive workshops, members and guests of the project investigated different aspects concerning the literary, artistic, and mental changes during the period of time between the Patristic Golden Age and the Muslim invasion to the Mediterranean basin and its aftermath. The first volume in the series, edited by Hagit Amirav and Francesco Celia, is entitled *New Themes, New Styles in the Eastern Mediterranean: Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Encounters, 5th-8th Centuries* (Leuven, 2017). This present volume seeks to nuance, or better still, deepen our study and discussion of two of the many themes discussed in the first volume.

Apocalyptic concepts prevailed in the cultural and psychic arsenal of all Abrahamic religions which thrived in the eastern provinces and in the margins of the Byzantine empire during the period under discussion. Apocalyptic writings from that period present important sources for the history of apocalypticism as well as for the history of inter-religious relations. This time period, the period of the rapid expansion and establishment of Islamic rule, is also the period, when the first encounters of the three Abrahamic religions took place. It is significant that the earliest literary encounters of Christians and Jews with Islam were expressed through the medium of apocalyptic expression. Despite their differences in language, geographical provenance, dating, and quite often also in

their literary form, apocalyptic writings share certain common apocalyptic motifs and traditions. Furthermore, they address a wide range of contemporary historical, political, and social issues. Apocalyptic and eschatological ideas were also expressed in a variety of literary 'genres', such as historiography, 'question and answer' compilations, exegetical, astrological and poetical works and so on, which have all been taken into consideration.

One particular focus of this volume is some specific and well-articulated eschatological motifs which run through the fibre of Late Antique and Byzantine literary discourses. This volume examines how old categories were developed and transformed, as well as how differences in eschatological concepts of the Abrahamic religious traditions were articulated. Finally, this volume seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the shaping of Islamic apocalyptic symbolism.

The various contributions included in this volume discuss the following themes: Greek Byzantine, Syriac, Armenian and Ethiopic apocalyptic traditions, Jewish and Christian apocalypticism in the post-Islamic era, seventh-century millenarianism, Zoroastrian and Manichaean apocalypticism, as well as the possible apocalyptic background of the genesis of Islam and issues of Qur'anic eschatology.

The papers are arranged partially according to alphabetical order. An exception to this rule is the paper by Averil Cameron which is used, again, as part of the general introduction to the volume as a whole. Another one is that we have grouped the papers on early Islam together, starting with the one on the Qur'an. Short summaries of the papers are as follows.

In 'Late Antique Apocalyptic', Averil Cameron re-examines and re-evaluates common scholarly assumptions regarding the place of eschatology as a recurring theme in the mental and literary landscape of the period before and at the time of the emergence of Islam, and the influence this trend may have had on the formation of the Qur'an. A renewed case has been made recently for eschatology as a major, or *the* major, theme in the message of the Qur'an, and a general opinion also exists according to which Late Antiquity was a period in which apocalypticism was widespread, with the sixth and early seventh centuries as a time when apocalyptic ideas gained even greater currency. Some scholars argue that these Late Antique trends provided a context for the development of the eschatological themes in the Qur'an. This paper asks how far such generalizations are justified, and seeks to introduce greater precision into the argument.

In 'Their Evil Rule Must End!', Domenico Agostini traces back the origins and features of Iranian apocalypticism and the place due within

it to Iranian eschatology, while highlighting major scholarly trends and developments in the past two hundred years of research on the subject. Embracing a more sceptical approach which was promoted in the last two decades of the twentieth century by, among others, the famous historian Franz Cumont, Agostini challenges the Irano-centric approach which had prevailed until then, according to which ancient Iranian apocalyptic tradition had direct influence on Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic apocalypticism. However, while the author attributes some features of Iranian apocalypticism to Jewish influences, and more specifically the book of Daniel, he strongly advocates a clear-cut distinction between Iranian apocalypticism and Iranian eschatology, also arguing that in the Iranian context, we should also recognise a late historical apocalyptics that can include pseudo-historical and mythical elements.

In 'Apocalyptic Thought', Matthias Binder focuses on monastic apocalypticism in Greek and Syriac texts of the seventh to eighth centuries. That apocalyptic texts were widely read by monks is well known. However, Binder also argues that some few apocalyptic texts of that period may have also been specifically written for members of monastic orders. Rather than limiting himself to apocalyptic texts par excellence and by definition, the author answers this question by examining relevant apocalyptic motifs – 'end time motifs', 'transformation motifs', and 'other world motifs' – in a variety of texts: sermons, commentaries, and hymns. The texts are also examined in terms of how they may affect their intended audiences, as well as in terms of their respective goals: reassuring and encouraging, admonishing, guiding and instructing.

In 'The Young Daniel', Sebastian Brock studies a little known, yet important, pseudepigraphic text which, on the basis of a close comparison with the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, can be arguably dated to the seventh century. Transmitted in a single, twelve-century Syriac manuscript, the work is presented as if it were part of the group of books associated with Daniel in Peshitta (and Septuagint) manuscripts. This text raises a number of problems which are of wider concern to the study of apocalyptic literature. In addressing these problems, it is important for us to assert that this work does not belong to the apocalyptic literature of the early centuries of the Christian era, as had originally been thought to be the case.

In 'The End is Coming', Lutz Greisiger discusses the revival and (re-) appearance of millenarian expectations and beliefs in the seventh century, as they are reflected, for example, in the *Apocalypse of St Andrew the Fool* and in the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. Traditionally, millenarianism is defined as the period of thousand years, which would

follow the second coming of Christ. In his study, the author identifies a 'new' impetus of millenarianism, which emerged during the Byzantine-Persian war. The adherents of millenarianism in its new mantle postulated that the disruptive events, including the second coming, would be postponed to the end of the millennium. The author further argues that our understanding of this stream of thought is essential to a better understanding of the religious, social, and political climate during the seventh century and the period, which saw the emergence of Islam and its spread in the Mediterranean basin.

In 'Managing Anger, Fear and Hope', Yannis Papadogiannakis examines some immediate reactions of Christian communities to the fall of Jerusalem, as these were documented and commented upon by contemporary Christian writers and theologians: Anastasius of Sinai, Antiochus, Zacharias of Jerusalem and Sophronius of Jerusalem. In the midst of the total despair and anguish which engulfed the Christian commonwealth – being an 'emotional community', as it were – these writers tried to instil hope and combat strong sentiments of fear by promoting the theology of divine Providence and a sense of purpose which they presented in an apocalyptic framework. The author analyses their technique of using a typological view of history, namely pointing to 'historical' biblical episodes of punishments brought against the Israelites, which, in their view, were actually meant for their salvation, redemption, and well-being.

In 'Universal Salvation', István Perczel focuses on the doctrinal views regarding the final end of humanity, as these are reflected in the *Erotapokriseis* of Pseudo-Caesarius. Trying to establish a valid decoding method for understanding this cryptic text, the author comes to the conclusion that Pseudo-Caesarius – in all probability, Theodore of Caesarea, Justinian's all-powerful religious advisor – applied the philosophical theory of the universal restoration to the contemporary political situation. In fact, during Justinian's reign, many were awaiting the end of the times and, in it, the promised conversion of the Jewish people. It is to a great extent against these expectations that Pseudo-Caesarius/Theodore of Caesarea sets up his apocatastatic views. By means of dismantling the traditional eschatological historical framework of Christian theology, Pseudo-Caesarius/Theodore of Caesarea was serving the anti-eschatological imperial propaganda. In this role, Pseudo-Caesarius also became one of the early initiators of Christian theological anti-semitism.

In 'A Revival in Jewish Apocalyptic?', Helen Spurling highlights elements of both change and continuity in the development of apocalypticism within the Judaism(s) of Late Antiquity in the aftermath of the Sasanian Persian and Arab conquests of the eastern Mediterranean. The source

material under discussion includes a number of apocalyptic tractates, as well as *Pirqe Mashiah*, an apocalyptic *midrash* from Palestine. This important Late Rabbinic *midrash* draws on a number of older traditions in outlining its apocalyptic response to the Arab conquests, considered by the ancient compiler as a sign of the messianic era and the coming future age, which would be a time of restoration and/or reward for the Jewish people.

In 'Apocalyptic Ideas in Early Medieval Armenia', Robert W. Thomson analyses surviving Christian Armenian texts from the fourth century onwards and their contribution to our understanding of the notion of early Armenian apocalypticism, that is, the revelation of that which pertains to the end of the present, and the role which this phenomenon had in the transformation of the Near East following the advent of Islam. Preaching the gospel, revealing the word of Christ, is closely connected to the notion of apocalypticism. In this context, the following works are examined in detail: Koriwn's biography, written in the 440s, of Maštoc', also known as the inventor of the script, the *History* attributed to Agathangelos, the standard account of the conversion of king Trdat and the life of Gregory the Illuminator, and a catechism entitled the *Teaching of Saint Gregory*. These works, in which the notions of damnation and salvation take central stage, contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of Armenian apocalypticism in the period under investigation.

In 'Byzantine Greek Apocalypses and the West', Pablo Ubierna discusses the reception of Late Antique Greek and Syriac Apocalyptic Texts in the West during the High Middle Ages. The article focuses on some of the most important texts of eastern apocalyptic literature: the *Sermo de fine mundo* of Pseudo-Ephrem and the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius, along with some mystical texts, which circulated in the West, including Aquitaine and the Iberian Peninsula. The author argues that, as the eastern Christian apologetic literature against Islam spread across Spain, a different and independent tradition of the Latin version of the Pseudo-Methodius developed. In this context, the famous *Roda Codex*, a tenth-century codex used by the Kings of Navarre in support of their propagandistic claims, is closely studied with particular attention to the Syriac original.

In 'The Eschatological Kerygma of the Early Qur'an', Nicolai Sinai undertakes a detailed intertextual and literary study of what the early Qur'anic surahs have to say about the resurrection of the dead, the ensuing divine judgement, and the subsequent fate of the saved and the damned. Building on the work of Tor Andrae, Sinai demonstrates far-reaching parallels between early Qur'anic eschatology and Syriac Christian homiletic literature. Both textual corpora make widespread

use of New Testament eschatological motifs and both assign a similarly fundamental role to eschatological fear in their understanding of what constitutes true piety. Moreover, Syriac eschatological terminology can often be mapped onto Qur'anic diction, and there are intriguing similarities in literary technique. However, Sinai also underscores salient differences and concludes by exploring the significant degree of literary and doctrinal innovation that characterises the Qur'anic appropriation of Syriac eschatological piety.

In 'Apocalypticism in Sunni Hadith', Christopher Melchert discusses apocalypticism in *Hadith*, the body of reports about what the Prophet and other early Muslims said and did. Central to this study is the *Six Books*, widely recognized as the most authoritative collections, which were assembled from the mid-ninth century to the early tenth century. As opposed to earlier studies which hitherto focused on the circulation of apocalyptic ideas in popular circles, such as Sufism and the proponents of Islamic mysticism, the author offers here translations of and commentaries on selected passages from the *Six Books* with the aim of developing the uses of apocalypticism in Orthodox centres of Sunni Islam. In this context, the author studies several definitions of Sunni Orthodoxy and the multiple senses, in which the term has been used in modern scholarship.

In 'A People Will Emerge from the Desert', Emmanouela Grypeou discusses eastern Christian Syriac apocalyptic texts as sources for the study of the history of apocalypticism as a literary genre and its focus on the theological explanation of history. The author further argues that, despite the fact that apocalyptic texts are considered from the outset as non-historical, we may still draw important conclusions regarding the history of the reception of early Islam in Christian lands. In this vein, some important conclusions will be drawn regarding the historical and social conditions of the Christian population, who lived in the eastern Byzantine provinces at the time of the Muslim conquests, and the theological responses, which were elaborated by Christians to the expansion of Muslim political and military power and the subsequent overthrow of Byzantine rule.

Going back to the title of the first workshop (and volume) in the series, *New Themes, New Styles in the Eastern Mediterranean (5th-8th Centuries): Jewish, Christian and Islamic Encounters*, we must now revisit the problem of 'genres' and the claim for 'newness': while we purposely and cautiously refrained in this title from any reference to 'genres', opting instead for the milder and much more accurate, Cameronian, 'styles and

themes', it became quite clear to the participants that the word 'new' may also pose not a few problems. To begin with, there is no literary style of which it can be said that it stood on its own: biblical exegesis, for example, can be found in a wide range of literary contexts and frameworks: commentaries, homilies, collections of questions and answers, catenae, chronicles, and historical narratives. When we speak of 'styles' we are often forced to describe their fusion. Trying to isolate styles and themes which are really and truly 'new' can also be a problem. Catenae and florilegia, for example, have always been around and we can hardly say with any degree of precision that there was anything 'new' about them. Similarly, themes which have been circulating in the literary reservoir of Christians for centuries, kept popping up in different contexts, albeit, as we have also seen, in different degrees of intensification. Similar problems present themselves when we are trying to define more precisely what can or cannot pass for 'literature' and similar other slippery concepts which we are bound to come across whenever we read texts and try to make sense out of them.

During the workshop, we also learned that our chosen themes, apocalypticism and eschatology, are represented in all the literary vessels known to the authors and thinkers who operated throughout the Greek East in the period under discussion. Again, we are not able clearly to associate the themes of the 'end of times' and 'salvation' with any specific literary 'genre'. As we have seen, these themes are everywhere: questions and answers, homilies, commentaries, historical accounts, *midrashim*, and unsurprisingly, in forms of practical magic, such as celestial letters.

Time frames are also a complicated issue. For this set of workshops, we have purposely chosen a period which featured dramatic historical developments, and more specifically, the military advancements of Persians and Arabs into Christian-ruled territories, but also plagues, famine, and the occasional natural disaster.

It might be safe to say and also logical to assume that in the face of peril and in the specific context of Christianity being an active carrier and promoter of the messages of salvation and redemption, that peril and discomfort would intensify the recourse to apocalypticism and eschatology. In fact, no paper read in this workshop testifies to the contrary. In one case, however, as shown by Robert Thomson, who pointed to tendencies to suppress apocalypticism or, at least, to scale down its dramatic overtones, we see that apocalypticism flourished in very specific mental and geographical climates and that an 'apocalyptic' mentality could be present in one region and more supressed in another region. And we

could also add that Islamic apocalypticism flourished against the background of success, rather than failure – a fact which puts to the test the association of apocalypticism solely with emotions of fear and threat.

This last statement, which the reader is more than welcome to challenge, raises a few other important questions, such as: why apocalypticism; what was the societal function of apocalyptic and eschatological messages; what triggered the further elaboration of apocalyptic discourses and rhetoric? As we have seen throughout the workshop, these questions are not at all easy to answer. Again, the period of our study was dramatic and must have provided ample scope for apocalyptic sentiments, when Christians became hunted rather than hunters, ruled, rather than rulers. However, we must not forget that Christians promoted and entertained apocalyptic and eschatological discourses also in periods of relative comfort. What was the function of these discourses then? In order to get an answer, we may have to take Christian theology into account and understand, as has been mentioned by Averil Cameron, that apocalypticism was also an expression of belief in Divine Providence and that it could be equally entertained by more positive and optimistic mind sets.

The most important contribution of our workshop to a better understanding of the function of apocalyptic and eschatological discourses lay, we think, in the multiple answers given to the questions mentioned above. Yannis Papadogiannakis highlighted the pastoral, comforting function of eschatology, where a frightened or at least less confident community, an emotional community, found itself in search of answers. Lutz Greisiger stressed the function of this type of discourse as a boundary marker and as a means of singling out specific groups, for example Jews, and other 'others'. On a few occasions, we see, calamities and potential calamities were used to inspire a moral renaissance (so, with the focus pointing inward, to personal eschatology) and in other cases, the finger was pointed at alienated groups as a means of strengthening a sense of communal identity.

We are especially grateful to our partners in the *Beyond the Fathers* project, István Perczel and Christoph Markschies, who joined us in this long journey, having carried in concord and unison the financial, administrative, and intellectual burden, and having contributed their indispensible expertise and support. We are indebted to Francesco Celia and Cor Hoogerwerf for their meticulous copy editing and to Helen Richardson-Hewitt for correcting the English style. Finally, an enormous debt of thanks is owed to the contributors, whose expertise and commitment rendered the gathering in Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, a real workshop and this volume, a good basis for further discussion on the fascinating period under discussion.

The editors
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LATE ANTIQUE APOCALYPTIC:
A CONTEXT FOR THE QUR'AN?[1]

Averil CAMERON

In his succinct contribution to the recent *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, entitled 'Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion', Robert Hoyland devotes just over a page to the subheading 'Apocalypticism'.[2] He refers to apocalypticism as a 'spirit' (connected for instance with calculations about the 500th year after the Incarnation, supposedly marking 6,000 years since Creation), which early Islam 'seems to have caught'. In the same volume Stephen Shoemaker asks the provocative question whether Muhammad was an eschatological herald or a social reformer, surveying the differing views among specialists as to how early and how central the eschatological emphasis was as part of Muhammad's teaching, and whether such passages are to be interpreted literally, as evidence of belief in an imminent judgement, or in a more generalized way.[3] Was the Hour really seen as imminent, or was it rather sometime in the future, for which believers had to be prepared? Shoemaker draws an apt

1. A version of this paper was delivered at the Kenyon Institute, Jerusalem, in June 2013, and I thank the Director, Dr Mandy Turner, for the invitation. I also thank Guy Stroumsa, Stephen Shoemaker and Robert Hoyland for sharing their ideas with me, even if my views may differ from theirs.

2. Robert Hoyland, 'Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion', in Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford-New York, 2012), pp. 1053-77, at pp. 1066-67; the pages on apocalypticism in his *Seeing Islam and Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13; Princeton, 1997), at pp. 26-31, are deliberately cautious. For Late Antiquity and Islam see Averil Cameron (ed.), *Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam* (The Formation of Classical Islamic World, 1; Farnham-London-Burlington VT, 2013), *Introduction*, with Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton, 2013).

3. Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'Muhammad and the Qur'an', in Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, pp. 1078-1108; id., *The Death of a Prophet. The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia, 2012), especially chapter 3; '"The Reign of God Has Come": Eschatology and Empire in Late Antiquity and Early Islam', *Arabica* 61 (2014), pp. 514-58. The sources of early Islamic apocalypticism are briefly discussed in Gerbern S. Oegema, 'The Heritage of Jewish Apocalypticism in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Judaism, Christianity and Islam', in Robert Wisnovsky, Faith Wallis, Jamie C. Fumo, and Carlos Fraenkel (eds.), *Vehicles of Transmission, Translation, and Transformation in Medieval Textual Culture* (Cursor Mundi 4; Turnhout, 2011), pp. 103-28, at 126-28.

parallel with the seemingly contradictory references to the coming of the Kingdom in the teaching of Jesus, and opts for Muhammad as an eschatological prophet who preached the imminence of the Hour – a position which his followers, like the early Christians – had to modify or explain when the Hour did not come as expected.[4]

To return to the Late Antique context. Firstly, it is noticeable how many assumptions are regularly made (with a ready elision between apocalyptic and eschatology), and how much the existing literature depends on wide generalizations. For Fred Donner, in his recent book *Muhammad and the Believers*, 'apocalyptic ideas' were a particular feature of the religious climate of Late Antiquity, and had an obvious appeal, given the 'harsh' reality of life in the 'Byzantine domains'.[5] In John C. Reeves's useful guide to Jewish apocalypses, we read that the 'apocalyptic imagination', in the words of John C. Collins, operated 'more or less continuously within the broader ethnic or religious framework of the wider Near East', and that in the seventh and later centuries it was 'figured as a mentality';[6] while it would be foolish, he says, to deny that historical events play a role, apocalyptic was 'a type of narrative' within a 'formulaic set of conventions, tropes and figures'.[7] He goes on to claim that seventh-century apocalyptic springs from a 'seismic shift' in the location of authority and an enhanced role for the Bible, within the Abrahamic religious communities, emphasizing the role of the Bible in the 'early Muslim appropriation of an apocalyptic discourse'.[8] Later in the introduction, he writes of the 'varied interdependencies and thematic echoes across the second half of the first millennium among Jews, Christians and Muslims'.[9]

It seems to be generally assumed among scholars of Late Antiquity that eschatology was an important element in the period, and some claim that there was a distinct rise in such ideas in the sixth and seventh centuries.[10] However, these assumptions leave one with many questions. I will leave for others the nature and centrality of eschatology in the Qur'an. But when Islamic scholars, in particular, write of 'Late Antiquity', is this the same as Reeves's 'wider Near East', or, as in the common formulation, as 'the eastern Mediterranean'? Should we suppose that

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4. Shoemaker, 'Muhammad and the Qur'an', pp. 1094-96, 1099.
5. Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge MA, 2010), pp. 14-17.
6. John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic. A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Resources for biblical studies 45; Atlanta, 2005), pp. 1-2.
7. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, p. 4.
8. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, pp. 5-6.
9. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, p. 23.
10. For instance Shoemaker, '"The Reign of God Has Come"', pp. 535-37.

broad apocalyptic trends evinced in written sources from Constantinople are relevant to emergent Islam? More fundamentally still, what is meant by 'apocalyptic', 'apocalypticism', and 'eschatology' in this context? A general awareness of the end of the world and the last judgement, or, as in the Qur'an, of the need for personal moral reform, is not the same as historical apocalyptic, envisaged as a political and historical scenario involving successive empires. I will argue in this paper that much more precision is needed before it can be argued that either Late Antique apocalyptic as a whole or any specific Late Antique texts had a direct influence on the emergence of Islam, or of Qur'anic eschatology.

The Jewish apocalyptic works of the seventh century have also given rise to considerable discussion, both in themselves and in their connection with the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614 CE, and I will not discuss them further here, except to make the point that they and several of the contemporary Christian sources need to be placed in the context of local issues in the history of early seventh-century Palestine rather than used as the basis of wider generalizations.[11] The apocalyptic overtones found in the sources for the Emperor Heraclius have also been well covered by others, notably Gerrit Reinink, and now Shoemaker. Given Heraclius's almost miraculous return of the Cross to Jerusalem in 630 CE it would not be very surprising if this event was given an apocalyptic aura; however, it does not seem to me proven that he himself knowingly enacted the eschatological role ascribed to the Roman emperor in later texts.[12] Furthermore, while Heraclius's admittedly sensational campaigns

11. For which see now Alexei M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2011), chaps. 4 and 5, arguing for the emergence of a Jewish concept of a 'messianic Jerusalem', with Martha Himmelfarb on *Sefer Eliyyahu* in Kenneth G. Holum and Hayim Lapin (eds.), *Shaping the Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims in an Age of Transition, 400-800 CE* (Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture 20; Bethesda MD, 2011). For the Persian conquest see Yuri Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross. The Sasanian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614 and Byzantine Ideology of Anti-Persian Warfare* (Österreichische Akad. der Wiss., philosoph.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 819; Vienna, 2011), Glen W. Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity* (Waltham MA, 2012) and James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford, 2010).

12. See Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Heraclius, the New Alexander. Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius', in Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation* (Leuven, 2002), pp. 81-94. It seems to me more likely that the idea of the last emperor placing his crown on Golgotha followed rather than preceded Heraclius's restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem in 630: see Jan Willem Drijvers, 'Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*: Notes on Symbolism and Ideology', ibid., pp. 175-90, at pp. 184-90. Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'The *Tiburtine Sibyl*, the Last Emperor, and the Early Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition', in Tony Burke (ed.), *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier: The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives* (Eugene OR, 2015), pp. 218-44, argues for an early date for the Last Emperor

and his victory were presented by the Constantinopolitan poet and pan-
egyrist George of Pisidia, deacon of Hagia Sophia, as a religious crusade,
this is not the same as ascribing an explicitly eschatological interpreta-
tion to them.[13] We also need to be precise about the dating of the indi-
vidual poems and to remember that George's poems belong to the realm
of official imperial panegyric. Their actual complexity has been well
brought out in recent years by Mary Whitby,[14] and George's poem, the
Hexaemeron (predictably, from its title), envisages Heraclius's victory as
a New Creation rather than a Last Judgment. If George drew heavily on
Old Testament imagery, so after all had Eusebius for Constantine in the
fourth century.

I will return later to the issue of Heraclius, Golgotha and the Cross.
One question therefore is whether Heraclius himself knew of the apoca-
lyptic motif of the last emperor placing his crown on Golgotha, or
whether this motif arose only later. Related to it is the further question
whether, as Donner believes, the early 'Commanders of the Faithful',
with the importance they attached to Jerusalem, also had in mind the
apocalyptic theme of the last emperor and Jerusalem, where the Last
Judgment would take place.[15]

However, I think we need some clarity.

Eschatological thinking had been part of Christian and Jewish
assumptions from an early stage,[16] and early Christians lived in expecta-
tion of an imminent end. When this did not happen, various adjustments
had had to be made. This was still continuing in Late Antiquity in many

motif and supports a mid-seventh instead of late seventh-century date for Ps.-Method-
ius, but see Christopher Bonura, 'When did the Legend of the Last Emperor originate?
A New Look at the Textual Relationship between the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*
and the *Tiburtine Sibyl*', *Viator* 47.3 (2016), pp. 47–100. See further p. 14 below.

13. So Shoemaker, '"The Reign of God Has Come"', p. 539 ('boldly eschatological').

14. Mary Whitby, 'A New Image for a New Age: George of Pisidia on the Emperor
Heraclius' in E. Dabrowa (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the Near East* (Cracow,
1994), pp. 197–225; ead., 'The Devil in Disguise: the End of George of Pisidia's *Hexae-
meron* Reconsidered', *JHS* 115 (1995), pp. 115–29; ead., 'Defender of the Cross: George of
Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius and his Deputies', in ead. (ed.), *The Propaganda of
Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 247–73; ead., 'George
of Pisidia's Presentation of the Emperor Heraclius and his Campaigns: Variety and
Development', in Reinink and Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641)*, pp. 157–74;
Claudia Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios, Georgios Pisides und die Perserkriege', in Paul
Speck (ed.), *Poikila Byzantina* xi (Bonn 1991), pp. 73–128.

15. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, pp. 143–44.

16. Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet: Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Apocalyptic Prophet of the
New Millennium* (Oxford, 1999), and for discussion of the differing approaches, which
also depend on assessments of the Jewish apocalyptic context, see Crispin Fletcher-
Louis, 'Jesus and Apocalypticism', in T. Holmén and S.E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the
Study of the Historical Jesus* 3 (Leiden, 2010), pp. 2877–2909.

different spheres[17] – and certainly not without being contested and argued over. The same happened in the sixth century when the expected end soon after 500 CE did not happen. Eschatology and apocalyptic thinking were and had to be extremely malleable; they changed to suit the historical circumstances. Moreover, eschatology belongs within a much wider complex of thinking about divine providence, theodicy, creation and the physical universe, and, for Christians, the question of what would happen to their bodies and souls after death. I began a paper on divine providence in Late Antiquity in 1993 with the words 'Mono-theistic religions have a vested interest in asserting the omniscience of God: man is granted only partial knowledge, and on God's terms.' I went on to say that 'the rise of Islam brought an even stronger emphasis on the word of God and the authority of scripture.'[18]

Yet it is not for nothing that the title of Brian Daley's book on Chris-tian eschatology up to our period now is *The Hope of the Early Church.*[19] Hope is also important: Christians knew that some would be punished, but they hoped for salvation, the return of Christ and a very personal salvation. Visual art in the patristic period did not dwell on Christ's suf-fering on the cross (indeed this was an issue which presented problems in patristic thinking), or even on judgment. The possibility of universal salvation was real, if difficult to envisage. However controversial the teachings of Origen on the subject, and despite the finding against Origenism in 553, theologians of the eastern church such as Maximus Confessor and John of Damascus continued to offer hope to the indi-vidual Christian, with the ultimate goal of *theosis*, or union with God. How this was to be achieved in the context of an expected end was a question capable of many different answers.

We need to keep this wider complex in mind when approaching the question of any comparison or connection between Christian, Jewish and Qur'anic eschatology and apocalyptic in our period. In that connec-tion the questions that seem to arise include the following:

Was there more actually apocalyptic speculation in Late Antiquity, specifically in the sixth century, than before? If so, what form did it take?

17. For eschatology in relation to the monastic life see Dimitrios Moschos, *Escha-tologie im ägyptischen Mönchtum. Die Rolle christlicher eschatologischer Denkvarianten in der Geschichte des frühen ägyptischen Mönchtums und seiner sozialen Funktion* (Tübingen, 2010).

18. Averil Cameron, 'Divine Providence in Late Antiquity', in Leo Howe and Alan Wain (eds.), *Predicting the Future* (The Darwin College Lectures; Cambridge, 1993), pp. 118–43, at 118.

19. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1991).

What sort of works were produced and where did they circulate (if it is possible to know)? What more general evidence is it reasonable to adduce in addition to the existence of apocalyptic texts? Finally, how do Christian ideas compare with what is found in the Qur'an, and is it plausible to suggest that there was any linkage?

A great deal has been written already on this subject. The scope of 'Late Antiquity' also needs some refinement. Although I will mainly be dealing here with the Greek or 'Byzantine', material, a main question concerns the connection, if any, between this and the Syriac works produced in closer juxtaposition to the Islamic milieu. The principal Syriac work for such comparison, though far from the only one, is the *Apocalypse* of Ps.-Methodius, though it was produced, if we follow Gerrit Reinink, only in the context of 'fierce anti-Islamic polemics' at the end of the seventh century.[20] In a chapter with the title 'Apocalypse and the Arabs', Sidney Griffith makes the point that Christian reactions to the Arab conquests, both during and at the end of the seventh century tended to adopt an apocalyptic tone; however, these were, as he makes clear, reactions to something already happening, while it is clear that the later seventh-century writer Anastasius of Sinai already had some awareness of Qur'anic themes.[21] As stated earlier, the Jewish apocalyptic texts that belong in and around the period of the Persian invasion are also certainly part of the material that needs discussion in a full treatment. Whether and how all these different expressions may have been linked is exactly what now needs to be discussed.

To turn back to what I will call for convenience the 'Byzantine' evidence, it is worth drawing attention to some observations made by Paul Magdalino in an important article about apocalypticism in Byzantine

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20. Gerrit J. Reinink, 'From Apocalyptics to Apologetics: Early Syriac Reactions to Islam', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in der monotheistischen Weltreligionen* (Millennium Studien 16; Berlin–New York, 2008), pp. 75–88; Shoemaker, '"The Reign of God Has Come"', p. 543 and n. 83, argues for the middle of the seventh century.

21. Sidney H. Griffith, 'Apocalypse and the Arabs', in id., *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, 2008), pp. 23–44; the subtitle of the chapter is 'The First Christian Responses to the Challenge of Islam'. For the other Syriac texts of the same general period as Ps.-Methodius see p. 34 n. 35, and more widely see also Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt, 1985) and F.J. Martinez, 'La literatura apocaliptica y las primeras reacciones cristianas a la conquista islamica en Oriente', in Gonzalez Anes y Alvarez de Castrillón (ed.), *Europa y el Islam* (Madrid, 2003), pp. 155–81. All these contributions are cast in terms of the reactions of others to Islam, that is, to changes already underway, rather than in the context of the general Late Antique background.

history as a whole.[22] He remarks first that 'on the whole, Byzantine eschatology does not present a coherent prophetic vision. Its different strands are never united and its different opinions are never resolved'. To this he adds that there was a 'basic lack of cross-reference' between different types of text (meaning between the 'chronological' narratives and the more timeless prophetic texts). Elsewhere he writes: 'what changed was not the psychology, or the tools, but the materials: the numbers and the exact identity of the apocalyptic signs'.[23] But he also refers to a 'dynamic phase' of Byzantine eschatology in the sixth and seventh centuries, followed by 'later, derivative phases'.[24] Writing with a stronger focus on the early medieval west, Jane Baun has broadened the enquiry and comments that 'we find recorded not only the opinions of eminent bishops, but also the visionary experience of humbler lay people and monastics, both male and female.'[25] We certainly need to distinguish between apocalyptic texts as such, and the common and much broader and overall assumptions about the end of the world, judgment and the Second Coming of Christ which are memorably described by Cyril Mango in a chapter entitled 'The future of mankind' in his 1980 book, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome.*[26] Homiletic and hagiography would be obvious genres where such assumptions might naturally be found. Whether Mango is right to deduce general 'Byzantine' beliefs from this is another question. But we can surely say that the idea of

22. Paul Magdalino, 'The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda', in Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (eds.), *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Presented to Donald M. Nicol* (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 3–34; cf. 29, 31. Other basic works include Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. Dorothy deF. Abrahamse (Berkeley, 2002); id., *The Oracle of Baalbek. The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Washington DC, 1967); Wolfram Brandes, 'Die apokalyptische Literatur', in Friedhelm Winkelmann and Wolfram Brandes (eds.), *Quellen zur Geschichte des fruhen Byzanz (4.-9. Jarhundert)* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 305–70; Gerhard Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie: die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem tausendjährigen Friedensreiche (Apok. 20). Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (München, 1972); Wilhelm Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend. A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore* (Eng. trans.; London, 1896); Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979) deals with the east up to John of Damascus, offering translated excerpts with introductions, but then focuses on the west; see also Werner Verbeke, D. Verhelst and Andries Welkenhuysen (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988).

23. Paul Magdalino, 'The End of Time in Byzantium', in Brandes and Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten*, pp. 119–34, at p. 126.

24. Magdalino, 'The History of the Future', p. 31.

25. Jane Baun, 'Last Things', in Thomas X. Noble and Julia M. Smith (eds.), *Cambridge History of Christianity* III: *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c.1100* (Cambridge, 2010), chap. 29, pp. 606–24, at p. 607.

26. Cyril Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), pp. 201–207.

judgment and the fate of individual Christians after death were indeed built in – together with intense curiosity about the details – to the development of Christianity from the early centuries and into the Byzantine period.

Paul Magdalino's emphasis on the actual variety of apocalyptic and eschatological texts and references is worth stressing. One example of such texts lies in the work of the sixth-century traveller and writer Cosmas Indicopleustes, who inserts an excursus in his *Christian Topography* referring to the book of Daniel. Unlike many others, however, he interprets it symbolically rather than in terms of an approaching end, and sees the Christian Roman empire as eternal, part of the divine dispensation.[27] The first two known commentaries in Greek on the Apocalypse of John, otherwise known as the Book of Revelation, date from our period, and one at least is preserved in a large number of later manuscripts and with translations into Armenian, Georgian and Old Slavonic, although Shoemaker suggests that attention to the *Apocalypse* did not change significantly before the eleventh century.[28] Of the two authors, Oecumenius may be identifiable as a correspondent of Severus of Antioch, and his work was translated into Syriac in the seventh century.[29] Andrew may have been bishop of Caesarea in the late sixth century.[30] However, the modern editors of the two works confine themselves to textual matters rather than the contemporary context, and the commentaries themselves belong more to the field of exegesis and allegorical interpretation than

27. Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography* II.73–75; see Sabine MacCormack, 'Christ and Emperor, Time and Ceremonial in Sixth-Century Byzantium and Beyond', *Byz.* 52 (1982), pp. 287–309, at pp. 294–97; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, p. 196; Mischa Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzehrfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Göttingen, 2003), p. 480. For the patristic reception of Daniel see Oegema, 'Heritage of Jewish Apocalypticism', pp. 115–23.

28. Andrew of Caesarea: ed. J. Schmid, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes* (München, 1955–56), I.1; Oecumenius: ed. Herman C. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse* (Ann Arbor, 1928); for the reception of the *Apocalypse* in the Byzantine period and its awkward status in Orthodox and especially eastern Christian culture even today, see Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'The afterlife of the *Apocalypse* of John in Byzantium', in Derek Krueger and Robert S. Nelson (eds.), *The New Testament in Byzantium* (Washington DC, 2016), pp. 301–16, who also discusses the earlier reception of the *Apocalypse*, with detailed bibliography; I thank Stephen Shoemaker for letting me see this paper in advance of publication.

29. Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (München, 1959), p. 417.

30. Ibid., 418; against Mango's dating of the work to 630/37 ('Le temps dans les commentaires de l'Apocalypse', in *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen âge, IIIe–XIIIe siècles* [Paris, 1984], pp. 431–38, at p. 435) see Wolfram Brandes, 'Anastasios ho dikoros. Endzeiterwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr.', *BZ* 90 (1997), pp. 24–63, an important article with very full bibliography, at p. 48, n. 164.

to free-standing apocalyptic. Neither commentary fits the pattern of seventh-century historical apocalyptic. Oecumenius sees 'old Rome' as the persecutor of Christians, and 'new Rome', the empire of Constantinople, as pious and good, while Andrew has seven distinct periods, not four as in the book of Daniel.[31] Probably not very relevant for us here is the Latin commentary on the book of Revelation composed by the North African bishop Primasius of Hadrumetum, one of the most active opponents of Justinian's Three Chapters decree in the 540s; as with the two Greek commentaries, it is mostly studied as a witness to the early Latin version of the book of Revelation itself.[32] Oecumenius and Andrew do have something in common in that they both illustrate in different ways how some at least in the sixth century found it necessary to find ways of accommodating or dealing with both the 6,000 years between Creation and the end identified by Hippolytus of Rome and the thousand-year period of Christ's reign on earth found in John's *Apocalypse*.

John's *Apocalypse* had had a troubled reception, and this continued to be the case in eastern Christianity.[33] Especially after Dionysius of Alexandria in the late third century, its authenticity was challenged, and most Greek patristic writers did not include it among the canonical books, nor was it included in the Syriac New Testament. Apart from the question of whether or not it was the authentic work of John the apostle, there was also that of whether it should be understood in an allegorical or millenarianist way. In the second century Irenaeus linked the *Apocalypse* with the book of Daniel, but very soon its status and interpretation came under fire. Hippolytus's early third-century commentary on Daniel combined the references in Ezekiel which lie behind John's *Apocalypse*, the prophecies in Daniel 2 and 7 and the Synoptic Gospels, with the *Apocalypse*, and endorsed the idea of a delay of 6,000 years, so setting the scene for future historical/prophetic eschatology with an emphasis on Jerusalem and on the prophecy taken up in the Gospels about the Temple and the abomination of desolation.[34] But controversy about the *Apocalypse* was recorded by Eusebius[35] and this set the pattern thereafter. We know of no commentaries on the *Apocalypse* before the sixth century; why it aroused

31. See Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, pp. 84–87.
32. Primasius of Hadrumetum, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. A.W. Adams, *CCSL* 92 (Turnhout, 1985).
33. Its earlier reception is discussed by Dimitris Kyrtatas, 'The Transformations of the Text', in Averil Cameron (ed.), *History as Text. The Writing of Ancient History* (London, 1989), pp. 146–62; see also Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, pp. 79–90.
34. Matt. 24; Mark 13:3–27; Luke 21:8–36.
35. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.25.

more interest then, and whether this is significant for our question, must as yet remain unclear.

The prospect of the fulfilment of the expected interval of 6,000 years since Creation gave rise to much agonizing, not least since views about the actual date of Creation varied.[36] The reign of Anastasius (491–518), during which the 6,000 years seemed likely to be about to be fulfilled, was key, and partly for this reason Paul Alexander dated the Greek Oracle of Baalbek, which he termed 'the Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek dress', to this period. However, contemporary opinions also differed on how to interpret the seeming signs of the end. Book VII of the Syriac chronicle of Ps.-Zachariah Rhetor, part of which has recently been translated from Syriac, and which was written in the later sixth century but drew on the earlier work of Zachariah of Mytilene, deals with the reign of Anastasius and the famine and plagues of 500–501.[37] The *Chronicle* of Ps.-Joshua the Stylite, also of the early sixth century and translated in the same series,[38] records plagues and portents in relation to 502–503 CE, but also argues against those, as in the *Seventh Vision of Daniel* (a work from the same sort of period now extant in Armenian), who thought that the war between Byzantium and Persia spelled the end of the world:

> if it had not been for the words of our Lord, we would have ventured to say that the end of the age had come, for many thought along these lines and said so. What [our Lord] said [was], 'When you hear of wars and tumults, do not be afraid, for these things must first happen, but the end has not yet come' ... we also recalled the words of the Paul, in which he cautioned the Thessalonians about the coming of our Lord, saying that they should not be troubled by word or spirit or misleading epistle, as if it were from him, alleging that the Day of the Lord had now arrived, and [showed] them that the end could not come until the false Christ had been revealed.[39]

As Brandes points out, the writers mentioned all come from the eastern provinces, as do probably the two commentators on John's *Apocalypse*, whereas in contrast, the main chroniclers and historians of Constantinople

36. On these expectations around the year 500 CE see Brandes, 'Anastasios', with bibliography, at pp. 29–32 and see below for his political interpretation; the theme of Constantinople as the 'new Jerusalem' also appears in the early sixth century: ibid., p. 8.

37. *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor. Church and War in Late Antiquity*, ed. Geoffrey Greatrex, trans. Robert R. Phenix and Cornelia B. Horn, with contributions by Sebastian P. Brock and Witold Witakowski (Translated Texts for Historians 55; Liverpool, 2011), VII, 231–32.

38. Frank R. Trombley and John W. Watt, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, trans., intro. and notes (Translated Texts for Historians 32; Liverpool, 2000).

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did not register the impending end.[40] In fact Brandes can offer only a few scattered indications of such thinking in other kinds of literature in Greek, all of them from outside the capital.[41] At least as far as the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries were concerned, therefore, it would be going too far to claim that apocalyptic thinking was characteristic of the Late Antique world as a whole.

As we know, the world did not end in the early 500s. Later writers therefore had to adjust their thinking. To quote Magdalino again, 'what changed was not the psychology, or the tools, but the materials: the numbers and the exact identity of the apocalyptic signs.'[42] In other words, we might conclude, the basic thinking was always there, but it surfaced only at certain times, and then in different ways. Mischa Meier argues for a preoccupation with chronology and chronographical computation during the reign of Justinian, for example in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas, which he connects with a human need for mental adjustment in the face of difficulty or disaster.[43] Of the other examples commonly cited in support of the view that apocalyptic thinking was widespread in the sixth century, the liturgical poet Romanos, writing in Greek in Constantinople in the 550's, composed a hymn on the last judgement,[44] while the later sixth-century historian Agathias claims that many in Constantinople thought the end of the world was coming when an earthquake struck the city in 557 CE.[45] Nevertheless I am not sure that I agree with the emphasis that is laid on this passage by Magdalino and others.[46] Agathias's comments form a literary and historiographical set piece, part of a highly literary work; when writing of an earthquake at Alexandria Agathias also goes out of his way to discuss the merits and demerits of Aristotelian science, commenting on the proneness of human nature to adapt the facts if they do not fit the theory.[47] Agathias's comments need to be read in the wider context of other statements in his *Histories* about God's interventions: for instance, he also expressly declines to give his

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42. Magdalino, 'The End of Time in Byzantium', p. 126.

43. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, pp. 443–70; Meier refers to the period around and after AD 500 as marked by 'virulenten endzeitlichen Prognosen', ibid., p. 99.

44. Magdalino, 'The History of the Future', pp. 6–7.

45. Agathias, *Historiae* V.4; see Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 46.

46. See on this Magdalino, 'The End of Time', pp. 124–25, with p. 120 on the idea of 'cosmic weeks' and the dating of the Incarnation in the mid–sixth millennium. Magdalino, 'The History of the Future', p. 8, even describes Agathias as 'the main source for sixth-century apocalyptic fever'.

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own view while recording differing explanations of plague, including its attribution to divine wrath.[48]

As I suggested, Mischa Meier would like to see in these apparent examples of speculation about the end of the world in the second half of the sixth century manifestations of a contemporary existential anxiety in the face of the many natural disasters and the downturn in imperial fortunes that occurred in the later part of Justinian's reign.[49] Likewise Wolfram Brandes gives as a reason for apocalyptic thinking the occurrence of contemporary disasters such as earthquakes or traumatic events such as war.[50] Agathias may seem at first sight to testify that such reactions were common, yet the complexities of these passages stand as a warning that we should approach his comments with caution.

Magdalino also appeals to wider trends in the sixth century, which he claims demonstrate 'the idea that the Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Heaven were in the process and on the point of becoming one'.[51] However, this does not seem precise enough to be helpful to the question raised in this paper. And even leaving aside the methodological questions surrounding functionalist explanation of apocalyptic trends by reference to 'anxiety', there are other problems with Meier's general portrayal of the sixth century as a period of disasters. Meier's book focuses explicitly on calamities and disasters, plagues and earthquakes;[52] yet plagues and tidal waves, like other portents, happen in all periods and are the stock in trade of Late Antique and Byzantine literature, and of Christian literature in the widest sense; they do not tell us much that is specific. Referring to the reign of Anastasius, Brandes argues that apocalyptic texts also had political agendas, and memorably refers to the use of apocalyptic to criticize emperors as a *Spielart der Kaiserkritik*.[53] Surely we find the same phenomenon both in the famous comparison of

48. Agathias, *Historiae* V.10.

49. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, pp. 96 ff., a section headed 'Angst und Apokalyptik im 6. Jahrhundert'. Meier cites the work of Ulrich H.J. Körtner, *Weltangst und Weltende. Eine theologische Interpretation der Apokalyptik* (Göttingen, 1988; Eng. trans. Louisville, 1995); and cf. also p. 100, where apocalyptic is described as 'Kompensation' for 'Angst'.

50. Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 25; Brandes also wants to emphasize the collective and detach apocalyptic from personal anxieties about individual salvation, ibid., 28, but see below.

51. Magdalino, 'The History of the Future', p. 11.

52. See also Brandes, 'Anastasios', pp. 41–44, and cf. Roger Scott, 'Malalas, The Secret History and Justinian's Propaganda', *DOP* 39 (1985), pp. 99–109; Peter Bell, *Three Political Voices from the Age of Justinian*: Agapetus, *Advice to the Emperor, Dialogue on Political Science*; Paul the Silentiary, *Description of Hagia Sophia* (Translated Texts for Historians 52; Liverpool, 2009).

53. Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 63.

Justinian with Antichrist in Procopius's *Secret History*,[54] and in Ps.-Joshua's *Chronicle* discussed above. But when both Meier and Brandes connect apocalyptic references in the mid-sixth century with the oppositional politics of the reign of Justinian it seems to me that the value of such references as evidence of general thinking is somewhat undermined.

The question is also whether there were more catastrophes in the sixth century than at other times; or is it rather that more such events were recorded by contemporaries, perhaps because they wanted to make political points?[55] Certainly prodigies and prophecies can be found in the works of John Malalas, Procopius and other contemporary authors, as also in the later sixth century in the context of renewed war and uncertainty,[56] but such elements had been standard in previous history-writing since the classical period. To be convincing, each of the sources on which the case for widespread genuine apocalyptic thinking rests needs at the very least to be subjected to close rhetorical analysis.

As for later periods, Magdalino makes the point that while apocalyptic thinking continued, and continued in many forms, despite the fact that the world had not ended when expected, later Byzantine apocalyptic was primarily interested in the fall of Constantinople. This is illustrated vividly in the final centuries of Byzantium before 1453, but nearer in time to our period, similar fears also showed themselves in connection with the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717.[57] In other words, apocalyptic thinking was highly flexible and highly adaptable to local circumstances.

Turning from Constantinople to Jerusalem, it would surely have been amazing if the events of the early seventh century had not given rise to apocalyptic expectations, hopes and fears. After all, the arrival of the Arabs and the surrender of Jerusalem were preceded by the almost equally extraordinary events of the Persian capture of the city, and the dangerous Avar and Persian siege of Constantinople in 626, followed against all expectations by the spectacular victory of Heraclius deep in

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54. Procopius, *Secret History* 12, on which see Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 43; Procopius's comparison of Justinian to Domitian (*Secret History* 8), made with studied artlessness, is surely another such example. Some historians take the comparison at face value, but Magdalino, 'The History of the Future', p. 8, is cautiously sceptical about Procopius's comparison of Justinian to Antichrist, also noting that Procopius does not himself make the comparison explicit.

55. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*; see also Mischa Meier, 'Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6 Jahr. n. Chr., oder: Wie Osten und Westen beständig aneinander vorbei redeten', in Brandes and Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten*, pp. 41-74.

56. Brandes, 'Anastasios', pp. 47-49, on Theophylact and the Georgian Passion of S. Golindouch.

57. See Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 52.

Persian territory and his triumphant restoration of the True Cross;[58] this is not to mention an eruption of the volcano on the island of Thera. Reversal followed success at dizzying speed. Central to the issues in Jerusalem was possession of the Temple Mount, and for the Jews, the possibility of building on it. In 630 Heraclius restored the True Cross to the very spot identified with Golgotha, just as the last emperor in the *Apocalypse* of Ps.-Methodius places his crown there.[59] As argued above, if this story of the last emperor was really already in existence, Heraclius's action would indeed have been sensational. But while the story appears in (later) manuscripts of the Latin *Tiburtine Sibyl*, it is not in the Greek version, dated by Alexander to the early sixth century and connected by him with the expected expiry of the 6,000 years since Creation in the reign of Anastasius.[60] It seems more likely that the motif of the last emperor and Golgotha followed rather than preceded Heraclius's actions, and was a natural result of such climactic events. As for the anti-Jewish work known as the *Doctrina Jacobi*, probably of the early 640s, it reflects the rapidly changing circumstances after the restoration of the cross in 630, but while it does deal with the prophecies in Daniel 7, and the four kingdoms, with Rome as the fourth, it does not develop into full-scale apocalyptic. Brandes nonetheless sees this and other works, including the Syriac Alexander Legend as influential on the later Ps.-Methodius.[61]

Apocalyptic and prophecy are closely related themes, and as an example of *Adversus Iudaeos* literature, the *Doctrina Jacobi* naturally focuses on Christian interpretations of Scriptural prophecy. For apocalyptic to be accepted, the relevant prophet had to be a true prophet; thus while the *Doctrina* mentions the Saracens and their prophet, for the author of this work that prophet is false.[62] The identification of true and false prophets

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58. Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 38, for Gog and Magog in the homily on the siege by Theodore Syncellus.

59. See on this Drijvers, 'Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*', pp. 186–87; Magdalino, 'The History of the Future', p. 19; Cyril Mango, 'Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide', *T&MByz* 9 (1985), pp. 91–117; Christopher Bonura, 'The Man and the Myth: did Heraclius Know the Legend of the Last Roman Emperor?', *StPatr.* 62 (2013), pp. 503–13; on the Last Emperor theme see A. Kraft, 'The Last Roman Emperor *topos* in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition', *Byz.* 82 (2012), pp. 13–57, dealing with Ps.-Methodius and its descendants and the related Syriac texts; Petre Guran, 'Genesis and Function of the Last Emperor Myth in Byzantine Eschatology', *Byzantinistica* 8 (2006), pp. 292–96.

60. See Shoemaker, 'The Tiburtine Sibyl', with pp. 222–25 on the complex history of the text and Latin translation, with n. 12 above.

61. Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 50.

62. *Doctrina Jacobi* III.8–9 (Daniel); V.16 (the false prophet of the Saracens); eschatology in the *Doctrina*: G. Dagron and V. Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle', *T&MByz* 11 (1991), pp. 263–68.

was a shared but contentious theme within the worlds of Judaism, Christianity and Islam,[63] and the Qur'anic position on the status of Jesus as a prophet and its polemical implications are clear enough.[64]

By the end of the seventh century circumstances had changed dramatically, not least with the stronger policies of 'Abd al-Malik in relation to Christians in the Umayyad Caliphate. In this context what Reinink has called a 'sudden rise and rapid diffusion of Syriac apocalyptic'[65] in the late seventh century becomes readily explicable, and at the same time indicates a wider Syriac diffusion by then of the motif of the Last Emperor and Golgotha. Like their counterparts in sixth-century Constantinople the Syriac apocalyptic texts of the late seventh century and early eighth were nothing if not political. But they are also too late, and too different, to have been influential in the earliest emergence of Qur'anic eschatological thinking.

Strikingly different from the eschatological elements in the Qur'an and from the Qur'anic treatment of the crucifixion, according to which Jesus did not die on the cross, Christian apocalyptic thinking in the seventh century gave great importance to the theme of the cross. We do not know exactly what form Heraclius's restitution of the cross actually took, though it seems likely, as Jan Willem Drijvers argues, that as shown in the poetry of George of Pisidia, Heraclius's reference points were Old Testament and Davidic.[66] But we see in this period a growing focus on the liturgical theology of the cross, with an obvious resonance in the events of the Persian invasion and Heraclius's restoration of the Cross to Jerusalem. The Christian sources on the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614, when the True Cross had been removed to Ctesiphon, and the

63. See Guy G. Stroumsa, 'False Prophet, False Messiah and the Religious Scene in Seventh-Century Jerusalem', in Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget (eds.), *Redemption and Resistance. The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (London, 2008), pp. 85–96.

64. See Qur'an 19:16: 'Jesus taught: I am a servant of Allah, He has given me the Book and has appointed me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and has enjoined on me Prayer and almsgiving throughout my life. He has made me dutiful towards my mother, and has not made me haughty and graceless. Peace was ordained for me the day I was born, the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised up' (31–34).

65. See G.J. Reinink, 'The Romance of Julian the Apostate as a Source for Seventh-Century Syriac Apocalypses', in Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais (eds.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam* (Damascus, 1992), pp. 75–86, at p. 80, and see Griffith, 'Apocalypse and the Arabs', pp. 32–35; for the *Apocalypse* of Ps.-Methodius see now Benjamin Garstad (ed.), *Apocalypse. Pseudo-Methodius; An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 14; Cambridge MA–London, 2012).

66. See Drijvers, 'Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*', pp. 184–86; for the Syriac Alexander Legend as a 'protoByzantine propaganda writing', from 629/30 in North Mesopotamia, see Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 50.

accounts of its restoration all lay enormous emphasis on its symbolism.[67] The Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September received much more emphasis from now on, and Sophronius, the future patriarch of Jerusalem, and author of poems dealing with the Persian capture, seems to have known of two other feasts. Several homiletic texts about the cross date from the sixth and seventh centuries.[68] St Anastasius the Persian was said to have been converted by the cross, and the physical wood of the cross is an important topic in the *Adversus Iudaeos* texts of the seventh century, where it is cited as one of the material objects whose veneration by Christians has to be defended against charges of idolatry. In the late seventh century official Muslim policy forbade the display of crosses as the key marker of Christians,[69] while the dead Christ on the cross begins to be depicted in images of the crucifixion. The plain cross also gained particular salience during Byzantine iconoclasm, as the visual symbol preferred by the iconoclasts in place of figural images.[70] In the crucial seventh century the cross, so central to contemporary Christian apocalyptic, became a central and sharp point of tension between Christians and Muslims. This example of difference suggests caution in connection with generalizations about the emergence of Islam and about the Qur'an which appeal to a supposed emphasis in late antiquity on apocalypticism and eschatology. These were themes which surfaced in different ways and in different places, and which served different purposes. We do not help the case by glossing over the differences.

It is perhaps worth saying more in conclusion about the broader context of anxiety about the future life in Christian Late Antiquity,

67. The great day of restoration, designated as 21 March, was hailed by Sophronius in Palestine (Marcello Gigante [ed.], *Sophronii Anacreontica* [Rome, 1957], no. 18), and George of Pisidia in Constantinople.

68. See for example Roger Scott, 'Alexander the Monk, *Discovery of the True Cross*', Eng. trans. with notes, in Margaret Mullett (ed.), *Metaphrastes, or, Gained in Translation* (Belfast, 2004), pp. 157-84; partial ed. and trans. John W. Nesbitt, 'Alexander the Monk's Text of Helena's Discovery of the True Cross (BHG 410)', in id. (ed.), *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 23-39; for a similar work in Syriac by Pantaleon (BHG 6430) see A. di Berardino, *Patrologia* V (Genoa, 2000), p. 299, and cf. BHG 427p.

69. Geoffrey R.D. King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm and the Declaration of Doctrine', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985), pp. 267-77; Sidney H. Griffith, 'Images, Islam and Christian Icons. A Moment in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in Early Islamic Times', in Canivet and Rey-Coquais (eds.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, pp. 121-38.

70. For the theme in the seventh century see Anna Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986), especially pp. 40-63, and see Averil Cameron, 'The Language of Images: the Rise of Icons and Christian Representation', in ead., *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1996), no. XII, at p. 37.

especially life beyond death. This could indeed take many forms, from the questions asked in the various sets of questions and answers from the sixth to eighth centuries[71] to fears expressed about the actual efficacy of the saints and their capacity to help the living.[72] At bottom, certainly, were anxieties and doubts about divine justice that we also find taken up so strongly in the Qur'an. Issues such as the afterlife, providence, creation, predestination and revelation also lay behind these texts, but they are not necessarily expressed in apocalyptic terms.

We have focused here on the political and public expressions of apocalyptic, and indeed, Wolfram Brandes wishes to detach the theme of apocalyptic from the background of individual experience. Yet concerns about individual salvation were also a central element in Late Antiquity, perhaps indeed even more so, given Christian opposition to any hint of fatalism. For the eastern provinces this was a painful period, not only in terms of political events but also because of sharp inter-Christian divisions and the 'separation' of the Chalcedonians and Miaphysites. Getting doctrine right, or at least, belonging to the right group – about which it was not always easy to be sure – carried a high level of personal anxiety. It is often argued that doctrinal issues were not important because they did not touch the majority, who probably did not understand or even perhaps know about them. I want to argue in contrast that the concerns, arguments and tensions about Christian orthodoxy during Late Antiquity, and in particular for the eastern Mediterranean in the period after the Council of Chalcedon, also shaped general experience and historical development.

To repeat Brian Daley's words, Christianity in Late Antiquity was based on hope, the personal hope of salvation.[73] That hope could be easily dented. It might require the help of intercession, whether from the Virgin or the saints, or through relics, pilgrimage, or, increasingly, images. Yet these too could arouse anxieties in the faithful. The scepticism and anxiety expressed by some about the power of saints after their deaths were responses to a widespread turn towards the help of saints, relics, and images for personal agendas in which a main issue was the salvation of the individual or those

71. See Yannis Papadoyannakis, 'Instruction by Question and Answer: the Case of Late Antique and Byzantine *erotapokriseis*', in Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 91-103; Gilbert Dagron, 'L'ombre d'un doute: l'hagiographie en question, VIe–XIe siècles', *DOP* 46 (1992), pp. 59-68. Recurring anxieties expressed in this literature concern the fate of souls after death and the reality of bodily resurrection.

72. See Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2012); Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo, Phil Booth (eds.), *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity* (Leiden, 2011).

73. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*.

on whose behalf they prayed, yet when it was often difficult for individuals to be quite sure of where they stood.[74]

There is also in this period an abundance of evidence for Christian concerns about fate, astrology and prophecy. Two authors of the period, the early seventh-century historian Theophylact Simocatta and the early eighth-century patriarch of Constantinople, Germanos, both composed dialogues arguing against the fatalistic idea that God had ordained a fixed term of life for each individual.[75] Arguments against the power of astrology and of the heavenly bodies, and the idea of fate had long been standard in Christian writing, and continued to be so now.[76] At the end of the sixth century St Symeon the Younger is said to have debated with astrologers, who are thus linked with 'Hellenes' as the interlocutors and rivals of Christian holy men and saints.[77] Condemned as its practitioners were under various names in imperial legislation (mathematici, philosophers), astrology continued to be practised, and continued to be a subject of anxiety for Christians. Accordingly the sixth-century bureaucrat and exegete Junillus explicitly linked together 'Sibyls and philosophers' as targets of Christian condemnation.[78] Foretelling the future, prophecy, fate, were all topics that continued to engage Christians, just as the providence, and the judgement, of God, had been central issues in the sixth century in the debates about creation, cosmology and the eternity of the world, and works on the subject by Aeneas of Gaza, Zachariah Rhetor, John Philoponus and Cosmas Indicopleustes.[79]

There is no doubt that fears of the coming of Antichrist, or predictions of the end of the world, are common in Late Antique sources, as are

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74. Matthew Dal Santo, 'Text, Image and the "Visionary Body" in Early Byzantine Hagiography: Incubation and the Rise of the Christian Image Cult', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4.1 (2011), pp. 31–54. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, places emphasis on an increase in piety in the late sixth century.

75. See Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (Washington DC, 2014), pp. 7–21.

76. Averil Cameron, 'Divine Providence in Late Antiquity'; that attitudes were also ambivalent, even among Byzantine intellectuals, has been shown in an excellent recent study by Paul Magdalino, *L'orthodoxie des astrologues. La science entre le dogme et la divination à Byzance (VIIe-XIVe siècles)* (Paris, 2006).

77. P. Van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521–592)*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1962-1970), I, pp. 138–39.

78. Ed. M. Maas, *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean. Junillus Africanus and the Instituta Regularia Divinae Legis* (Tübingen, 2003), II, 29, p. 232; II, 18–24 concern *praedictiones*, predictions, or 'foretellings'; cf. also Justinian persecuting astrologers: Procopius, *Secret History* 11.37–40.

79. Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity*, pp. 28–38; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, pp. 190–98.

concerns about divine justice and providence.[80] But the many such passages commonly cited in discussions of Late Antique apocalyptic are striking above all for their variety, and for their very varied literary contexts. I have not tried in this paper to make the necessary critical comparison between these and the eschatology we find in the Qur'an, but indeed the latter does indeed seem different, whether from the political-historical apocalypses or from the more diffuse Christian anxieties of the age. I would like to emphasize yet again the sheer variety in the Christian material; *pace* Magdalino, cited above, not even the elements remained the same. Furthermore the apocalyptic works as such often have no clear context, even if we can agree that beyond them lay a complex and wide-ranging area of Christian hope and Christian anxiety. Given such a situation, identifying possible lines of influence in any more precise way between these highly fluid texts and ways of thinking and the Qur'anic message seems just as difficult as the other manifold problems with which the latter is surrounded. Yet it is easy to see the level of bewilderment and uncertainty which many Christians must have felt when faced with such dangerous times and such a turmoil of religious change. Perhaps the idea of Islam as a reform movement against this confused background is a better explanation for its eschatological message than generalization about the possible influence of an 'apocalyptic spirit' that was somehow characteristic of 'Late Antiquity'.[81]

80. However, behind the passages about fate and *tyche* in classicizing historians like Procopius and Agathias discussed by Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2004) and 'The Historical and Religious Views of Agathias: a Reinterpretation', *Byz.* 69 (1999), pp. 206–52, lie many precedents in classical historiography.

81. For related arguments see also Averil Cameron, 'Patristic Studies and the Emergence of Islam', in Brouria Bitton-Askelony, Theodore de Bruyn, Carol Harrison (eds.), *Patristic Studies in the Twenty-First Century. Proceedings of an International Conference to mark the 50th Anniversary of the International Association of Patristic Studies* (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 249–78.

'THEIR EVIL RULE MUST END!' A COMMENTARY ON THE IRANIAN BUNDAHIŠN 33:17-28

Domenico AGOSTINI

IRANIAN APOCALYPTICS:
A SHORT HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After about two centuries of scholarship, it is still difficult to unravel the skein of the origins and features of Iranian apocalyptics. Many unsettled disputes remain regarding its relation to Iranian eschatology and to other similar traditions found in the literature of other religions, notably Judaism and Christianity. This is mainly due to the paucity of Iranian texts and passages that might be classified as apocalyptic. Indeed, apart from the Young Avestan text *Yašt* 19.88-96, or *Zāmyād Yašt*, and the controversial tradition of the *Oracles of Hystaspes*,[1] the only examples of Iranian apocalyptic literature are a few Pahlavi texts written during the Islamic period (9th-10th century). Among them, one must mention the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* (henceforth also *ZWY*), the *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* (henceforth also *JN*), a few passages in the *Dēnkard* VII: 7-11, and chapters thirty-three and thirty-four of the *Iranian Bundahišn*.

Since the nineteenth century, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* have stressed the idea that Iranian eschatology had already been crystallized in the *Gathas*, the most ancient part of the *Avesta* directly to be attributed to Zarathustra. Then, after the upheaval of the Greek conquest, it developed into an apocalyptic system that became the main source of Jewish, Christian and Gnostic apocalyptics. This Irano-centric position, stressing the antiquity of this literary and religious phenomenon, was resumed in the first half of the twentieth century by Franz Cumont in his idea of 'Mages hellénisés',[2] and more recently by certain scholars of

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1. On the position of this text in the context of Iranian apocalyptic, see David Flusser, 'Hystaspes and John of Patmos', in Shaul Shaked (ed.), *Irano-Judaica: Studies relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 12-75; Frantz Grenet, 'Y a-t-il une composante iranienne dans l'apocalyptique judéo-chrétienne? Nouveaux regards sur un vieux problème', *Archæus* 11-12 (2007-2008), pp. 15-36.

2. Franz Cumont, 'La fin du monde selon les mages occidentaux', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 103 (1931), pp. 29-96.

the Scandinavian school, notably Geo Widengren and Anders Hultgård.[3] This current of thought was followed more mildly by Mary Boyce, who was the first scholar to speak of an 'apocalyptic-eschatology' in the Iranian tradition.[4]

On the other hand, in an innovative article, Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin challenged the claim of the originality of Iranian apocalyptics by arguing that the concept of the metallic era in the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, one of the most important Pahlavi Apocalyptic texts, had been borrowed from Daniel 2.[5] Since then, Philippe Gignoux has convincingly argued for the first time for the existence of a historical apocalyptics in the Iranian context. The accounts found in late Pahlavi literature should be classified precisely as pseudo-historical and should be included in the genre of *vaticinia ex eventu*. Though he reasserts the idea of the originality of Iranian eschatology, Gignoux has also shown the dependence of Iranian apocalyptics on other traditions, in particular Jewish ones.[6]

In the last years, I have approached the idea of a clear-cut separation between eschatology and apocalyptics in the Iranian context. I believe that in the Iranian tradition the apocalyptic events may form a stage that is independent of eschatology, and I am thus in favour of the idea of a late historical apocalyptics that may include also pseudo-historical and mythical elements. It is indisputable that the apocalyptic narration found in Pahlavi texts is full of characters and characteristics drawn from contemporary political events. This article aims to comment on and define the sixth-ninth century events and historical figures that are referenced in the *Iranian Bundahišn* 33:17-28, as well as to show how the overlap

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3. Geo Widengren, 'Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apocalyptik', in David Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 77-162; Anders Hultgård, 'Forms and origins of Iranian Apocalypticism', in David Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 387-411.

4. Mary Boyce, 'On the antiquity of Zoroastrian apocalyptic', *BSOAS* 47 (1984), pp. 57-75.

5. Jean Duchesne-Guillemin, 'Apocalypse juive et apocalypse iranienne', in Ugo Bianchi and Maarten J. Vermaseren (eds.), *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'impero romano* (Leiden, 1982), pp. 753-61.

6. Philippe Gignoux, 'Apocalypses et voyages extra-terrestres dans l'Iran mazdéen', in Claude Kappler (ed.), *Apocalypses et voyages dans l'au-delà* (Paris, 1987), pp. 351-74; idem, 'Nouveaux regards sur l'apocalyptique iranienne', *CRAI* (1986), pp. 334-46. In a recent article (Domenico Agostini, 'On Iranian and Jewish Apocalyptics, Again', *JAOS* 136 (2016), pp. 495-505, p. 502), I argued that 'it is more useful to evaluate the extent and the importance of these contacts rather than seeking to trace the presence of any direct or indirect influence. Indeed, going after further speculations may reduce this important field of studies to an otiose debate.'

and the adaptation of different topics effected the transmission of this important apocalyptic material.

CHAPTER 33 AND ITS IRANIAN BUNDAHIŠN CONTEXT

The *Bundahišn*, 'the Primal Creation', is a major Zoroastrian cosmologic and cosmogonic work written directly in Pahlavi, but based on detailed Avestan sources. It contains the story and description of the world and of humankind from the creation to the resurrection (Pahlavi *ristāxēz*), a short account of the legendary dynasty of the Kayanids, and a discussion of the Ērānšahr, that is, the land of the Iranians. It has come down to us in two different versions, one longer version called the *Iranian Bundahišn* and another shorter one called the *Indian Bundahišn*. As is true for most of Pahlavi literature, the book underwent much reworking and adaptation up to the first centuries of the Islamic era.

Chapter thirty-three (ms. TD1 90r.2-94r.11)[7] of the *Iranian Bundahišn* entitled 'On the afflictions which will befall Ērānšahr in each millennium' (*abar wizend <ī> hazārag hazārag ō ērānšahr madan*), contains mythical, historical, apocalyptic and eschatological material. It describes the events that occurred and will occur during the last six millennia of the twelve that compose the Zoroastrian history of the world, up to the coming of the final saviour Sōšāns,[8] to whom fifty-seven extra years are assigned. The description of the seventh and eighth millennia (the first and the second in the *Bundahišn*'s account) is very short and it focuses respectively on the first human beings and on the cruel tyranny of Azdahāg, a traditional enemy of Iran. A long narration of the National mythical history of Iran, including well-known heroes such as Frēdōn, Ēraj, Manuščihr and Rustam, is found in the account of the ninth millennium (the third in the *Bundahišn*'s account). The tenth millennium (the fourth in the *Bundahišn*'s account) in particular is that of Zoroaster and the propagation of Mazdean religion under the auspices of King Wištāsp, and its description contains mostly a parade of historical characters and peoples, such as Alexander the Great, Khosrau I 'of immortal soul' and Yazdegard III, the Byzantines, the Arabs and the Turks. This millennium is very important in the Zoroastrian imagination. In fact, according to the most common tradition, the end of this millennium

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7. *The Bondahesh. Being a Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript TD₁* (Iranian Cultural Foundation 88; Tehran, 1970).
8. On this figure, see Jean Kellens, 'Saošiiaṇt-', *Studia Iranica* 3 (1974), pp. 187-209.

would have coincided with a period of religious and social troubles and upheavals.[9] In this context, the apocalyptic narration that is the subject of this article develops and ends with the description of the eleventh and twelfth millennia (the fifth and sixth in the *Bundahišn* account), those of the first two saviours Ušēdar e Ušēdarmāh and the allusion to the coming of Sōšāns. The latter will accomplish the eschatological process that is described in detail in the thirty-fourth chapter of the same work.

TEXTUAL EDITION[10]

Ms. TD1 91v.14-93r.2

17) andar xwadāyīh <ī> pērōz ī yazdegardān šaš sāl wārān nē būd <ud> mardōm anāgīh ud saxtīh ī garān rasīd

18) did ⁎axšūnδār[11] ī heftālān xwadāy āmad ud pērōz ōzad ud kawād ud xwah ātaxš-ē pad grawān ō heftālān burd

19) andar xwadāyīh <ī> kawād mazdak ī bāmbādān ō paydāgīh mad ud dād ī mazdakīh nihād <ud> kawād frēft <ud> wiyābān kard <ud> zan ud frazand ud xwāstag pad hamīh ud hambāzīh abāyēd dāštan +framūd <ud> dēn ī mazdēsnān ī az kār dāštan tā +anōšag ruwān husraw <ī> kawādān ō purnāyīh mad <ud> mazdak ōzad <ud> dēn ī māzdēsnān winnārd <ud> awēšān axwān kē-šān asp +tag ō ērānšahr +hamē kard spōxt ud widarag bast ud ērānšahr abēbīm kard

20) ud ka xwadāyīh ō yazdegard mad wīst sāl xwadāyīh kard ēg tazīgān pad was maragīh ō ērānšahr dwārist hēnd yazdegard pad kārēzār abāg awēšān nē +škāft[12] <ud> ō xwarāsān ud turkestān +šud <ud> asp ud mard +ō ayārīh xwāst u-šān ānōh ōzad

21) pus ī yazdegard ō hindūgān šud ud spāh <ud> gund āwurd pēš az āmad tā ō xwarāsān uzīd <ud> ān spāh <ud> gund wišuft ud ērānšahr pad

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9. On this topic, see further in detail.

10. Critical apparatus: +: In transcription for words emended; ⁎: Doubtful transcription or meaning; < >: In transcription and in translation for words supplied.

11. For this reading, issued from a typical Sogdian title 'xšwnδ'r, see Walter B. Henning, 'Neue Materialen zur Geschichte des Manichäismus', *ZDMG* 90 (1936), pp. 1–18, p. 17, n. 2; Frantz Grenet, 'A View from Samarkand: the Chionite and Kidarite Periods in the archaeology of Sogdiana (fourth to fifth centuries A.D.)', in Michael Alram *et al.* (eds.), *Coins, art and chronology, II: The first millennium CE in the Indo-Iranian borderlands* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 267–81, p. 268. Other reading of this name are: لا روپ [hšnw'c] 'Khašnawāz' in the *Iranian Bundahišn*; 'Khushnawāz' in Firdowsi's *Šahnāme* and 'Akhshunwār' in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*. The corruption of *Axšundār* (or *Axšunwār*) in *Khašnawāz* is more explicable by the corruption of Arabic script (mostly through mistakes of diacritical signs) than by that of Pahlavi. This might indicate that this part of *Iranian Bundahišn* was written later, and might be in part dependent on Arabic or Persian sources (Frantz Grenet's private communication, 18/03/2014).

12. Dan Shapira, 'On King and on the Last Days in Seventh Century Iraq: A Mandaean Text and its Parallels', *Aram* 22 (2010), pp. 133–70, p. 160, n. 135 suggests *škōhēd* 'flowering, triumphant' as historical present.

tazīgān mānd u-šān ān ī xwēš dād <ud> +agdēnīh rawāgēnīd ud was ēwēn ī +pēšēnīgān wišuft <ud> dēn ī mazdēsnān nizārēnīd ud nasā-šōyišnīh ud nasā-nigānih ud nasā-xwarišnīh pad kardag nihād
22) az bundahišn tā im rōz anāgīh az ēn garāntar nē mad čē duš-kunišnīh <ī> awēšān rāy niyāz ud awērānīh ud must kunišnīh ud wad dādīh ud dēnīh rāy sēj ud niyāz ud abārīg anāgīh mehmānīh kard ēstēd
23) pad dēn gōwēd <kū> duš-pādixšāhīh <ī> awēšān sar kāmēd būdan
24) grōh-ē āyēnd +suxr nišān ud +suxr drafš ud pārs ud rōstāgīhā ī ērānšahr tā <ō> bābel girēnd <ud> awēšān tazīgān nizār kunēnd
25) pas ēk-ēw az kust ī xwarāsān āyēd wad mard <ud> awēšān padišxwārgarīgān spōzēd <ud> sāl-ē čand duš-pādixšāhīh +kunēd <ud> pad sarīh <ī> oy andar pārs mardōm be +abesīhēnd bē huzārag ī pad kāzarun drayā-bārīhā tā be nē mānēd
26) az ān pas hēn[13] <ī> turk ī pad was marag +ud was drafš andar ērānšahr dwārēnd ēn ērānšahr ābād ud °hubōy awērān kunēnd ud was dūdag ī ābādān wišōbēnd <ud> was°[14] anāgīh ud must pad mardōman ī ērānšahr kunēnd <ud> was mānīhā kanēnd <ud> wišōbēnd <ud> girēnd tā yazdān +abaxšāyišn kunēd
27) <ud> ka rūmīg[15] +rasēnd <ud> ēk sāl pādixšāyīh rāyēnēnd ān ī hangām az kust ī kāwulistān ēk-ēw āyēd kē-š xwarrah padiš az ham-dūdag ī bayān <ī> kay wahrām xwānēnd ud hamāg mardōm abāg ōy abāz bawēnd ud pad-iz hindūgān ud hrōm ud turkestān hamāg kust-+ēw pādixšāyīh kunēd <ud> hamāg abārōn wurrōyišn ul +dārēd <ud> dēn ī zarduxšt +winnārēd ud kas pad ēč wurrōyišn ō paydāgīh nē tuwān āmadan
28) andar im nihang pešōtan ī wištāspān az kustag <ī> kangdiz āyēd abag sad ud panjāh mard <ī> ahlawān <ud> ān +uzdeszar ī rāz-gāh ī awešan bud be kanēd ud ataxš <ī> wahrām pad +gōhrīg nišānēd <ud> den hamāg drust gōwēd <ud> winnārēd

17) During the reign of Pērōz the son of Yazdegard, there was no rain for six years and heavy evils and severities befell the people.
18) Then Axšūnδār, the Hephthalite prince, came and killed Pērōz. Kawād and <his> sister brought as a pledge a Fire to Hephtalites.
19) During the reign of Kawād, Mazdak the son of Bāmbād appeared and established the Mazdakite law. He tricked and deluded Kawād, and commanding that women, children and property must be held in common and equally by all, and that <people> must abandon the Mazdean religion until Khosrau 'of immortal soul', Kawād's son, reached maturity, killed Mazdak and restored the Mazdean religion. He drove out the lords who were attacking Iran with their horses, blocking their way and securing Iran.
20) And when Yazdegard became king he ruled for twenty years. Then the Arabs overran Iran in great numbers. Yazdegard did not bend to them in battle. He went to Khorasan and Turkestan, asking for aid, horses and men. <However>, they killed him there.

13. Avestan *haēna-*.
14. °...°: passage taken from ms. DH 22v.18-19 (*The Codex DH. Being a Facsimile. Edition of Bondahesh, Zand-e Vohuman Yasht, and Parts of Denkard* (Iranian Culture Foundation 89; Tehran, 1970).
15. Pahlavi *hrōmāyīg.* Compare to Classical Persian رومي 'rūmī'.

21) Yazdegard's son went to India and brought <back> army and troops. <But> before he reached Khorasan, he went into exile and the army and troops were vanquished. Iran remained <in the hands of> Arabs. They propagated their own law and heterodoxy, and destroyed many ancestral traditions, weakening the Mazdean religion. They established the <practices> of washing the dead, burying the dead, and eating the dead.

22) From the first creation until today, no evil worse than this has <ever> come. On account of their evil deeds <Iran> has become a host to want, desolation and on account of <their> violent deeds, evil law and religion, <a host> to danger, misery and other evils.

23) In the *dēn* it says: 'Their evil rule must end!'

24) A group will come <bearing> red banners and red flags. They will seize Pārs and the districts of Iran as far as Bābel (i.e., Babylonia); they will weaken the Arabs.

25) Then an evil man will come from the direction of Khorasan (i.e., the East). He will defeat those of Padišxwārgar and will wield <his> misrule for several years. During his leadership, the people of Pārs will be destroyed – but for a few living on the shores of the Kāzarun sea – until none remain.

26) Afterwards, the Turkish forces will overrun Iran in great numbers and many flags. They will lay waste to Iran, so thriving and sweet, and will destroy many prosperous families. Until the gods have mercy, they will do much harm and violence to the people of Iran, and raze, demolish, and seize many homes.

27) When the Byzantines will come, they will rule for one year. At that time, a man, <endowed> with the *xwarrah* and from the same family of lords, will come from the direction of Kāwulistān. They will call him kay Wahrām. All people will be again with him, and he will rule over India, Byzantium and Turkestan, and everywhere. He will uproot all sinful beliefs and restore the religion of Zarduxšt (i.e., Zoroaster). No one will dare openly practise <another> belief.

28) At the same moment, Pešōtan the son of Wištāsp will come with one hundred and fifty righteous men from the district of Kangdiz. He will raze the idol temples that were their place of secrets. He will establish Wahrām fires in <their> stead, and will proclaim the religion without fault and restore it.[16]

The Famine, the Hephthalites and Mazdak (5ᵗʰ-6ᵗʰ century)
[§§ 17-19]

These first three paragraphs draw an accurate historical picture of Iran between the middle of the fifth century and the end of the sixth. In this context, I would like to draw attention to the apocalyptic patterns and content of some passages of narration.

16. This passage is based on the new translation of the *Iranian Bundahišn* being prepared by Domenico Agostini and Samuel Thrope.

Historical evidence exists for the famine and the drought under the reign of Pērōz (459-84). According to al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, al-Thaʿlabī's *Ta'rīkh ghurar al-siyar* and Firdowsi's *Šahnāme*,[17] this terrible and hopeless period lasted seven years and caused desperation and harm.[18] Although the truthfulness of this event is not contestable, it is interesting to remark that in the Iranian apocalyptic narration the disaster is associated with the end of the millennium of Zoroaster. In the *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* 16:12-13 (ms. DS 5:10-6:6)[19] is written:

> 12) The atmosphere <will be> upset and cold winds as well as hot winds will blow, and fruits of trees will decrease and the earth will be barren. 13) <There will be> many earthquakes that will cause a lot of destruction. Rain will fall off-season and that which will fall will be profitless and harmful; and clouds will swirl in the sky.

Furthermore, the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 4:42-46 says as follows:[20]

> 42) And a mighty cloud and the righteous wind will prevent rain at the proper moment and time. 43) And clouds of haze will darken the whole sky. 44) And the hot wind and the cold wind will arrive and take away the fruit and the seed of the grain. 45) And even the rain will not pour in its proper moment and even that <little> which will rain, more *xrafstar* (i.e., Ahremanic creatures) will rain than water. 46) And the water of the rivers and the springs will decrease, and there will not be increase.

I do not think that it is a coincidence that the *Iranian Bundahišn* adapted these extraordinary meteorological adversities during the reign of Pērōz to the context of Iranian apocalyptic literature. It is not even hard to argue that this historical event provided the genre with a very real context, still vivid in the Zoroastrian collective imagination before being reworked during the later composition of Pahlavi literature.

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17. See respectively Clifford E. Bosworth (trans.), *The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen* (The History of al-Ṭabarī [*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*] 5; New York, 1999), p. 110; Hermann Zotenberg (ed. and trans.), *Histoire des Rois des Perses de Al-Thaʿālibī* (Paris, 1900), pp. 575–76; Jules Mohl (ed. and trans.), *Le livre des Rois par Abou'lkasim Firdousi*, vol. 6 (Paris, 1876–1878), pp. 70–72. See also Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), pp. 124–26, 290.

18. In the *al-Āthār al-Bāqīa* (see C. Edward Sachau [trans.], *Al-Bīrūnī: The Chronology of the Nations* [London, 1879], pp. 215–16), al-Bīrūnī refers that in Isfahan during the festival of 'watering' they used to pour water for the remembrance, at least as they pretended to explain, of the pilgrimage of King Pērōz to the fire-temple of *ādur-xwarrah* (i.e., *ādur-farrōbag*) in Pārs in order to pray for rain. See also Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 176.

19. For the transcription and the manuscript facsimile of the passage, see Domenico Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg. Un texte eschatologique zoroastrien* (Biblica et Orientalia 50; Rome, 2013), pp. 189, 346–47.

20. For the transcription of this passage, see Carlo G. Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn. A Zoroastrian Apocalypse* (Serie Orientale Roma 75; Roma, 1995), p. 138.

After the reference to the famine and drought, another terrible event that occurred under the reign of Pērōz is recorded: the war of this king against the Hephthalites. Pērōz became ruler of Iran, probably with the help of the same Hephthalites,[21] as a result of a fratricidal struggle against Hormizd III who ruled for two years (457-59) after the death of their father Yazdegard II. During this dynastic confusion, Albania gained independence and the eastern borders of the empire were laid open to Hephthalite attack. When Pērōz became king, he succeeded in pacifying Albania and in making an agreement with the Byzantines for the defence of the Caucasus against nomadic tribes.[22] However, the wars and the tragic defeat of Pērōz in 487 CE against Axšūnδar[23] prince of the Hephthalites made a great impression on contemporary as well as later Arabic and Persian authors.

The Byzantine, Syriac, Armenian and Arabic-Persian sources clarify, more or less, what is reported in the *Iranian Bundahišn*. Although all of these different traditions appear to differ from one another, it is possible to utilize them all in order to reconstruct the historical events that transpired. In 469 CE following after the first disastrous battle, Pērōz was forced to cede some territories and to promise not to cross the borders again. At the same time, he recovered his own freedom by paying a heavy ransom and by leaving his son Kawād (488-531) as a pledge (*Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua* and *Šahnāme*).[24] Then Pērōz broke the agreement and marched against the Hephthalites in 484 CE. He ordered his cavalry to charge, but, according to a tradition more or less similar, they fell into a hidden ditch and all perished (Lazar of Pharp and Procopius).[25] According to al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, the Hephthalites held a *mowbed* (i.e., a Zoroastrian chief priest), a daughter of Pērōz and the rest of his womenfolk as hostages.[26]

21. See Adrian D.H. Bivar, 'The History of Eastern Iran', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran 3/1: The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods* (Cambridge, 1983), [pp. 181–231], p. 214.

22. See Touraj Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (London, 2009), p. 25.

23. See n. 10.

24. See respectively William Wright (trans.), *The Chronicle of Joshua The Stylite* (Cambridge, 1882), pp. 8–9; Mohl, *Le livre des Rois*, vol. 6, p. 79. See also Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 293; Richard N. Frye, 'The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran 3/1: The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 116–80, p. 149.

25. See respectively Victor Langlois (trans.), *Collection des historiens anciens de l'Arménie*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1869), p. 351; Henry B. Dewing (trans.), *Procopius: History of the Wars*, vol. 1 (Cambridge MA, 1914), pp. 23, 25. Procopius incorrectly uses the name White Huns, usually associated to Chionites, for the Hephthalites.

26. See Bosworth, *The Sāsānids, the Byzantines*, p. 119.

The story of Kawād and his sister bringing fire as a pledge to Hephthalites is not recorded in any other source besides the *Bundahišn*. However, we know from Procopius that Sasanians became tributaries to the Hephthalites and that Kawād owed money to them,[27] probably because they actively assisted him in obtaining the throne, to the detriment of his uncle Walāxš.[28]

The last topic left to comment on is the rise of Mazdakism. I will not expatiate upon this topic as it is more important here not to try and uncover the historical kernel but rather to try and understand the effects that it had on Sasanian society.[29] While at the end of the fifth century Kawād was facing economic and political problems, a Zoroastrian priest named Mazdak proposed to the king a series of social and religious reforms that caused grudge and annoyance among the Zoroastrian clergy. These ideas stressed an egalitarian social system, allowing the sharing of wealth, women and property. Kawād supported these new political and social reforms and the prior order plunged into chaos. Later, Khosrau I (531–79), son of Kawād, restored the *status quo ante* by killing and persecuting Mazdakites and by strengthening the empire through social, political and military reforms that both made his kingship more stable and Iran more secure.[30]

These first three paragraphs record an overview of the Iranian historical situation between the fifth and the sixth centuries, accurately describing the social, economic, political and religious fears of the Sasanian, Zoroastrian society. The famine and the drought, the defeat against the Hephthalites with the obligation of a huge moral and financial tribute and the later rise of Mazdakism drove people to think that the dreadful end of the millennium of Zoroaster was coming. It is likely that the events of this period – before the coming of the Arabs and the fall of the Sasanian Empire – may have provided the conditions for the birth of the first apocalyptic ideas in the Late Antique Zoroastrian tradition.

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27. See Dewing, *Procopius*, p. 49.
28. Frye, 'Political History of Iran', p. 149.
29. See Ehsan Yarshater, 'Mazdakism', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran 3/2: The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 991–1026; Gherardo Gnoli, 'Nuovi studi sul Mazdakismo', in A. Carile *et al.*, *La Persia e Bisanzio. Convegno internazionale, Roma 14-18 ottobre 2002* (Atti dei Convegni Lincei 201; Rome, 2004), pp. 439–56.
30. In the *Iranian Bundahišn* this is likely a reference to the constructions of defence walls, in particular that of Darband. See Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 369; Frye, 'Political History of Iran', p. 160 and in particular idem, 'The Sasanian System of Walls for Defense', in Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 7–15.

The Arab Conquest and the Unsuccessful Revenge
(7ᵀᴴ century) [§§ 20–23]

The Arab conquest of the Sasanian Empire as well as the disintegration of the pre-established religious and social order constituted a heavy burden for the Zoroastrian community and a terrible outrage to the Iranian identity. A short account of these events is presented in these passages of the *Bundahišn*. The mention of the battle of Yazdegard III (632–51) against the Arabs (Pahlavi *tazīgān*)[31] certainly refers to the battles of Qadisiyya in 636 CE and of Nīhāvand in 642 CE, both of which ended with the tragic defeat of the Sasanian army. Once he lost Ctesiphon and control of the entire Iranian plateau, Yazdegard escaped to Sistan and then to Khorasan and asked for help in facing the menace.[32] The reference to Turkestan is related to the location of Merv, where, according to the tradition, the fugitive Yazdegard was killed in 651 CE by a greedy miller who did not recognize him.

Another historical event that emerges from this account is the political role of the son of Yazdegard after the death of his father. We know from Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawāhir* that Yazdegard had two sons: Pērōz and Wahrām.[33] Pērōz, the elder son, took the title of King of the Kings. He looked for aid from the Sogdians and Hephthalite princes in Tokhāristān (nowadays Badakhshan, Afghanistan) in the fight against the Arabs.[34] He stationed his army at Zaranj (located at the border between modern-day Afghanistan and Iran) between 658 and 663 CE and he established there a 'Persian Area Command', the *Bosi dudufu* of Chinese sources.[35] In all the passages of this chapter, the reference to India (Pahlavi *hindūgān*) should not mislead us. Indeed, for Persian authors, both Sasanian and Post-Sasanian, this toponym might refer to

31. On this ethnonym and its implications, see Werner Sundermann, 'An early attestation of the name of the Tajiks', in Wojciech Skalmowski and Alois van Tongerloo (eds.), *Medioiranica* (OLA 48; Leuven, 1993), pp. 163–73.

32. See Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 507. According to the Chinese sources in 638 CE Yazdegard asked – unsuccessfully – for help from the Chinese emperor in his fight against Arabs (see Frye, 'Political History of Iran', p. 172).

33. See Charles Barbier de Meynard and M. Pavet de Courteille (ed. and trans.), *Maçoudi, Les prairies d'or. Texte et traduction*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1863), p. 241. We will see further on that Wahrām might play an important apocalyptic role.

34. See Frye, 'Political History of Iran', p. 176; Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia*, p. 37.

35. See János Harmatta, 'The Middle Persian-Chinese Bilingual Inscription from Hsian and the Chinese-Sasanian Relations', in *La Persia nel Medioevo. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Roma 31 marzo - 5 aprile 1970* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura, Quaderno 160; Rome, 1971), pp. 363–76, p. 374; Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia*, p. 37.

the areas of the former Kushan Empire, and to the area covered by modern Afghanistan and Pakistan.[36]

Even the account of Pērōz's exile, that is, his retreat to the Chinese court in 674-75 CE after a series of Arab victories, is a narrative transposition of a historical event.[37] Since the beginning of his attempt to recover the Iranian kingship, Pērōz had solicited the T'ang emperor to support militarily and economically his campaign against the Arabs. In fact, the Chinese court was from the very first moment a secure abode for Sasanian refugees who fled the Arabs. Unfortunately, the Chinese emperor, except for recognizing his crown as a puppet king of Persia, fell short of the expectations of Pērōz. China continued to recognize the fictive existence of a king of Persia at least until the middle of the eighth century.[38] As we will see later, in the study of kay[39] Wahrām (§ 27), the recognition of the semi-independent reign of Persia in Central Asia as well as the strong and lasting presence of Sasanian courtly families in the Chinese empire may have incited the Zoroastrians of Iran to compose political oracles about a political saviour coming from the Eastern regions, even from the Chinese borderland.[40]

A short description of the terrible and harmful effects of the violent Arab conquest is found at the end of this passage. This genre of account is found in a more extensive version in the most important Pahlavi apocalyptic texts such as the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 4 and the *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* 1-26, as well as in some of the passages of the *Dēnkard* VII.[41] The detailed

36. See Carlo G. Cereti, 'Central Asian and Eastern Iranian Peoples in Zoroastrian Apocalyptic Literature', in Csanád Bálint (ed.), *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.-7. Jahrhundert* (Budapest, 2000), pp. 193-207, pp. 196, n. 14 and 198; idem, 'Again on Wahrām i Warzāwand', in *La Persia e l'Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Roma, 9-12 novembre 1994* (Atti dei Convegni Lincei 127; Rome, 1996), pp. 629-39, p. 632; Dan Shapira, "The coming of Wahram: Iranian political messianism from the Chinese borderland', *Studia Asiatica* 11 (2010), pp. 117-33, p. 119, n. 14.

37. Antonino Forte, 'On the Identity of Aluohan (616-710) A Persian Aristocrat at the Chinese Court', in *La Persia e l'Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo*, pp. 187-98, p. 190.

38. See Édouard Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-Kiue (Turcs) occidentaux* (Paris, 1946²), pp. 171, 257.

39. This is a title associated with the mythical Kayanid family.

40. On the presence of a Sasanian court-in-exile in Central Asia, see now Domenico Agostini and Sören Stark, 'Zāwulistān, Kāwulistān and the land Bosi – On the question of Sasanian court-in-exile in the Southern Hindukush, *Studia Iranica* 45 (2016), pp. 17-38.

41. For the transcription and the translation of these passages, see respectively Cereti, *Zand i Wahman Yasn*, pp. 136-39, 153-58; Agostini, *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg*, pp. 109-11, 188-90; Marjan Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevis* (Paris, 1967), pp. 84-92.

description of these three versions stresses the nature of the trauma felt
by the Zoroastrian community and the consequences of the loss for the
Iranian identity: for example, the extinction of the holy fires, the disin-
tegration of the social order and of the family ties due to the conversion
to Islam, the confiscation of properties and goods of the Grandees and
the nobles of Iran. It is evident that this description does not constitute
the narration of 'événements spectaculaires apocalyptiques, mais la réal-
ité vécue par les mazdéens lors de la conquête.'[42] Moreover, it is interest-
ing to note that in the *Iranian Bundahišn* the Arab conquest is not pre-
sented as an event that is to happen as it is found in the *Zand ī Wahman
Yasn*, in the *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* and in the *Dēnkard*, but as an historical
event that has already occurred. It could mean that the author(s) of this
text had the goal of stressing, in particular, the apocalyptic aspects of
other impressive and significant events, namely, those that followed the
Islamisation of Iran.

After the account of the dreadful events that occurred at the end of
the millennium of Zoroaster, the *Iranian Bundahišn* reports a very short,
important sentence: *pad dēn gōwēd <kū> duš-pādixšāhīh <ī> awēšān sar
kāmēd būdan* (§ 23). This sentence, in present and future tenses, repre-
sents an oracle concerning the future and expected defeat of Arabs. This
assertion is rendered stronger by the fact that it is said in the *dēn* (to be
translated as either 'tradition' or 'scriptures' or even 'religion'). This
incipit is quite common in Pahlavi texts as an *escamotage* for relating the
origin of a text to more ancient, even often alleged, authoritative sources
such as the *Avesta* or the speeches of eminent masters.

In short, this passage is a narrative divide between the distress due to
the Arab conquest and the hope of the coming of the first future saviour
that will happen after many other fictional and historical events which
are the product, as we will see further, of the continuous reworking and
adaptations of the text and its traditions through the centuries.

POLITICAL ORACLES AND PROPAGANDA: FROM THE WAHRĀM(S)
TO SAFFARIDES (6TH–9TH CENTURY) [§§24–28]

The following passages can be classified among the *vaticinia ex eventu*
that are characteristic of Zoroastrian apocalyptic narratives. In the *Ira-
nian Bundahišn*, as well as in similar texts, these 'future' events seem to
be out of chronological order and distorted.

42. Gignoux, 'Apocalypses et voyages', p. 361.

The first episode probably refers to the sectarian/heretical movement of Bābak Khorramī and his followers who rebelled against the Abbasid caliphate from around the second decade of the ninth century. Bābak and his Wearers of Red (*mohammera*) or Those with Red Banners (*sorkh-ʿalamān*)[43] fomented existing socio-religious discontent and heterodoxy in Arrān and Azerbaijan[44] and obtained control of north-west Iran. They then became a serious and redoubtable threat to the stability of the caliphate and their radius of action and their influence reached Western Persia and the regions around Iraq itself.[45] It was certainly an anti-Islamic movement connected with the Mazdakites and thus strongly related to the social struggles. They most probably fostered a plan to restore a national Persian kingship.[46] Although in 837 CE Bābak was executed, his followers kept alive expectations of his return until the eleventh century.[47]

Also the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 6:3[48] likely refers to the Khorramiya[49] in describing in a negative manner a people that will come from the West after the rise of the Abbasids and will dress with red caps, red armour and red banners (Pahlavi *suxr kulāh ud suxr zēn ud suxr drafš*). As Touraj Daryaee convincingly claimed,[50] this episode reports, in particular, the battle of Zibaṭrah (Syria) in 837 CE in which the army of the Byzantine emperor Theophilus together with thousands of *mohammera* conquered the Abbasid city and fortress. The bloodshed was so great that the Persian version of the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* says that the river Euphrates

43. On their characteristic red colour, see Gholam H. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au II* et au III* siècle de l'hégire* (Paris, 1938), p. 108; Bianca Scarcia Amoretti, 'Sects and Heresies', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran 4: The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 481-519, p. 514.

44. Zoroastrianism remained strong in the more inaccessible mountainous regions of Iran, such as Pārs, Azerbaijan, and Khorasan, where the geographers of the tenth century still mention the existence of fire temples. Between the ninth and tenth centuries, the Zoroastrian communities showed a last burst of intellectual activity, copying and writing their sacred books and composing polemics and apologies.

45. Clifford E. Bosworth, 'Abbasid Caliphate', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopædia Iranica* 1 (London, 1982), pp. 89-95, p. 93.

46. See also Wilferd F. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany NY, 1988), p. 2.

47. Bosworth, 'Abbasid Caliphate', p. 93.

48. For the transcription and the translation of this passage, see Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, pp. 141, 160.

49. Similarly Philippe Gignoux, 'Sur l'inexistence d'un Bahman Yasht avestique', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 32 (1986), pp. 53-64, p. 61. In contrast Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, p. 199.

50. Touraj Daryaee, 'Apocalypse Now: Zoroastrian Reflections on the Early Islamic Centuries', *Medieval Encounters* 4/3 (Leiden, 1998), pp. 188-202, pp. 198-99.

and the clouds would turn red from the bloodshed.[51] Moreover, in the *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-muluk* by al-Ṭabarī it is said that after the battle Muslim men were blinded and that their noses and ears were cut off.[52] Although the Khorramiya fought against the common enemy, that is, the Arabs, the Zoroastrian community perceived their heresy as dangerous for the community. Furthermore, the echo of their bloody conquest, also in collaboration with Byzantines, led the Zoroastrians to feel the eminent end of Zoroaster's millennium and was reported in their apocalyptic accounts.

Afterwards it is said that an evil man from Khorasan would perpetrate injustices and harm to the people of Padišxwārgar (i.e., the Caspian historical region named also Tabaristān), and to the people of Pārs, for many years. This character from the East is also mentioned in other Pahlavi apocalyptic texts and his identification is quite problematic. In the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 4:4[53] a people of the lowest descent, of parted hair and wearing black armour and flags, is said to come from Khorasan. In this context, the most probable identifications are with Abu Muslim, the chief of the Abbasid rebellion from Merv, and his army,[54] and with the Turks or the Mongols who invaded Iran from the tenth to thirteenth century bringing much harm to the Zoroastrian communities of Yazd and Kerman.[55]

The *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* 27–30 (ms. DS 10:5–11:9)[56] provides us with further details of the story of this treacherous invasion from the East and its end:

> 27) Then, an insignificant and obscure man who will become very powerful will arise from the land of Khorasan with a large number of men, horses and pointed lances, and the country will fall under his tyranny and under his power. 28) He will be destroyed and will disappear in the middle of <his> dominion. 29) The sovereignty will move away completely from the Iranians and will reach non-Iranians and there will be many dogmas, laws

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51. Ervad B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others* (Bombay, 1932), p. 479.

52. Clifford E. Bosworth (trans.), *Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate* (The History of al-Ṭabarī [*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-muluk*] 33; New York, 1991), p. 93.

53. For the transcription and the translation of this passage, see Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, pp. 136, 153.

54. See Gignoux, 'Nouveaux regards', pp. 339–40; idem, 'Sur l'inexistence', pp. 59–60. See also Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, p. 185.

55. See Edward W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 1 (Sacred Books of the East 5; Oxford, 1880), p. 202, n. 1; Cereti, 'Central Asian and Eastern Iranian', p. 195.

56. For the transcription and the manuscript facsimile of the passage, see Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspig*, pp. 351–52.

and beliefs and they will consider the murder of one by another as a good deed: it will be easy to kill a man. 30) And I will tell you this too: during that time there will be such a man, the victorious king, who will conquer many cities and many provinces in the land of the Romans and then he will bring from the land of the Romans a large quantity of property.

The accounts of the *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* and that of the *Iranian Bundahišn* (§§ 25, 26 and first sentence of 27) recall a precise period in the history of Iran, that is, the rebellion of the Sasanian *spāhbēd* 'general' Wahrām Čōbēn against the crown and the restoration of the Sasanian kingship by Khosrau II Abarwēz 'The Victorious' (590–628) at the end of the sixth century. Wahrām Čōbēn, from the noble Arsacid family of Mehrān, defeated the Turks in 589 CE and secured the north-eastern borders. After a minor defeat against the Byzantines in Armenia, Hormizd IV slandered him and made false accusations against him, which caused the general to rebel. In 590 CE Wahrām Čōbēn proclaimed himself king by the name of Wahrām VI. This was likely a troublesome social and political period for Iran as it was the first time that someone outside the Sasanian royal family attempted to usurp the throne of the legitimate sovereign. After the deposition of Hormizd IV by the nobles, his son Khosrau II was enthroned in 590 CE. Since Khosrau II could not withstand the army of Wahrām Čōbēn, he fled the same year to Hierapolis and sought the help of Emperor Maurice. Exactly one year later, in 591 CE, he returned to Iran with Byzantine and Armenian troops and defeated the usurper who was eventually murdered by the Turks in Balkh.[57]

The villain of the *Iranian Bundahišn* can be identified as Wahrām Čōbēn.[58] In addition to the historical details of the account, it is important to stress how the adjective 'evil' (Pahlavi *wad*) for this general seems to fit the context. Zoroastrians considered him nothing more than a usurper of the royal blood and of the Kayanid throne, both of which were closely related to the Mazdean religion.

Additionally, the reference to Padišxwārgar, as opposed to Iran, might be a mythical allusion to the attack of the Iranians' archenemy Frāsyāb against the heroic king Manuščihr and his army who hid in this exact

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57. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 445.

58. Similarly Karoly Czeglédy, 'Bahrām Čōbīn and the Persian apocalyptic Literature', *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 8 (1958), pp. 21–43, p. 34. Frantz Grenet wrote me his doubts about the identification suggested first by Karoly Czeglédy. In fact, this figure is an oppressor, while Wahrām Čōbēn is a liberator (private communication). Cereti, 'Central Asian and Eastern Iranian', pp. 199–200 identifies this character with the governor of Khorasan who murdered Khosrau III in 630 CE, the latter having been recognized as sovereign of the Oriental part of the kingdom (see Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 498).

northern region.[59] Faced with the strong apocalyptic component of these sources, mythological characters were re-used by the authors of the *Bundahišn* in order to facilitate the comprehension of the narration.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the convincing suggestion of Frantz Grenet that the evil man coming from Khorasan should be identified either with the governors of the Tahiride dynasty (828–73) or with the founder of the Saffaride dynasty of Sistan Ya'qub ibn Laith (861–79). The latter ruler, between the years 840 CE and 879 CE, put an end to the Zoroastrian rebellion of Mazyār in the mountains close to the Caspian Sea and persecuted the Zoroastrians of Pārs.[60] It might mean that, as for most part of the apocalyptic material, this section of the text has been reworked and readapted at a different stage in time according to the current events and troubles of Zoroastrian community.

The apocalyptic figure of kay Wahrām, alongside the character of Wahrām Čōbēn, also needs to be analysed in detail and with due attention as it contains many historical implications. This character may be identified with the son of Yazdegard III, Wahrām, and with the even earlier general Wahrām Čōbēn. Here too the other Pahlavi apocalyptic texts are very useful for identifying kay Wahrām.

In different passages of the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, which preserves a more detailed account, there are many references to the deeds of a figure that is called Wahrām ī warzāwand 'the Powerful' (ZWY 7:5).[61] At the age of thirty, together with the armies of Hindūg[62] and of China, he will run with a swift movement up the river Oxus and then to Balkh[63] (ZWY 7:7). Once he obtains the kingship, he will have countless armies from many parts of Iran (ZWY 7:8–9). Then, this large army of Padišxwārgar, holding a common flag, will enter Iran and will defeat the enemies of the seed of Xēšm (i.e., the demon of Wrath) who are depicted also as a monstrous army (ZWY 7:10–11). The *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 9:10 reports the list of enemies, that is, the triptych of the Turks, Arabs and Byzantines.[64]

59. Czeglédy, 'Bahrām Čōbīn', p. 35.
60. Grenet, 'Y a-t-il une composante iranienne', p. 31, n. 30.
61. For the transcription and translation of this passage, see Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, pp. 142, 162. For a detailed study of this character, see also idem, 'Again on Wahrām ī Warzāwand', pp. 629–31, 634–35 and 638.
62. On this toponym and its localization in this specific context in the former Kushan empire, refer to n. 35.
63. On the geographical identification of this toponym, see Cereti. *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, p. 205.
64. For the transcription and translation of these passages (7:7-11 and 9:10), see Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, pp. 142–43, 146, 162–63, 167.

In the *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* 43-49 (ms. DS 16:7-19:3)[65] we read, as follows:

43) Then, in Padišxwārgar near the sea shores, a man will see the *yazad* Mihr, and the *yazad* Mihr will reveal many hidden secrets to this man. 44) He will send him with a message to the king of Padišxwārgar: 'Why do you support this king deaf and blind? You also exercise the power as your fathers and your forefathers did!' 45) This man (i.e., the king) will answer: 'How may I exercise this sovereignty if I do not have these troops, this army, these treasures and these generals that my fathers and forefathers had?' 46) The messenger will say: 'Come, that I will give you the treasures and property of your fathers and forefathers.' He will show him the great treasure of Frāsyāb. 47) When he will have the treasure in <his> hands, he will equip an army and troops at Zāwul and will march against the enemies. 48) And when the enemies will know it, Turks, Arabs and the Romans will gather and <will say>: 'We will catch the king of Padišxwārgar and will take off from this man <his> treasures and goods.' 49) Then, when this man will know this news, he will march with a big army and troops from Zāwul to the heart of Ērānšahr, and with the king of Padišxwārgar these men will battle and fight ...

Although the apocalyptic accounts of these three texts may seem to come from different, certainly complex, traditions, some topics function as a common denominator and aid reconstructing a narrative reading, mainly the idea of the eastern direction of the coming of the Iranian restorer and the triptych of enemies to fight (with a slight difference).

In the *Iranian Bundahišn*, kay Wahrām, endowed with the *xwarrah*,[66] will come from the region of Kāwulistān (nowadays the region of Kabul) to Iran and will excite great hope. Afterwards, he will rule over India, Byzantium and Turkestan and will restore the Zoroastrian religion. As said above, one of the sons of the last king Yazdegard III was called Wahrām. We already know that his brother Pērōz unsuccessfully attempted to regain the lost kingdom through the lukewarm aid of the Chinese who for a few years supported a Persian puppet government in Central Asia. Furthermore, Antonino Forte has drawn the attention to a funerary stele, from 710 CE, belonging to a Persian nobleman called Aluohan who died at the age of ninety and was held in great esteem by the Chinese court. Forte has shown that this name might be the Chinese rendering of the Persian Wahrām.[67] The identification with the son of Yazdegard III is not easy because of chronological reasons (i.e., Aluohan

65. For the transcription and the manuscript facsimile of the passage, see Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, pp. 191-92, 357-60.
66. On this divine and royal attribute of controversial meaning, see Gherardo Gnoli, 'Farr(ah)', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopædia Iranica* 9 (Costa Mesa CA, 1999), pp. 312-19.
67. Forte, 'On the Identity of Aluohan', p. 635.

would have been supposed to be born at the same period as his father) and because of the absence of any reference in the inscription to his famous and important father, but the suggestion is nevertheless not completely unfounded![68]

Besides the disquisition about the identity of Aluohan, kay Wahrām and the other similar characters in Pahlavi apocalyptic texts may be identified with the son of Yazdegard III.[69] These accounts likely belonged to the Sasanian political propaganda heralding the return of the legitimate king to Iran from China or Central Asia and the apocalyptic literature might have represented the most influential and incisive mass media.

However, kay Wahrām might hide the tragic figure of Wahrām Čōbēn. Regarding the story of this general an extensive body of literature spread earlier due to the general admiration for his victories along the Oriental borders, and later because of the disapproval and disappointment surrounding his false royal claims. There exist in later Arabic and Persian versions many stories about Wahrām Čōbēn, some of them identical to the stories concerning Wahrām Gōr, a confusion common in Sasanian history when two kings or heroes have the same name.[70] The Šāhnāme, in particular, reports an interesting dialogue between Wahrām Čōbēn and Khosrau II where the first lays claim to the throne as the restorer of Arsacid rule. Furthermore, he reveals to him that his mission is also to destroy the Sasanian dynasty as five-hundred years have already passed from the enthronement of the first Sasanian king Ardašīr (224/6–42).[71]

This last assertion most probably refers to the end of the millennium of Zoroaster that would have caused many troubles and much harm to the Sasanian dynasty. In this context, it is useful to mention the account of Mas'ūdī. He writes that king Ardašīr, estimating that he was nearing the end of the millennium of Zoroaster and fearing that it carried with it major troubles, sought to move back this term of approximately two hundred years, by subtracting from the official chronology almost half of the time that had elapsed between him and Alexander the Great.[72] Since according to the most current tradition Zoroaster lived 258 years

68. Forte, 'On the Identity of Aluohan', p. 637.
69. Similarly Annette Destrée, 'Quelques réflexions sur les héros des récits apocalyptiques persans et sur le mythe de la ville de cuivre', in La Persia nel medioevo (Rome, 1971), pp. 639–52, pp. 645–46; and Cereti, 'Wahrām i Warzāwand', p. 638.
70. Cereti, 'Wahrām I Warzāwand', pp. 630–31; idem, 'Central Asian and Eastern Iranian', pp. 198–99.
71. Mohl, Le livre des Rois, vol. 7, p. 24.
72. For an outstanding and thorough study on Mas'ūdī's account and its political and religious implications, see Gherardo Gnoli, 'Politica religiosa e concezione della regalità sotto i Sassanidi', in La Persia nel medioevo (Rome, 1971), pp. 225–53.

before Alexander[73] and this revised chronology shortened the Arsacide era by two centuries, the young Sasanian dynasty may have been strengthened without the social pressure of millenarian trends. Moreover, this historical fraud, both political and religious, welded the destiny of the crown with that of the Zoroastrian clergy.

Thus, the figure of Wahrām Čōbēn is not just a usurper, but emerges as an apocalyptic character embodying the mission to restore the pre-Sasanian *status quo*. If the long section dedicated to him in the *Šahnāme* is probably part of a more extensive romance, then this particular passage seems to belong to a 'Čōbēnian' literary and political propaganda.

The evidence of the *Šahnāme* is an important and helpful element in developing an alternative reading of the events in the *Iranian Bundahišn*. In this text, the reference to the yearly rule of Byzantines is clearly related to the flight of Khosrau II to Hierapolis in 590 CE and his request of help to Emperor Maurice. Moreover, it is quite interesting that the text stresses both *xwarrah* as an attribute of kay Wahrām as well as his family origin. This passage should be considered an *escamotage* that aims to present Wahrām Čōbēn as a legitimate Iranian king whose *xwarrah* constitutes one of his major attributes. He is to come from the region of Kāwulistān that was closed to Balkh, the same place in which Wahrām Čōbēn unsuccessfully tried to take refuge after his defeat against Khosrau II.

His political activity will include ruling over India, Byzantium and Turkestan. It is striking that there is no reference made to Arabs as there is in other Pahlavi texts (*JN 48* and *ZWY 9:10*). However, besides a few incursions into Iran's borders by Arab Ghassanids in 591 CE, Iran's major dangers and troubles during this period came from these three countries. It seems that the tradition of *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* and *Zand i Wahman Yasn* re-adapted this triptych of enemies according to the current events of the Arab conquest.

The last paragraph in the *Iranian Bundahišn* mentions that kay Wahrām will restore the Zoroastrian religion. Although this action is more fitting to a legitimate Zoroastrian restorer who should be a Sasanian royal heir, this passage might refer again to Wahrām Čōbēn. According to Theophylact Simocatta, after the rebellion broke out and Khosrau fled to Byzantine territory, Wahrām Čōbēn became angry with the Zoroastrian clergy because of a difference in views.[74] This passage might

73. On this dating, see Gherardo Gnoli, *Zoroaster in History* (New York, 2000), pp. 131–83.

74. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (trans.), *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford, 1986), p. 119. See also Czeglédy, 'Bahrām Čōbin', p. 39.

constitute a polemic by fanatic followers of Wahrām Čōbēn against the Zoroastrian clergy due to its non-support of the rebel general and might be a way to elevate him to the status of a hero of religion.

As for the other Pahlavi apocalyptic texts,[75] this story ends with the coming of Pešōtan, son of King Wištāsp, and his one hundred and fifty followers from the legendary city of Kangdiz.[76] The deeds of this hero take place at the end of the millennium of Zoroaster, open the eschatological process and herald the coming of the first saviour Ušēdar.

As this account relates more to mythical issues, and less so to the historical narrative and setting that has been the focus of this essay, I will not comment further. However, I would like to stress that the *Iranian Bundahišn* makes mention of the restoration of fires by Wahrām, 'venerable/god' (Pahlavi *yazad*) of the victory, unlike the other apocalyptic texts that refer to fires more generically. It is not rash to say that it could be again a veiled reference to the two namesake figures above who thus received the fitting attribute of victorious.

This long apocalyptic passage in the *Iranian Bundahišn* (§§ 24–27) testifies to the difficult and untidy transmission of the Zoroastrian apocalyptic material. It is a perfect example of how the authors of these texts reworked and adapted different apocalyptic traditions without taking great care in retaining an accurate chronology and the consistency to the events, of which the misplaced position of Khorramīya's period is just one example

Regarding the figure of kay Wahrām in the *Iranian Bundahišn*, I think that he might be identified with the legitimate Sasanian heir to the throne Wahrām, son of Yazdegard III, in the context of a political oracle heralding the coming of an Iranian saviour from the East. Nevertheless, many narrative elements show that this tradition was issued from the romance of Wahrām Čōbēn whose heroic yet tragic life excited, after his death, the birth of more apocalyptic stories centred around his miraculous and victorious return from exile at the Turkish court.

CONCLUSIONS

The Zoroastrian apocalyptics is no doubt a literary genre related strongly to the historical events that marked the end of the Sasanian

75. *Jāmāsp-Nāmag* 51–53 (see Agostini, *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg,* pp. 113–14, 192); *Zand i Wahman Yasn* 7:20–39 (see Cereti, *Zand i Wahman Yasn,* pp. 143–44, 163–65).
76. For further bibliographical information on this mythical city, see Agostini, *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg,* pp. 125–27.

Empire in the seventh century and the birth of messianic hopes, likely regarding the coming of a legitimate Sasanian heir from the East, that it created. Although the conquest of Iran by Arabs and the loss of Iranian religious and political identity represent the most reliable cause for the formation of apocalyptic texts, we have seen here that the troublesome events which occurred between the end of the fifth and the sixth centuries, recorded by the *Iranian Bundahišn*, gave birth to an initial rise of apocalyptic ideas, including the conviction that the millennium of Zoroaster was at an end.

Regarding the literary material: in the *Iranian Bundahišn*, as in the other Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts, this narrative pattern is made up of at least three different *strata*.[77] The first deals with the late Sasanian period represented by Pērōz, Kawād, Khosrau I and Yazdegard III, the tragic rebellion of Wahrām Čōbēn and the triptych of enemies of Iran, such as the Turks, Byzantines and Arabs. The second is related to the Post-Sasanian period: the attempt of the son of Yazdegard III to organize an army and come back to Iran, the rise of Khorramīya and other events that are more or less identifiable, though sometimes out of place and distorted. For example, parts of the romance of the illegitimate pretender Wahrām Čōbēn were readapted by Zoroastrian authors in the composition of some apocalyptic passages, notably the one referring to the coming of the positive figure kay Wahrām. The last one is the mythical *stratum* represented by the hero Pešōtan, son of King Wištāsp, who will herald the coming of the first saviour Ušēdar and the starting of the eschatological process.

Although the apocalyptic texts, along with most of Pahlavi literature, were only written just between the ninth and tenth centuries, the Zoroastrian community composed and arranged several apocalyptic texts whenever it felt an eminent danger, a practice that is here documented from the end of the sixth to the end of the tenth century.[78]

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77. Similarly Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, pp. 26–27.

78. Frantz Grenet, 'Le chapitre apocalyptique du traité pehlevi Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg. Propositions pour un décodage et pour une date', in Véronique Schiltz (ed.), *De Samarcande à Istanbul: étapes orientales. Hommages à Pierre Chuvin - II*, (Paris, 2015), pp. 103-14, interestingly claimed that it is possible to relate some Zoroastrian apocalyptic passages to the atmosphere of Zoroastrian restoration that surrounded Mardāwji, Ziyarid prince of Gilān, who ruled the South Caspian provinces between 927 and 935 CE.

APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT WRITTEN FOR MONKS? SOME TEXTS AND MOTIFS AND THEIR FUNCTION IN GREEK AND SYRIAC ANTIQUITY

Matthias BINDER

1. INTRODUCTION: A CASE AND TWO APPROACHES

Many of the Christian writers in Antiquity were unmarried and were ascetics in some way, if not actually monks. And of course, some of them aimed specifically at the advancement of the ascetic life. But did they use apocalyptical thought for their purpose? Ascetics did use, for example, *merkavah* motifs known from the apocalyptical Enochic literature (after 200 BCE until 200 CE) or from the Ascension of Isaiah (first centuries CE).[1] Monks used, for example, the influential *Apocalypse of Paul* (Apoc-Paul, about 400 CE): 'The work seems to have been widely read in the fifth and sixth centuries, particularly in monastic circles in the West'.[2] But were apocalyptical texts *written* for such use?

Alexander Golitzin finds a positive answer, looking at the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* (sApocDan, 7th cent. CE): 'I think that its author is a monk, and that he is paraphrasing the canonical Daniel, who himself was also traditionally an ascetic, in order to remind his fellow monks of the meaning of their vows, to encourage them to hold fast to their calling, and to counsel them about the nature – and dangers – of spiritual experience.'[3]

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1. I am most grateful to Mrs. Jenny Pilhofer and Dr. Peter Baumann for reading this paper and for their most helpful suggestions.
   Alexander Golitzin writes: 'I do not ... think it hard to understand why generations of monks... preserved this literature': idem, 'Heavenly Mysteries. Themes from Apocalyptic Literature in the Macarian Homilies and Selected Other Fourth-Century Ascetical Writers', in Robert J. Daly SJ (ed.), *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity* (Holy Cross Studies in Patristic Theology and History 2; Grand Rapids, 2012), pp. 174–92, on p. 176. Golitzin helpfully and convincingly compares Afrahat the Persian Sage and Pseudo-Macarius with 3 (Hebrew) Enoch in his article.

2. Brian E. Daley, 'Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology', in Bernard McGinn (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* 2: *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture* (London, 2000), pp. 3–47, on p. 37, referring to Claude Carrozzi, *Eschatologie et au-delà: Recherches sur l'Apocalypse de Paul* (Aix-en-Provence, 1994), p. 12.

3. Alexander Golitzin, 'A Monastic Setting for the Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel', in Robin Darling Young and Monica J. Blanchard (eds.), *To Train his Soul in Books. Syriac Asceticism in Early Christianity* (Washington DC, 2011), pp. 66–98, on p. 69.

Golitzin sets out with the assumption that in sApocDan there is no visible reflection of some historical crisis.[4] Instead, he builds his argument on the observation that some of the text's *merkavah* motifs may reflect mystical visionary life.

However, Muriel Debié put forward an equally well-founded argument that there *is* a reference to a historical context.[5] Her argument is inspired not by the visionary (eschatological) but the historical part of sApocDan. One of its passages emphasizes the (legendary) restitution of the lost sacral temple implements to Jerusalem by the Persian king Darius (died 486 BCE). The account can well be seen as an allusion to the famous retrieval of the Holy Cross from the Persians in 629/30 CE.[6] If this holds true, even some of the eschatological motifs may be detected to be historical allusions. SApocDan would then address Christians around Jerusalem who were asked to cooperate in reconstructing peace and rebuilding the city, shortly after the Persian war.[7] Thus, when confronted with two approaches to the interpretation of sApocDan, we may ask whether apocalyptical texts can be produced for a monastic setting at all.

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4. With a reference to the editor: Matthias Henze, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Tübingen, 2001). Henze is more precise, however, in saying that there are no *direct* allusions to history, ibid., p. 11. Then Henze suggests, p. 22, that the text simply wants to inform about the sequence of events at the end of the world.

5. Muriel Debié, 'Les apocalypses apocryphes syriaques: des textes pseudé-pigraphiques de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament', in Alain Desremaux, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, and Muriel Debié (eds.), *Les apocryphes syriaques* (Études syriaques 2; Paris, 2005), pp. 111–46, on pp. 133–35.

6. This is roughly in accordance with the dating of Henze, *Syriac Apocalypse*, pp. 14–15: after the *Syriac Alexander legend* (630) and before *Pseudo-Methodius* (690).

7. There is even a third option: the possibility of Jewish provenance of the book with Christian interpolations, as is the case with older apocalypses. The quote from sApocDan below (section 2,4), as arranged by myself, shows that the parallelisms of the text can be arranged in a way that the presumably Christian statement stands out as an unfitting insertion. Also the double arrival of Christ (not even 'Jesus') *after* the Lord Zeba'oth seems strange. There were Jewish messianic hopes of the restoration of the temple around 628, as probably reflected in the *Jewish Apocalypse of Elijah* (hApocEl) and the *Sefer Zerubbabel* (SefZer). The report in sApocDan of Darius' first temple restoration fits in this context, too. But this matter cannot be further discussed here, and it will not influence the envisioned investigation. Edition of hApocEl (Hebrew and German): Moses Buttenwieser (ed./tr.), *Die hebräische Elias-Apokalypse und ihre Stellung in der apokalyptischen Litteratur des rabbinischen Schrifttums und der Kirche. 1. Hälfte* (Leipzig, 1897). Edition of SefZer (Hebrew): Adolph Jellinek (ed.), *Bet Ha-Midrasch. Sammlung kleiner Midraschim* 2 (Leipzig, 1854; reprint Hildesheim, 1967), pp. 54–57; dating and interpretation by Israel Lévi, 'L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroes', in *Revue des études juives* 68 (1914), pp. 129–60; 69 (1919), pp. 108–21; 70–71 (1920), pp. 57–65.

These two very diverging approaches seem to correspond to two different approaches to what 'apocalypticism' is. Golitzin's interest in *merkavah* motifs and theophany is linked with Christopher Rowland's interpretation which names 'direct revelation of heavenly mysteries' as a central aspect of the genre.[8] Debié's reconstruction of a critical moment in history, on the other hand, seems to be closer to Brian E. Daley who identifies a 'violent end to human history and the present world' as the central topic of the 'apocalyptic world view'.[9] Of course, these quotes from Rowland and Daley need not contradict each other. The former definition focuses on form, the latter on plot.

1.1. Method and Scope of the Investigation

Indeed, in apocalyptical texts we will find motifs akin to a monastic milieu. Which function do they serve? Three sets of such texts, little known, provoke further research into the matter. The first set is the Greek apocalyptical sermon 'On the Coming of the Lord and the Consummation of the World and the Coming of Antichrist' ascribed to Ephrem, in two recensions from the late fourth century (here named Ephr gr A and B, see below 3.1).[10] The second set is a pair of Antichrist sermons by Narsai the Great, the fifth-century school director of Edessa and Nisibis (see 3.3).[11] The third set is an end time sermon written by the seventh century East Syrian author Shubhalmaran of Kirkuk.[12] This sermon indeed deals not with asceticism but with ecclesiastical politics,[13]

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8. Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London, 1982), pp. 14 and 76; quoted from Golitzin, 'Heavenly Mysteries'.

9. Daley, 'Apocalypticism', p. 3.

10. Only edition in Giuseppe S. Assemani (ed.), *Sancti patris nostri Ephrem syri opera omnia quae exstant* 2 (Rome, 1743), pp. 222-30 ('Ephr gr B') and 3 (Rome, 1746), pp. 134-43 ('Ephr gr A').

11. One is Narsai's unpublished 'On the Coming of Antichrist and the Revelation of Our Lord', in British Museum MS Oriental 9396c, fol. 163b-177a; it corresponds with Nr. 51 according to the list in Alphonse Mingana (ed.), *Narsai. Memre* (Mosul, 1905) vol. 2, final pages. The second sermon with similar content is Nr. 52 of this list, 'On the Revelation of Our Lord and the dispensation of the Coming World', which is printed in Syriac on pp. 1-28 in the same volume. Latin version in Emmanuel K. Delly (tr.), 'Le 23e "Memra" de Narsai', in *Divinitas* 3 (1959), pp. 514-53. Parts of both sermons are, in French, in Philippe Gignoux, 'Les doctrines eschatologiques de Narsai', in *l'Orient Syrien* 11 (1966), pp. 321-53, pp. 461-588; 12 (1967), pp. 23-54.

12. The 'End Time Sermon' is identical to 'part six' of David J. Lane (ed./tr.), *Subhalmaran. The Book of Gifts*, 2 vols. (CSCO 612-613, Scr. Syri 236-237; Louvain, 2004), vol. 1 pp. 167-95.

13. In apocalyptical language the book answers the contemporary Christological challenge of his church which resulted in an 'apology of faith' (ﬞܪܝܬ) in 612 CE. This is

but its last chapter has real ascetic qualities. Moreover, the sermon presents two interesting apocalyptical fragments, a 'prophecy' ascribed to Clement (ApocPsClem, see 3.3), and some anonymous metrical passages on Gehenna (see 2).[14] I will discuss these texts along with sApocDan, ApocPaul (see 2.2) and Ephrem's authentic *Hymns on Paradise* (HoP, see 2.3), his *Letter to Publius* (LtP, see 2), and the *Diatessaron Commentary* (CommDiat, see 2).[15]

Using the widely accepted classification of the genre 'apocalypse' by John J. Collins,[16] it will be found that almost none of these texts are 'apocalypses proper'. Instead, apocalyptical sceneries and antichrist myths are distributed over different genres such as commentary, homily, letter, and hymn.[17] So my approach will be by way of motif, not of genre. This has a methodological reason, too. As genre alone will not clarify whether a text was written specifically for monks, we need to investigate why the motifs were introduced into the text.

the overall proposal of my dissertation: Matthias Binder, *Asket und Eschaton. Das Endzeitbuch des Šubḥālmāran von Kirkuk* (Göttinger Orientforschungen, Reihe Syriaca 44; Wiesbaden, 2013), esp. pp. 137–47 and 412–18. For a summary, see: idem, "Your Death, O God". Christological and other Adaptions of Šhubḥalmaran's End Time Book in the Syriac Manuscript M20N from Mount Sinai', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 66 (2014), pp. 1–35.

14. ApocPsClem: Lane, *Book* 1, pp. 174–76; the 'Gehenna' fragments: ibid., pp. 194–95. Reconstruction in Binder, *Asket*, pp. 163–75; 177–79.

15. HoP: Edmund Beck (ed./tr.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, 2 vols. (CSCO 174–175, Scr. Syri 78–79; Louvain, 1957); English: Sebastian P. Brock (tr.), *St. Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise* (Crestwood, 1990); I will also use Beck's commentary in his Latin edition (abbreviated: Beck, *Kommentar*): idem, *Ephrems Hymnen über das Paradies* (Studia Anselmiana 26; Rome, 1951). - LtP: Sebastian P. Brock (ed./tr.), 'Ephraem's Letter to Publius', *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), pp. 261–305. - CommDiat: Carmel McCarthy (ed./tr.), *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2; New York, 1994).

16. Collins defines type I, with the visionary's journey to the other world, and type II, with a revelation by other means. Within each type there are three subtypes containing (a) a historical survey, (b) a draft of the latter days, and (c) a description of the individuals' ulterior fate: John J. Collins, 'Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre', in idem (ed.), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14; Missoula, 1979), pp. 1–20.

17. A good witness for the acceptance of the 'Antichrist myth' in the Church's everyday teaching is Cyril of Jerusalem's 15th lecture of his *Mystagogical Catecheses*: Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson (tr.), *The works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem* 2 (Washington, 1970), pp. 53–55. For the development of the myth, with a core in Hippolyte's *De Christo et Antichristo*, see Gregory J. Jenks, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 59; Berlin–New York, 1991); also Christian Bădiliță, *Métamorphoses de l'Antichrist chez les Pères de l'Église* (Paris, 2005).

1.2. 'End Time Apocalypticism' versus 'Other World Apocalypticism'

In order to classify apocalyptical motifs, three categories will probably serve our aims. They are *not* meant to reproduce Collins' classification, which only works with genre. I would like to arrange the motifs by making use of an apocalyptical 'mind map', as it were. If in the apocalyptical world view a great cataclysm divides two worlds, both on a temporal and a spatial level, we may deduce three aspects of the apocalyptic 'inventory' of motifs: (1) 'end time motifs', (2) 'transformation motifs', and (3) 'other world motifs'. 'End time' motifs concentrate on the existing but vanishing world; they may include antecedent history, the 'signs of the time', or the figure of Antichrist. 'Other world' apocalypticism looks to 'a new heaven and a new earth' where God resides; usually this other world exists already and can be visited by the visionary or the theologian. 'Transformation' motifs – which I will leave aside below – include the cataclysm itself, the cosmic upheaval, its suddenness, the annihilation of Evil, or the Last Judgement.[18] Most of the texts cover two or all three categories, but stress one of them.

Is there a difference in the way these motifs affect their audience? At first sight, they seem to match different types of *parainesis*. End time drafts (1) may be reassuring, as they help us to understand our destiny; they may provide encouragement or a reason to endure. Descriptions of the harshness of the world's transition (2) may be meant to admonish the faithful not to delay repentance. The perspectives of paradise and hell (3) may challenge a person to take the right decisions or to hold on faithfully to religious practice. These suggestions seem to show that *end time* apocalypticism was intended for any crisis-stricken group in society, while *other world* apocalypticism may be more suitable for the advancement of monastic life which needs daily encouragement to hold fast to the commitment. However, matters are not as easy as this, and it will be seen below that some of the monastic motifs work well with more than one of these categories.

2. Experiences of Heaven and Hell

In Antiquity, asceticism dealt to some extent with the meditating on or envisaging the other world. Monastic practice in the Egyptian desert

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18. Much elaboration of these motifs is not only in sApocDan, but for example in the eschatological homilies of Jacob of Sarug: Isabelle Isebaert-Cauuet (tr.), *Jacques de Saroug. Homélies sur la Fin du Monde* (Les pères de la foi 91; Paris, 2005).

included the envisioning and anticipation not only of one's own death but also of judgement, hell and paradise. According to Daley these motifs, inducing fear of torments and hope for the promises, were considered a legitimate source of motivation for monastic life.[19] Also Ephrem knew that beholding paradise and hell leads to remorse.[20] Shubḥalmaran of Kirkuk, who belongs to yet another region and century, reports the same at the conclusion of his apocalyptical sermon:

> I ask every sinner that he repent, ... Because I have given my mind to meditating (ܪܢܝܐ) on what is in my judgement; ... and my soul is very bitter within me at the remembrance (ܥܘܗܕܢܐ) of the condemnation. The bitterness of its everlasting torment chastened us from far off ... These things I learned from that mournful voice which estranges us, and calls us cursed.[21]

Ascetic motif and parenetic application are both found in this passage, together with the relevant technical terms 'meditation' and 'remembrance'. The latter term corresponds to Greek μνήμη and seems to point to regular practice, no matter how developed a technique it denotes.[22] The meditational technique is here directed towards the 'mournful voice' of the Judgement scene in Matt. 25:41, where the king's 'depart from me, you cursed' is addressed to those on the left. Shubḥalmaran had dealt with the scene in his preceding chapter, and now reports his own experience. So we really are confronted with the old practice of meditating on an apocalyptic motif, to effect repentance.

The same author in his second book, in two of his untitled chapters (ܪܫܝܐ), knows two ways of motivation in ascetic and monastic life (ܐܘܠܨܢܐ, ܚܝܠܐ). They may be summarized as 'strength through promise' and 'restraint through fear':

> The shrewd merchant keeps his valuable treasures for trade: that is at the fair. And the wise penitent keeps his good works stored for the resurrection: that is the great fair of the holy ones ...

> To this [that is, grace] testify the gluttonous son [Luke 15], and the robber [Matt. 27] ... , and also the day labourers [Matt. 20]. This is a little sign out

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19. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (New York, 1991), pp. 69–71, with references to the Apophthegmata patrum, and the *vitae* of Anthony and Pachomius.

20. Ephrem HoP 7,24.

21. Lane, *Book*, pp. 196 (Syr.)/184 (Engl.); translation changed.

22. For 'remembrance' in a different context, see Herman G.B. Teule, 'An Important Concept in Muslim and Christian Mysticism: the Remembrance of God, *dhikr Allah* – *'uhdōnō d-Alōhō*', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Gotteserlebnis und Gotteslehre. Christliche und islamische Mystik im Orient* (Göttinger Orientforschungen, Syriaca 38; Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 11–23.

of many, calling and teaching the chosen among us. It places before (us) a strength ...

But there is a second way for sinners who repent: first, there is secretly sown in them a fear of God and a trembling at his judgement, shame before humankind and disgrace before the angels ... a small taste of Gehenna. As an exact verification of the holy word of our life-giver, 'the kingdom of heaven is within you', Gehenna is within us.[23]

Here, we find an express internalization of the apocalyptic motif: the kingdom as well as Gehenna are said to be 'within us'. Concerning the Divine kingdom, this is a common understanding in Antiquity,[24] and the Diatessaron (in the passage correlating with Luke 17:21) takes it to an extreme: 'the kingdom is in your hearts'.[25] However, such a phrase is not without difficulty for 'Antiochene' interpreters. They usually interpret apocalyptic imagery within the Gospels (Matt. 24) as referring to the disciples' times: in their view, for example, the 'abominable desolation' must refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, and the limitation of the time of distress to three and a half years must be a consolation for those who suffered from the Judeo-Roman war in that epoch. Accordingly, the 'kingdom in you' is seen as the Lord's social presence among his disciples, as Ephrem and Theodore of Mopsuestia put it.[26] This is a Christ-centred presence of the kingdom. But with the Diatessaron's own psychological interpretation ('the kingdom is in your hearts'), Ephrem, the commentator, is urged to concede some internal presence of the kingdom. As a solution, he offers: 'See, the Lord of the flock [was present], entering the sheepfold by the door ... not in a hidden way, but through his testimonies'.[27] Thus he stresses that the internalization of the kingdom must be done mentally, by belief in the 'testimonies', but not 'in a hidden way', not mystically without any visible reference. In Shubhalmaran's passage this specification is

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23. This is in chapters I,1, II,2 and II,3 of the second book or 'part' according to the edition: Lane, *Book*, pp. 83, 85, 86 (Syr.)/81, 83, 84 (Engl.), translation slightly changed. At p. 83 (Syr.) we also find the terms of ascetic and monastic life, confirming that the chapters are written for *the advancement of monasticism*.

24. See Ilaria Ramelli, 'Luke 17,21: "The Kingdom of God is Inside You". The Ancient Syriac Versions in Support of the Correct Translation', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 12 (2009), pp. 259–86. Ramelli presents not only manuscript evidence of the Bible but much patristic material which is valuable even if one does not want to share her conclusions.

25. McCarthy, *Commentary*, p. 273.

26. For Ephrem, see McCarthy, *Commentary*, pp. 272–73. For Theodore, see Nestor Kavvadas, 'Von Antiochien nach Beth Qatraye. Zur Rezeption Theodors von Mopsuestia in der ostsyrischen Mystik', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Orientalische Christen und Europa: Kulturbegegnung zwischen Interferenz, Partizipation und Antizipation* (Göttinger Orient-forschungen, Syriaca 41; Wiesbaden, 2012), pp. 3–10.

27. McCarthy, *Commentary*, p. 273.

absent. The presence of the kingdom or Gehenna is simply found within the ascetic's soul or life. However, while sometimes apocalypticism may be used as a metaphor *only*, here a clear indication is found that judgement and Gehenna are taken to be real: distress of the soul is not Gehenna, but a taste of it. So apocalypticism can be related to both a present internal experience and a future external destiny.

2.1. Gehenna Internalized

Sure enough, Shubḥalmaran leads us to 'other world' imagery in his end time sermon: half of the final chapter from which the former of the two quotations was taken, consists of a description of hell. It is composed of three originally independent and now fragmentary verse passages, each containing a different metre. The first fragment describes hell *via negativa*:

> There is no new occurrence, nor coincidence,
> no new sadness, but also no consolation. ...
> There is nobody who judges or is judged,
> nobody who reproaches or is put to shame.[28]

After this, Shubḥalmaran inserts a comment: 'except', he says, the individuals themselves: they afflict and torment themselves, and become 'their own hell'. Self-accusation is here seen as the basic problem.

The author then quotes the second set of fragmentary verses, after his internalizing interpretation:

> 'This is the fire that is not put out ...
> this is the worm that never eats its fill ...
> this is the chain that does not open'.[29]

Obviously with this quotation Shubḥalmaran offers a psychological interpretation of eternal fire and the other apocalyptic motifs. In fact, he had introduced the chapter on Gehenna with words which he had already used: 'As the heavenly kingdom is within us, that is, in our works, also hell (ܓܗܢܐ) is accordingly in us, that is, the bad works that we do'.[30]

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28. Lane, *Book*, pp. 193–94, new translation, from the first of three fragments. For the analysis of them which I called 'Höllenlied', and which are written as couplets with a metre of usually 8, then 5, then 7 syllables, see Binder, *Asket*, pp. 177–79.

29. As in note 28.

30. Lane, *Book*, p. 193. The insertion of the term 'works' does not affect the internalized meaning here. 'Works' are probably emphasized as a precaution against some sort of mysticism which deals with the human psyche only but not with a person's lifestyle. The eschatological (but certainly not apocalyptical) aspect of a saintly lifestyle has been studied by Dimitrios Moschos, *Eschatologie im ägyptischen Mönchtum* (Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity 59; Tübingen, 2010).

Here we can turn to a famous model of this idea. Ephrem, in his 'Letter to Publius', offers a comparable internalized interpretation, seeing the same motifs as images for self-accusation. But Ephrem is more cautious than Shubḥalmaran and inserts a 'perhaps':

> And may be ... their mind acts as the flame. The hidden judge who is seated in the discerning mind ... beats them without mercy with the torments of contrition. Perhaps it is this which separates them out, sending each one to the appropriate place; perhaps it is this which grasps the good with its right hand stretched out, sending them to that right hand of mercy; and it again which takes the wicked in its upright left hand, casting them into the place called 'the left' ...
> Not that there really is a right or left there, but these are just terms we use for those who are honoured, and for those who are of low estate.[31]

This last statement is committed to a purely metaphorical understanding. I need not discuss here whether or not Ephrem additionally believed in some 'material' kind of hell-fire. Also, he does not say whether or not he suggests using the motifs for meditation. But he reveals that he does not consider hellfire simply as a metaphor that was made up by monks; instead he takes the tradition for granted and only tries to re-interpret it. After all, Ephrem may serve like the Egyptian fathers as a model in his own right for the function of images of hell in the spiritual life. And it can easily be proven that Ephrem consciously writes for an ascetic setting here: the letter presents him as a spiritual counsellor who writes to Publius who really is an ascetic.

Shubḥalmaran integrated such meditation on his judgement into his *own* spiritual life according to the quote. Did he, being a metropolitan bishop, write about it for spiritual counsel, too? He addressed 'all who know me in the Lord'.[32] The first and foremost focus of the book is on an ecclesial predicament. Therefore ascetics were not its main addressees, even if the author presents his own ascetic practice as a model. In my opinion, he does so because to him as a monk-bishop, meditation and repentance are an integral part of 'apocalypticism' (a term that did not exist in his time).

2.2. Inferno for Monks who went astray

The *Greek Apocalypse of Paul*[33] recounts the apostle's journey to the third heaven, to the doors of paradise and to the fringes of hell. It also

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31. Ephrem, LtP, p. 292; p. 282.
32. For the audience of this sermon, see Binder, *Asket*, pp. 184-86.
33. Hugo Duensing and Aurelio de Santos Otero (tr.), 'Apocalypse of Paul', in Wilhelm Schneemelcher and Robert McL. Wilson (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha 2 Writings Relating to the Apostles – Apocalypses and Related Subjects* (Cambridge, 1992),

contains the call for repentance, but the motifs appear in their material form. Fire is fire, the worm is a worm. There is no psychology[34] and no meditation. In turn, in five passages monastic virtues are proclaimed. First, in the chapters about the 'report of the angels' there is a comparison between steadfast ascetics and their regrettable counterparts. Of the former, the angels announce:

> We have come from those who have renounced this world on account of thy holy name; they wander as strangers and in the *caves* of rock; they *weep* every hour they dwell on earth, and they are *hungry* and thirst for the sake of thy name; their loins girt, they hold in their hands the incense of their heart; they *pray* and bless at every hour; they are *distressed* and subdue themselves. More than all others who live on the earth they are weeping and mourning.[35]

This is a list of about eight ascetic virtues some of which (put in *italics* by me) will be found again below in *Ephrem graecus*. After this passage, the ascetics who are qualified by these virtues are contrasted with those monks who became trapped in the world and found excuses; in short, they went astray. Such observations move the alleged author, Paul, to weep himself on several occasions. This discloses something about the function of the text: it must lead not only the visionary to remorse and repentance, but also his readers.

Second, in ApocPaul there are chapters on hell and a list with nineteen distinguished places of torment for as many kinds of sins. Apparently it is *communis opinio* to view the older Greek *Apocalypse of Peter* (ApocPet) and its *fourteen* torments as one of the sources of this passage.[36] But of course, ApocPaul is only inspired by it. There is no literary dependency, as the lists of torments and sins differ considerably from each other. The concept of Church morals has obviously developed in the mean time between the two apocalypses. Hence we cannot identify simply a few 'new' sins inserted by ApocPaul but we have to recognize that the whole underworld scenery has been remodelled.

pp. 712-41. A very promising proposal on the monastic setting of ApocPaul has been made by Emiliano Fiori after this paper was written: idem, 'A Reactivation of the Apocalyptic Genre in Early Egyptian Monasticism: the Apocalypse of Paul', in Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum and Anita Traniger (eds.), *Wissen in Bewegung. Institution – Iteration – Transfer* (Wiesbaden, 2015), pp. 307-22.

34. There is only one look at the psyche, in the point when the tormented complain that even worse than the torments is the distress of their souls: pain, tears, and worms! Their complaint is then rejected: ApocPaul, p. 736.

35. ApocPaul, p. 718.

36. C. Detlef G. Müller (tr.) 'Apocalypse of Peter', in Wilhelm Schneemelcher and Robert McL. Wilson (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha 2: Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses and Related Subjects* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 620-38. The list is on pp. 628-32.

However, probably some insertions into an older version of ApocPaul are discernable, at some redactional stage. The total number of sins (and torments), nineteen, is a strange asymmetrical number. The final two sins concern two basic heresies. The seventeenth type of sin concerns 'those who seemed to renounce the world ... by wearing our garb', their failure being absence of charity and daily prayer. They are even reprimanded by their non-ascetic fellow sufferers in hell.[37] As a monastic issue like this can be found nowhere else in the list, nor in that of ApocPet, I assume that it has been added to the tradition or to the book at a late stage, but before the issue of heretics was added. Be this as it may, the fact must be considered that monks who went astray form only one part of the list, whereas clerics on the wrong path represent four of them. Monks are not the only addressees of the book.

To resume the list of examples: third, in a description of 'Heavenly Jerusalem', we read of rewards for those who lived in marriage chastely, but sevenfold rewards for the virgins. Fourth, we read of monks who failed partly only and who are neither sent to hell nor to paradise. Instead they will only be admitted to be spectators of the Advent of Christ, standing at the gates of the city.[38] A similar place 'in between' will be found again in Ephrem's HoP. Finally, in a meeting with characters from the Old Testament, the visionary hears of their virtues which will grant them permission to be in pre-paradise already. These virtues are only marginally of an ascetic nature.[39]

Thus ApocPaul does present measures for the advancement of monasticism; the list of tortures may even betray the fact that it was deliberately embellished for this purpose at some stage. Exhortation is achieved by envisioning the consequences of monastic success or failure, even if this is probably not the kind of 'meditation' of other authors. However, the book seems to address its call for repentance to a larger audience than monks only.

2.3. Mind's Journey to Paradise

Regardless of the differences, both ApocPaul and Ephrem's Hymns on Paradise describe paradise as a mountain.[40] Its gate is placed on the level

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37. ApocPaul, p. 734. The heresies consist in the assertions that Christ was not incarnated, and that there is no resurrection of Christ and of the flesh.

38. ApocPaul, pp. 726 and 27 respectively.

39. ApocPaul, pp. 737–41.

40. For the following see Ephrem HoP 1 (paradise, Gehenna and place in between); 2,1 and 10 (gate and different stages from base to top); and ApocPaul, pp. 723–25 (gate, mountain and base) and 730 (ocean and hell). There are many more parallels in other

of the 'third heaven' in ApocPaul, while in HoP the angels' *trishagion* can be heard from the top and God's glory (ܪ‌ܐ‌ܘ‌ܒ‌ܚ‌ܫ) resides on the top.[41] In both books, the base of this mountain equals the shores of the paradise rivers, that is the ocean which encompasses the inhabited earth.[42] Near this base are also located the great abyss and the localities of torment.[43] In ApocPaul and in HoP there is a millennium-type place where milk and honey flow[44] and where 'Old Testament' characters already can be found corporally.[45] These similarities of 'topography' do not suggest any interdependence of the texts. They both must have drawn on common tradition, although Ephrem sometimes claims he acquired his view of paradise purely through meditating on the Scriptures. But Ephrem is contradicted by his own manifold descriptions of the nourishing fruits and scenting flowers of paradise. They cannot be found in the chapters on paradise by 'Moses', but appear, for example, in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (syrBar).[46] The fact that this work was handed down only in Syriac, but not in its Greek original, may show that it was considered quite attractive in Syriac circles.

The HoP will not easily be called 'apocalyptic' but rather, simply, 'eschatological'. However, they do include 'other world' motifs and even allude to 'transition' motifs. So it may be legitimate to use the hymns in this survey. They have been analysed by Edmund Beck for their theological and anthropological implications; in various instances he suggests that they describe the state of humanity – perfection or predicament – *after* the Last Judgement

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heavenly and infernal 'topographies' of that era. See Kirsti B. Copeland, 'Thinking with Oceans. Muthos, Revelation, and the Apocalypse of Paul', in Jan N. Bremmer, István Czachesz (eds.), *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* (Louvain, 2007), pp. 77–104.

41. Ephrem HoP 2,11 (ܪ‌ܐ‌ܘ‌ܒ‌ܚ‌ܫ), 9,17 (ܪ‌ܐ‌ܘ‌ܒ‌ܚ), 9,25 (ܪ‌ܘ‌ܐ). The interior (ܪ‌ܐ‌ܘ) of paradise, actually invisible: 4,7; the *trishagion*: 5,11. In the first half of ApocPaul, a daily judgement is pictured with regular meetings of the angels before God, so some concept of God's presence must be presupposed here, too.

42. Ephrem HoP 1 and 10. ApocPaul, p. 725.

43. ApocPaul, pp. 737–41, the abyss being below the chambers of torture. Ephrem HoP only alludes 1,17 to Gehenna, 10,14 to fire, 14,14 to remorse in Gehenna, while 1,12 the abyss refers to the border between paradise and hell, and pre-paradise plays a much larger role: cf. Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 13.

44. Ephrem HoP 10, cf. Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 110. ApocPaul, p. 726.

45. Beck, Kommentar, pp. 35–36, concerning Adam and Moses, and p. 60 concerning Elijah. ApocPaul, pp. 737–41.

46. SyrBar 29,5 and 7 speaks of the ten-thousandfold fruits of the new earth and their fragrance; syrBar 37 of a formerly uprooted plain now full of the vine and flowers. Cf. A. Frederik J. Klijn (tr.) '2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch, a new Translation and Introduction', in James Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1 (New York, 1983).

but not the transitional state before resurrection.[47] But these matters do not concern our case as much as the fact that Ephrem also recounts his mental and emotional experiences while pondering his themes. Several times he emphasizes that it is an ability of the mind to achieve a perception of the unspeakable.[48] He stresses that his mind has set out from reading the book of Genesis ('Moses'),[49] thereby probably confirming that we are not dealing with an enthusiastic pre-eschatological realisation of salvation. But what else is this if not a meditation and even vision? And indeed he uses a cognate term of musing (ܪ̈ܥܝܢܐ) himself,[50] and confesses to an independent movement of his mind: he arrived at places 'Moses' does not talk about.[51] Even if this terminology were employed here as a stylistic device 'only', it is fitting to associate it with the meditation experience of the ascetics. In fact, it comforts the author (and his readers, of course) by its beauty, but also induces him to a conduct of life which will finally be rewarded with paradise.[52] Its beauty moved (ܐܙܝܥ) him to pray that God make him worthy to enter paradise finally – this is really about motivation![53] Ephrem's daring search for paradise, as he calls it, will be useful for others: the mourners (ܐܒܝ̈ܠܐ) will be comforted, the child (ܛܠܝܐ) grown up, the chaste (ܢܟܦ̈ܐ) glorious, and the indigent (ܡܣܟܢܐ) rich.[54] Blessed in paradise will be the community of the vigilant and the fasters.[55] Its fruits and flowers will be less than the works of the victors (ܙܟܝ̈ܐ), the virgins (ܒܬܘ̈ܠܬܐ) and the holy (ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ); Elijah can be met there for his virginity; Moses is an

47. Beck, *Kommentar*, for example, pp. 20, 63.
48. Ephrem HoP 1,2 (ܪ̈ܢܫܟܬܐ); 5,3 (ܪ̈ܢܫܟܬܐ), 6,2 (ܐܝܢܐ ܟ̈ܢܫܘܬܐ ܟ̈ܢܫܐ, ܟ̈ܢܫܐ).
49. Ephrem HoP 1,1 and 3; 5,3–4; 15,2.
50. Ephrem HoP 6,4 and 25 ('meditate, study'). Cf. the wandering of mind, 6,2 (ܟ̈ܢܫ ܟ̈ܢܫܐ), and some kind of transformation of the self which cannot refer to the *eschaton* alone: 'as if it was not me anymore, because it renewed me by its transformation' (ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܢܐ ܟܠܝ ܗܝ ܕܚܕܬܢܝ ܒܫܘܚܠܦܗ).
51. Ephrem HoP 5,5: 'I began wandering in places he had not written about' (ܫܪܝܬ ܟܐܕ ܐܬܟܪܟ ܒܟ ܕܘܟ̈ܝܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܟܬܒ ܥܠܝܗܝܢ). Admittedly Beck, *Kommentar*, reminds us of Ezek. 14:28 as a genuinely scriptural source of the paradise mountain. But in the imagery of flowers and fruits, Beck, ibid. pp. 110–15, sees an adaption of popular millenaristic materials for an orthodox non-millenarian interpretation.
52. Ephrem HoP 5,12: It refreshed me through peace and beauty ܐܚܝܢܝ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܘܫܘܦܪܐ. This is followed by a beatitude of those who are worthy to be revived by paradise.
53. Ephrem HoP 6,26.
54. Ephrem HoP 4,10. Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 38 points rightly to those whom Christ devotes the beatitudes of the Gospel; but it is not possible to separate these from ascetic values – the ascetics were inspired by the beatitudes: See G. Günter Blum, 'Leiden mit Christus, Schau des göttlichen Lichtes, Erfahrung der dunklen Nacht', in Karl Pinggéra (ed.), Georg Günter Blum. „In der Wolke des Lichts". *Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Spiritualität und Mystik des Christlichen Ostens* (Oikonomia 40; Erlangen, 2001), pp. 127–61, on p. 129.
55. Ephrem HoP 6,2.

example of someone who fasted and who thus was nourished and transfigured by God's glory (ܪܘܚܢܐ).[56] As in paradise, the well of desire has run dry, there being no heat (of scorn) and only purified souls, virgins (ܒܬܘܠܐ) and hermits (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ) and those abstaining from alcohol will be fit to live there.[57] The community of the seeing (ܟܢܫܐ ܕܚܙܝܐ) will partake in the *visio beatifica* to the degree that they have cleansed their eyes, opened their ears and trained their hearts in this life.[58] Even more than in Apoc-Paul, in HoP ascetic values are added to general Christian qualities, but as in ApocPaul, the whole of the Church is envisioned. Ephrem includes a larger list of general virtues,[59] a wider range of Christians as penitents (ܬܝܒܐ), holy persons (ܩܕܝܫܐ), and martyrs (ܣܗܕܐ) in paradise, and wives can be found there, too.[60]

After observing this abundance of ascetic motifs being integrated into the eschatological 'paradise' set of motifs, including judgement day,[61] I finally turn to another set of motifs in the final chapter in HoP which closely connect eschatology with spirituality. It is the entering of the Israelite priest into the 'holy of holies' of the temple, which the author takes as a *typos* for the eschatological entry to paradise. This entering is by way of perception (ܒܚܙܝܐ) and doctrine (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ), knowledge (ܝܕܥܬܐ) and truth (ܩܘܫܬܐ), the latter two symbolized by the priest's ephod, and results in the *trishagion* being heard from inside, the Cherubim talking to him.[62] It is through the wood of the cross that the cloud of unknowing will be pushed aside and the eye can see the inner beauty: faith, vision and intellect

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56. Ephrem HoP 6,12 for the tripartition; 6,23–25 for Elijah; 9,22 for Moses. Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 54, falters between 'monks' and *'sancti'* for ܩܕܝܫܐ; at any rate in asceticism it is a term for sexual abstinence of the married.

57. Ephrem HoP 7,5 and 18.

58. Ephrem HoP 9,24 and 26. *Visio beatifica* has been introduced as the correct interpretation by Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 104 and passim. Idem, p. 158, reminds us that in Ephrem, this *visio* is not only an act of the mind, but of knowledge (ܝܕܥܬܐ), probably instead of sensation. For a wider perspective, see Phil J. Botha, 'Cleansing of the eye: spiritual vision and the fast in Ephrem's hymns *De Ieiunio*', in *Acta patristica et byzantina* 4 (1993), pp. 13–22; for an example of 'cleansing the eye' in Theodoret, see Blum, 'Leiden', p. 129.

59. Ephrem HoP 7: paradise is also a reward for those who did not curse, who washed the neighbour's feet, and visited the sick; for martyrs and widows.

60. Ephrem HoP 2,11. Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 21 assumes that Ephrem employs here the ecclesiological classification of *poenitentes, fideles, perfecti*. On wives, see 7,8 and Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 71.

61. Ephrem HoP 2 uses the judging door of paradise as a symbol of judgement day; also 6,10 is a symbol for it according to Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 57.

62. Ephrem HoP 15,6–8. Ephrem reveals knowledge of *two* pairs of terms for the Urim and Tummim, placing beside each other the terms of the Hebrew and of the Syriac Bible. The latter's pair of terms he equals with ܩܘܫܬܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ. Cf. Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 159, notes 2 and 3.

have equal significance here.[63] It is interesting that this imagery as a means of speaking of the unspeakable emphasizes cognition so much; this apparently safeguards the reader against a wrong understanding of mystical experience. But it is equally interesting that Ephrem places the 'holy of holies' imagery in the final part of the eschatological picture, thus demonstrating an understanding that it belongs there, as it belongs in the apocalyptical setting of other texts, also.

2.4. God's Majestic Epiphany: After the End and Now Already

Here I have arrived at the set of motifs which was used by Alexander Golitzin for his suggestion to view sApocDan in a specifically monastic context. Although this is an 'end time' apocalypse, its final lines can be addressed as an 'other world' portrayal of the eternally existing presence of God.[64] The scene is placed after the upheaval of the world, and before the final judgement and restoration of the kingdom:

> Then Adonai Zeba'oth,
>> God of gods, Lord of lords, and King of kings,
> the great and awesome one [will descend] from heaven,
>> with powerful and mighty strength, and in majestic beauty,
> on clouds of light / and on a chariot of holy water
>> with marvellous power,
> and with a burning flame / and a fiery coal
>> and with angels, men of war.
> His voice will be heard from many-heights,
>> and he will speak with a strong and burning flame.
> Fiery chariots will surround him
>> and encampments of holy angels ...
>
> And then the God of gods, Lord of lords, and King of kings,
>> Adonai Zeba'oth, the Mighty Lord, will appear completely on Zion.
> He will set up a holy cherub on Zion,
>> and the throne of righteousness on the mountains of Jerusalem.
> *Also, the ... [lacuna] of Christ King from heaven will appear on earth.*
> Seraphim of splendour will stand before him,
>> and angels of reverence will be ministering before him.
> He will let his Presence abide on the mountains of Jerusalem,
>> he will abide in Jerusalem and sanctify her ...
> *Then there will be the Coming of Christ the king in Great glory* ...[65]

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63. Ephrem HoP 15,5, and Beck, *Kommentar*, p. 159.

64. According to syrBar 21,6, the creatures of fire, which possibly are one source for the following passages, are gathered before God's throne from the beginning of creation.

65. SApocDan, pp. 100–103. *Italics* by me; the two lines about Christ may not fit in terms of content and of the order of *parallelismus membrorum* and may thus be glosses.

'Divine presence' is the translation of ܫܟܝܢܬܐ here. The whole set of motifs is paralleled, and according to Golitzin inspired, by Jewish and Christian *merkavah* mysticism. It also contains such imagery as God's chariot (מרכבה, ܡܪܟܒܬܐ) and the angels as fiery beings, or a stream of fire, all associated with the presence or glory (שכינה, ܫܟܝܢܬܐ) of God. The ascetic's mystical experience is expressed symbolically as standing or ministering near the throne of God like the angels, or even as becoming Christ's throne or temple himself. Of God's glory (ܫܟܝܢܬܐ) and majesty (ܪܒܘܬܐ), and of the standing ministers we have already heard in Ephrem's HoP. Golitzin presents a large collection of parallels from Evagrius Ponticus, Aphrahat the Persian and Pseudo-Macarius up to Isaac of Nineveh and John of Dalyatha.[66] Of the latter at least a few lines of exhortation may be quoted:

> Man of God! Just how long are you going to console yourself with little obscurities (that is, John's letters)? Become instead wholly a flame, and burn up everything around you in order to see the beauty hidden within you! And then make this prayer: ...[67] You who are hidden and concealed within me, reveal within me your hidden mystery; manifest to me your beauty that is within me. O you who have built me as a temple for you to dwell in, cause the cloud of your glory to overshadow inside your temple, so that the ministers of your sanctuary may cry out, in love for you, holy, as an utterance which burns as fire and spirit, in a sharp stirring which is commingled with wonder and astonishment, activated as a living moment by the power of your being.[68]

The parallels between mystical imagery and sApocDan cannot be denied. Also, we can scarcely object that the text can be *used* as an appeal to stay on the right side. Golitzin puts it in these words:

> Like the writers of the ancient apocalypses, such as the author(s) of Daniel, our writer is also concerned lest the chaos outside his doors trouble or even overthrow the faith of his readers. The difference between him and the ancients lies in the nature of his readership. Our author's target audience is monastic, and the nature of the monks' calling is less simply to stand in attendance of the eschaton than it is, first and foremost, to seek to embody it, to become themselves, here and now, the 'place' of the divine Presence, living temples ... The very worst thing that can happen to a monk's sober pursuit of his vocation is to fall victim and give himself over to the alarms and agitations of the perishing world. This is exactly the danger that

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66. For the former three, see Golitzin, 'Heavenly Mysteries'; for all of them, see idem, 'Setting'.

67. From Golitzin, 'Setting', p. 90, after Robert Beulay, *La collection des lettres de Jean de Dalyatha* (PO 39; Turnhout, 1978), p. 351.

68. In Sebastian P. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo, 1987), p. 362.

I understand the author of the *SAD* [sApocDan] wants to confront, and to counter.[69]

However, the implied opinion that *merkavah* imagery *in itself* points toward mysticism and monasticism is debatable. In my introduction I have already reported that Muriel Debié reasonably points to a possible historical reference in the apocalypse's first part. Also, there is no explicit appeal in sApocDan to become 'living temples'. In fact, there are only two phrases that hint at an intention. The first phrase serves as the connecting link between the 'historical' and the 'visionary' part of the book; it says: 'The wise and those who keep the covenant will understand this book, and, at the end of ends, let them be moved by it'.[70] Even if the meaning of this remains obscure, it doesn't hint at everyday practice, but at a crucial point of time in history. The second phrase is at the end of the book: 'We beg from Christ our Lord that he deem us worthy to stand at his right side and to mingle us among the companies of his saints, among the ranks of his friends, those who have loved him and kept his commandments ...'.[71] This reflects a very general religious goal. Thus the historical aspect should come first in the interpretation of sApocDan. If this text should additionally function in the way Golitzin has proposed, it would be rather a side-effect.

Such a side-effect cannot be excluded in other texts, too. A similar situation will be encountered in the Ephremian pseudepigraphy which, together with sApocDan, belongs to 'end time apocalypticism' but also presents this final 'other world scene': those texts also speak of the chariot of Christ and the fiery angels.[72] The same is true for the seventh century Syriac end time sermon ascribed to Ephrem (Ephr syr), which on the whole reflects no asceticism at all. It is possible that *merkavah* motifs were adopted to the apocalyptic inventory before long on grounds of truly mystical experiences of the apocalyptic writers. But then, its mystical implication can easily have become incomprehensible at a later stage.

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69. Golitzin, 'Setting', p. 94.
70. SApocDan, pp. 75–76.
71. SApocDan, pp. 117–18.
72. Ephr gr B, pp. 229–30: Christ arrives with angels and archangels, flames and a river of fire, Cherubs and Seraphs who hide with their wings their fiery faces and feet; judgement is spoken from the throne (βῆμα). Ephr syr: Edmund Beck (ed./tr.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III* (CSCO 320–321, Scr. Syri 138–139; Louvain, 1972), pp. 60–71, 79–94; on pp. 70–71: after the archangels have destroyed the Antichrist, the Lord comes down with the glory of his angels, on a chariot (ܪܟܘܒܬܐ) and to a throne (ܟܘܪܣܝܐ); he and the apostles on thrones (ܟܘܪܣܘܬܐ and ܡܘܬܒܐ) speak justice, while the fiery beings (ܢܘܪܢܐ) execute it.

3. Ascetic Reflections in End Time Situations

3.1. A Greek End Time Sermon

There are many eschatological sermons ascribed to Ephrem but basically only three that contain an apocalyptical plot with an 'Antichrist myth'. The already mentioned Greek sermon (Ephr gr A and B) is one of the three, besides a Latin (Ephr lat) and the aforementioned Syriac one (Ephr syr).[73] Most scholars agree that all three were not composed by the great Syrian; Wilhelm Bousset however voted for the originality of Ephr gr.[74] Ephr syr is dated to the late seventh century as it clearly displays a Muslim Arab background.[75] Of Ephr lat a Greek original may be assumed.[76] But even so it differs much from Ephr gr, although both are connected in a way. Emmanouela Grypeou discusses that connection. Concluding that there is no literary dependence, she rightly assumes 'that the pseudo-Ephremian traditions were part of a rich apocalyptic lore on the End of the Times and the eschatological reign of the ultimate evil'.[77] The dating has to remain open, but Ephr lat, together with Pseudo-Hippolyte's *De consummatione mundi*, displays an atmosphere which fits in well with the reign of the emperor Julian 'the Apostate' (361–363) and thus in Ephrem's life time.[78] These texts both refer to the reconstruction

73. Ephr lat: Daniel Verhelst, 'Scarpsum de dictis Sancti Ephrem prope finem mundi', in Robrecht Lievens, Erik van Mingroot and Werner Verbeke (eds.), *Pascua medievalia. Studies voor Prof. Dr. J.M. De Smet* (Mediaevalia Lovanensia 1.10; Louvain, 1983), pp. 518–28. See also with detailed introduction: Carl P. Caspari (ed.), *Briefe, Abhandlungen und Predigten aus den zwei letzten Jahrhunderten des kirchlichen Alterthums und dem Anfang des Mittelalters* (Christiana, 1890), pp. 208–20.

74. Wilhelm Bousset, *Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judentums, des neuen Testaments und der alten Kirche* (Göttingen, 1895), p. 21.

75. See Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Pseudo-Ephraems "Rede über das Ende" und die Syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebenten Jahrhunderts', in *Aram* 5,1/2 (1993), pp. 437–63, esp. pp. 439–40. Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 136–47, has suggested to search for an older corel of Ephr syr in the 'twin text' Ephr lat, but to my knowledge he has not further undertaken such research.

76. General arguments are already in Caspari, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 208–20; a linguistic approach is in Georg Kortekaas, 'The Biblical Quotations in the Pseudo-Ephraemian Sermo de fine mundi', in Renée I.A. Nip et al. (eds.), *Media Latinitas. A Collection of Essays to Mark the Retirement of Lodewijk J. Engels* (Instrumenta patristica 28; Turnhout, 1996), pp. 237–44.

77. Emmanouela Grypeou, 'Ephraem Graecus, "Sermo In Adventum Domini". A Contribution to the Study of the Transmission of Apocalyptic Motifs in Greek, Latin and Syriac Traditions in Late Antiquity', in Samir Khalil Samir and Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala (eds.), *Græco-latina et orientalia. Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani Sexagenarii* (Beirut, 2013), pp. 165–79; the quote is on p. 178.

78. For further discussion, see Grypeou, 'Ephraem Graecus', pp. 173–75. Ibid., p. 165, we are reminded that the pseudepigraphy of the texts requires that at least their final redaction must be dated after Ephrem's death.

of the Jewish temple and to a Persian invasion, and it is Julian who projected the reconstruction of this temple and provoked a deathly defeat from the Persians. These references are not contained in Ephr gr B, while Ephr gr A at least mentions the rebuilding of the temple. This detail should help us to sort out the relation between the texts a little better.

But first I want to compile a list of some of the motifs that Ephr lat and gr have in common and lend them their unique character – I will leave out the standard motifs such as the Antichrist's pretention to be God, or the coming of his opponents Enoch and Elijah. In both texts, Satan is a dragon; Antichrist is born from an unclean girl (that is, as an actual human[79]); he appears first to be a mild king, accepting no presents (bribes), and praised by the Jews, but then turns out to be most cruel and a sorcerer; in his time people starve due to a disastrous drought; it causes mothers to die bowed over their sucklings and with their husbands leaning over their lap; people flee before him not only to the mountains (Matt. 24:16), but to caves and holes, graves and tombs, while weeping and supplicating; people in the West flee to the East while those in the East flee to the West; they experience perdition at sea and on the dry land; gold, silver, and precious garments lie worthless in the streets with nobody collecting them; only those are allowed to trade *food* who bear the Antichrist's sign on their forehead and hand. Many of these peculiarities I have not found in contemporary 'end time' texts. In the last mentioned motif, the word 'food' represents a unique addition to Rev. 13:16 (this source is indicated by Ephr lat). Therefore the word should be seen as a historical reminiscence, because there must have been some reason to combine the motif of starvation with the motif of the sign of the Antichrist and its use as a prerequisite of *food* trade. Whatever the common tradition (not literary source) of Ephr lat and gr may have been, it should be assumed that it concerned the reign of the emperor, Julian.

Then we have to look at the recensions of the Greek sermon. Ephr gr A is a text corpus which consists actually of three independent sermons, each of them presenting about a third of the contents of Ephr gr B. In other words, by combining these three sermons of Ephr gr A, much of Ephr gr B is obtained. But each of the short sermons has its own introduction and

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79. Ephr lat: Antichrist is born from a man and an unclean girl (*ex inmundam vel turpissimam virginem*, sic), the demon being mingled at the conception (*malo spirito vel nequissimo mixto*): Ephr lat, p. 526; Ephr gr: the Antichrist is an instrument (*organon*), born from an unclean girl (*kore*) 'so he does not incarnate': Ephr gr B, p. 226. It would be an incarnation if the girl had conceived directly from Satan. So both texts make the same emphasis in different words, while Ephr gr is even more cautious not to confuse Satan with humanity in that girl.

takes more time for its own subject than the large recension. On the other hand, the latter offers an extensive introductory passage which underlines the idea that the Antichrist is a demon. This detail, however, contradicts the aforementioned motif that the Antichrist is really a human, instead of Satan incarnated. I will return to this contradiction later; here I suspect that we are dealing with an embellishment, and that Ephr gr B may thus be the later text. Also, the fact that Ephr gr A mentions the projected rebuilding of the temple brings it closer to Ephr lat and closer to a historical setting.

Some words on authorship: to identify Julian 'the Apostate' with the Antichrist seems to be in accordance with the 'Ephremian School'. There is a peculiarity in the various interpretations of the term 'apostasy' in 2 Thess. 2:3. Usually, the ancient commentaries explain 'apostasy' as the falling from faith of *many*. But the Armenian Ephremian commentary interprets 'apostasy' as the coming of the 'apostate' and rebel, who is the Antichrist.[80] The interpretation as 'apostate' seems to be induced by the identification of Julian 'the apostate' with the Antichrist. But on the other hand this does not point to Ephrem alone; also Gregory Nazianzen praises 'all ye Angels, whose deed was the putting down of the tyrant [Julian], ... the Dragon, the Apostate'.[81] And even though we know that the authentic Ephrem was able to call Julian 'governed by Satan',[82] we hear of no Antichrist myth in the texts that are commonly attributed to him as authentic. Moreover, Ephrem probably did not accept an 'end time' interpretation of Matt. 24. This chapter from the Bible could have provided a setting for the belief in an eschatological Antichrist,[83] but Ephrem's CommDiat (see above) first reports the opinion that the Biblical prophecies of the Lord were aimed at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, which is not eschatological at all. Only in second place does CommDiat mention, 'it is said that he was speaking of the punishment in Jerusalem, and *at the same time, referring to the end* of this world'.[84] This does not seem to be the commentator's own opinion; it is not even

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80. See Patres Mechitaristae (tr.), *S. Ephraem Syri Commentarii in Epistolas S. Pauli* (Venice, 1893), p. 193 (2 Thess. 2:3). For the other interpretation see, for example, Theodore (and Cyril of Jerusalem and Theodoret) in Henry B. Swete (tr.), *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii. The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments* 2.1 *Thessalonians-Philemon* (Cambridge, 1882), p. 50.

81. Charles W. King (tr.), *Gregory Nazianzen's two Invectives and Libanius' Monody with Julian's Extant Theosophical Works* (London, 1888), p. 1 (sermon 4,1).

82. Beck, *Ephrem De Paradiso* 1, pp. 65–66.

83. Of course, Matt. 24 is not really the source of the myth which in part has been construed later. But usually later theologians try to legitimate their Antichrist myths, for example, with the pseudo messiahs in Matt. 24.

84. McCarthy, *Commentary*, p. 278, *italics* by me.

clear whether it is a later interpolation. All of this, and even more so the materials of HoP, do not make it likely that Ephrem wrote an Antichrist story. But this cannot be completely excluded: in the same Hymns it could already be seen that their author did not refrain from non-biblical apocalyptical materials.[85] The touching starvation scenes as well as scenes of streets full of the stench of the unburied may be cited in favour of an Ephremian origin; both of these images appear in Ephr gr; such scenes Ephrem may have witnessed during two Persian sieges of his hometown Nisibis. But finally, in order to firmly establish the authorship of Ephrem, it would be necessary to find some instances of his typical 'monastic' and even 'interiorized' interpretation of apocalypticism. Although I will identify some monastic aspects, they very much seem to belong to the later parts of the recension. This contradicts the assumption that Ephrem was the author. But it leaves open the possibility that the later insertions were authored by some Ephremian 'school'.

3.2. Contents: Ascetic Admonition

Ephr gr offers less 'historical' data than Ephr lat, but expands greatly on some details. Prominent among them is the motif that the bearing of the 'serpent's sign' is made a prerequisite for trading food, as instituted by Antichrist. In the end, the text says, the Antichrist will not even be able to fulfil his promise of sufficient supplies, and his followers will starve anyway. In a way, the motif sounds even more realistic this way. But then, the bearing of the sign is not only used as a symbol for the subjugation under Antichrist; finally it represents the basic criterion for condemnation to eternal fire in the Last Judgement. And more:

> Beware, my brothers, of the haughtiness of the beast and the schemes of the Evil one. It begins in the stomach, so that if someone is hungry and needs food, he will be forced to accept the seal ... but if someone is not sealed by that seal, he will therefore not be under the spell of those illusions (φαντασμοί), and the Lord will not keep away from them, but will illuminate them and draw them to him ... We must, brothers, recognize with scrutiny the illusions of the enemy, that they are worthy of contempt, because our Lord comes to us in stillness (γαλήνη) ... Let us think unalterable and faithful thoughts; then the Weak one will desist from us and can do nothing ... All those who have accepted the Seal of Antichrist, and have worshipped him as the good God, do not participate in the dominion of Christ and will be thrown into hell with the dragon. Blessed is he who will be found all holy and faithful, and has his heart with the Lord uninterruptedly.[86]

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85. See above on the fruits and flowers of paradise.
86. Ephr gr B, pp. 226–27.

These quotes show typical elements of the text: they lead us right away from politics to the spiritual life, and are unparalleled in Ephr lat and syr. The author exhorts his audience not to follow their stomachs nor any 'illusions' – superficially referring to the Antichrist's miracles – but to concentrate on godly thoughts and stillness. The stillness in which God comes to the individual contrasts with the rather spectacular coming of the enemy. Indeed, the introduction of the spiritual motif of stillness fits in well with the apocalyptical scenario, but it is not common.

'Illusions' (φαντασμοί) are very much at home in an ascetic context, even though they may also be part of simple popular belief about demons (and our text sometimes speaks of sorcery, too). But in the context where the illusion motif is introduced in the first place (Ephr gr B only), it becomes a new interpretation of Matt. 24:24. The Evangelist reports that by 'signs and wonders' the Antichrist tries to deceive the faithful. But Ephr gr B speaks of the Antichrist's 'false signs and *illusions of miracles*' (τεράτων φαντασμοῖς). This becomes more striking when in Ephr gr B the Antichrist not only simulates Divinity, part of the standard myth, but does it by means of illusions: 'He appears as God in terrible illusions, lifted up in the air, and all demons move in the air like angels in front of the tyrant'.[87] This reflects one major ambiguity of the desert fathers' experience: the possibility that a vision might be demonic instead of Divine. Golitzin reports the case of the monk Valens who failed to discern the demon behind a vision of the Deity he had falsely believed to see. It was not only a spiritual, but a theological and juridical issue.[88] If it is part of the current myth that the Antichrist will make people believe in him as God through miracles,[89] it is a peculiarity of our text that he will do it by illusion. A similar motif seems to reappear in sApocDan: There, Antichrist appears as a giant, stepping out of the sea and surmounting the mountains.[90] Golitzin informs us that this unique feature corresponds again with a motif from Christian and originally Jewish mysticism: the cautioning against the demon who by way of illusion takes on the 'measure of height' (קומה, ܪܘܡܬܐ) which should be reserved for the Messiah (cf. Eph. 4:13).[91]

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87. All in Ephr gr B, pp. 222.

88. Alexander Golitzin, 'The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God's Glory in a Form: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature', in *Studia Monastica* 44 (2002), pp. 13–44.

89. The source is 2 Thess. 2,10; then, for example, Cyril of Jerusalem, lecture 15,9–14: McCauley, *Cyril*, pp. 53–54.

90. SApocDan, p. 92.

91. Golitzin, 'Setting', pp 78–84. As above, we may question if this motif must be reserved for the mystical context alone.

The flight into the mountains (and the desert) is also an ascetic motif, even if it certainly represents an experience in time of war also. In Ephr gr it is not clearly discernable to which of both settings the motif belongs. But there is more material reported in the text which is familiar to the desert *topos* of the fathers:[92] for example, their 'uninterrupted' and 'unspeakable' weeping and praying to God as a means of salvation during their flight; a weeping in which even Earth and Sea partake, and animals and birds, the mountains and the woods of the plain – they all weep because psalms and prayer have become silent in the mouths of humans.[93] This may, but need not, reflect a situation during war when liturgy could not be entertained. It certainly can also be taken as a reflection of some decline of ascetic practice. More may be added, such as the way the people hide from the Antichrist not only in caves, but in graves and tombs – a place where also mystics liked to reside. And in the context of the desert, even hunger and snakes become literary motifs known from the hermit's experience: 'apart from hunger, tribulation and fear, there will appear carnivorous animals and biting vipers.'[94] This phrase from Ephr gr could likewise have been taken from a desert father's biography.

Also, the training of the soul is a monastic practice to which some remarks in Ephr gr seem to allude:[95] an 'adamantine' soul is required in order to withstand. It is necessary to remain 'unmoved' by the sight of so much distress; therefore the soul needs certainty about the coming of the Son of God. On the other hand, the belief that the soul *will* be unmoved and desires *will* be silent, a belief which usually belongs to a concept of the other world, is adapted to the end time here: according to Ephr gr the afflictions will be so great that not only women's beauty will fade but men's desire too.[96] Such an observation may be worth mentioning especially for an ascetic. Not only will godly thoughts help in such times, but there is also a negative application of the already mentioned term μνήμη: the preacher himself says he was aroused by the 'remembrance' (μνήμη) of the dragon. Here the word may not denote a technique of meditation. But it may be more than just 'memory' if sometimes meditation could even concentrate on death, judgement and hell.

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92. All of the following can be found in the description of the desert set of motifs by Antoine Guillaumont: Idem, 'La conception du desert chez les moines d'Égypte', in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 3 (1975), pp. 3–21. On the weeping motif, see also Blum, 'Leiden', pp. 130–31, 140–41.

93. Ephr gr B, pp. 229.

94. Ephr gr B, pp. 227.

95. The following is all from Ephr gr B, pp. 222–23.

96. Ephr gr B, pp. 228 on devastation of beauty and desire; confer Ephrem HoP 7,5 'the well of desire will have run dry'.

The general intention of Ephr gr is obviously to exhort his audience to opt for the right side in time, to act properly and to endure: this is common in apocalypticism. And yet, in many ways it seems to be an exhortation to opt for the ascetic side, to act ascetically, and to endure in the ascetic way of life. Above I have demonstrated how it helped ascetics to place them-selves fictively in 'other world' places, as their more cognate form of apoc-alypticism. Here, however, there is obviously an example of how ascetics could place themselves in the future 'end time', too. They could identify with the group of those who were not only persecuted by Antichrist but were also saved in the desert, and they could thereby gain deeper identity. However uncommon, I may venture to say that the recension of Ephr gr B as we have it to hand *was* made for monks, for the advancement of monas-ticism. But this happened in contrast to former recensions. If a handful of possible 'monastic' motifs are present already in Ephr lat, they may well have instigated the further embellishment for monastic purposes.

3.3. Continuations: The Great Struggle of Satan

Ephr gr B has gained a widespread reputation to the extent that it exists in Georgian, Arabic, Old Bulgarian, and in fragments in Palestin-ian Aramaic.[97] Has it then also become an example in so far that other end time sermons were written for monks as well?

There is a short text that deserves to be mentioned here. I have already dealt with Shubhalmaran's end time sermon. In it the author quotes an apocalyptical Pseudo-Clementine text fragment (ApocPsClem) which is hard to explain.[98] Written in lines that show parallelism but no metre, it is no sermon, but called a 'prophecy' (ܢܒܝܘܬܐ) by Shubhalmaran. He claims that it was taken from an 'anti-Ebionite confutation' (ܕܪܫܐ) of Clement. But no such confutation exists, whereas there is a remark by Epiphanius of Salamis who says, 'Clement himself fully convicts them [the Ebionites] of this [their alleged forgery of the book *Travels of Peter*] in his general epistles which are read in the holy churches'.[99] These epis-tles are known to us, also in their Syriac version that was widely acknowledged,[100] but they include no argument against the Ebionites. Epiphanius means that their content contradicts the Ebionitism in the

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97. See Grypeou, 'Ephraem', p. 140.
98. For an analysis of the fragment, see Binder, *Asket*, pp. 163–76.
99. Frank Williams (tr.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* 1 (Leiden, 1997), p. 131 (chapter 30,15,2).
100. B.P. Pratten (tr.), 'Two Epistles on Virginity ascribed to Clement of Rome', in Philip Schaff (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 8 (Grand Rapids, 1885), pp. 91–128; see introductions.

Travels of Peter, but not that there is a confutation written by Clement. So Shubḥalmaran's reference makes no sense. A plausible solution may be that he worked with a collection of (Pseudo-) Clementine texts which was handed down to him *as* 'the anti-Ebionite confutation', that is, in awareness of Epiphanius' statement. Part of the collection would have been our ApocPsClem. It might be argued that the small quotation from it could even be an invention of Shubḥalmaran himself, but it must be really a quotation: First, the fragment speaks of 'these things' after a few words, with no reference to what 'these things' are; this means that part of an extant text has been cut off. Second, the text is interrupted several times by the comments of Shubḥalmaran who resumes the quote regularly with 'he says' (ܐܡܪ) or the quotation particle (ܠܡ).

The fragment itself starts with a 'woe' against the 'servants of the tyrant', that is, of Satan. The unknown author warns against his schemes and deceit. Satan's aim is to 'devastate him [Christ] who does not perish, to extinguish the life giving name that is inextinguishable'. His means are 'agonies and plagues', and – again! – 'illusions and phantasies' (ܚܙܘܢܐ ܘܦܢܛܣܝܣ). Contrasting illusions with plagues must have been done deliberately. It suggests that the dangers of the end time do not purely consist of pains of the body, but also of attacks on the soul. This ascetic 'illusions' motif I have not found in a third end time text. Maybe there is a parallel in the 'giant' motif Golitzin analysed in sApocDan, and in the Antichrist's ability to 'change his shape' according to some texts.[101] The time span between Ephr gr and Shubḥalmaran is more than 200 years, but it is reasonable to say that here we are dealing with a continued tradition. However, it cannot as easily be said of ApocPsClem as of Ephr gr that it is

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101. Thus in the *Coptic Apocalypse of Elijah* (cApocEl, 3ʳᵈ cent.) and the *Greek Oracle of Baalbek* (OrBaal, 5ᵗʰ cent.). Within both texts, the motif remains cryptic. It may represent a negative spiritual experience, or, on the contrary – both texts are 'historical' and barely mystical – an explanation of how Satan can appear in the serpent and different persons throughout history, and finally as the Antichrist. The same motif is applied to Simon Magus who bears some features of the Antichrist in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (Clem R II,9,5, 4ᵗʰ cent.: *permuto vultum meum* in Latin, ܡܫܚܠܦ ܐܢܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܝ in Syriac). For cApocEl 34,3–5, see Albert Pietersma, Susan Turner Comstock, and Harold W. Attridge (eds.), *The Apocalypse of Elijah* (Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations 19; Chico, 1981). Wolfgang Schrage (tr.), *Die Elia-Apokalypse* (Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 5,3; Gütersloh, 1980), pp. 193–288, on pp. 215 and 254–55, relates further evidence of the motif which could be of old Egyptian provenance. For OrBaal, see Paul Alexander (tr.), *The Oracle of Baalbek: The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Washington, 1967), pp. 28–29. For Clem R, see Bernhard Rehm, Georg Strecker (ed.), *Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung* (Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller 51; Berlin, 1994²), p. 56 (Lat.), and Wilhelm Frankenberg, *Die syrischen Clementinen mit griechischem Paralleltext. Eine Vorarbeit zu dem literaturgeschichtlichen Problem der Sammlung* (Texte und Untersuchungen 48,3; Leipzig, 1937), p. 88 (Syr.).

'written for monks'. It is likewise possible that the motif had simply been introduced to the apocalyptic inventory by this time. Regardless of this, the fragment is too short as to enable us to draw too many conclusions.

Of similar interest is the fact that ApocPsClem displays a figure which is called 'tyrant' and obviously refers to Satan rather than the Antichrist. This is proven by the fact that he is seen as extant from the outset, although his end time activity is described here: 'Who is able to withstand the future violence and the malice of the tyrant when he will be admitted to the summit of his powers ... Cunning is the Old one, from the first times until the last'.[102] He sends out his 'priests', and it is they who work his illusions and fantasies. Now, Satan's great struggle against the faithful throughout history is a motif widely represented in asceticism, and it is no wonder that an ascetic would also see it in the end time struggle.

For the best illustration, I will turn to Narsai the Great. In his two sermons concerning the end time, this struggle is represented by the struggle between the Antichrist and the prophet Elijah. But it is not the kind of struggle we find in Rev. 13:3–7 where the 'two witnesses' are finally killed (the witnesses are often identified as Elijah and Enoch or Moses, as is well known). It is also not the struggle of the archangel Michael who defeats the Antichrist or his hosts as in Dan. 12:1 or in Ephr syr, respectively.[103] But it is a spiritual struggle so unique at first glance that Philippe Gignoux looked for its sources even in Zoroastrian apocalypticism.[104] Here is a section of it:

> In the power of the spirit, the prophet of the spirit [Elijah] comes at the end, and sets out to struggle with the rebel who speaks lies.

> Spiritually he fights with him, the deceiver,
> and demonstrates to him that in our body there is the power of the spirit ...

> A great war takes place on earth at the consummation of times,
> in which two bodily beings battle, using two kinds of power.

> Truth and lie do they attach as an armament to their senses
> and they fire the arrows of their message against each other.

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102. Lane, *Book*, p. 175 (Syr.), new translation.
103. Cf. Ephr syr, p. 70.
104. Gignoux, 'Doctrines', vol. 11, p. 342 n. 68. The following will show that Gignoux' assumption is not necessary. The struggle of Elijah is easily explained from Christian monastic tradition. A first reference to Elijah within the Antichrist myth is in Theodoret who in his commentary presents an *eisegesis* of Elijah into Dan. 12,1: 'He says that when these things happen through Antichrist, Saint Michael the Archangel will do everything in this way: Elijah will appear and announce the coming of the Lord': Jacques-Paul Migne (ed./tr.), *Theodoretus Cyrrhi Episcopus. Interpretatio in Danielem* (PG 81; Paris, 1861), col. 1256–1545, on col. 1535.

The son of strangers [Elijah] has wrapped himself completely in truth,
but the son of perdition is clothed in the schemes of betrayal.

The son of the right has put on the armour of justice,
but the son of perdition is girded in evil and abominable injustice.

The prophet of truth has donned the helmet of faith,
But he who spreads lies has lifted over his head the shield of lie ...

Lies are the whole armament of the son of perdition,
but the spirit affirms Elijah's preaching so that the mind becomes steady.

In the spirit the prophet of the spirit recites beautiful things,
and the children of spiritual practise hear his voice ...

The voice of the envoy of truth explains the word of truth, which had
announced earlier: 'Behold, Elijah came and will come' [Matt. 11:14] ...

As an athlete he comes down and stands up among the spirits,
and takes on the battle with the Strong one and his hosts.

All spirits take on the harsh battle with him,
and he with all of them, and they do not overcome his courage.

The power of the spirit overcomes his body and the stirrings of his soul,
and does not retreat from battle which he fights in the place of his lord.

That commandment that made him victorious in the struggle against
Baal's priests, will also make him win the war with the rebel.

Together with the goal he gave him strength in the days of Ahab
to prepare a way for the victory at the consummation.

The elimination which he inflicted on Baal's priests was a pledge
for the future elimination which he will bring over the host of spirits ...

The Creator saw his [Satan's] evil inclination from the beginning,
and appointed in advance his [Elijah's] strength of his help, to fight with him.

Through Elijah our whole generation fights with him
and overcomes his warring strength by our humility ...

Against him [Elijah] all spirits compete in the son of perdition,
but not a single one of his violent lies hits him.

A great miracle is the war that the son of the strangers wages,
because he is one against thousands, but is not pushed back.

Like a miracle is the Divine strength which strengthens him,
so that one man can look down on many.[105]

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105. BM Or 9396, fol. 169a-171a.

The prevalence of the spirit over the body, the caution of truth against deception, and the armament of the senses are ascetic issues similar to those already encountered. It is also an ascetic opinion that Elijah, 'son of strangers', was prepared for this eschatological *spiritual* struggle against Satan already through his struggle against Baal's priests. In the work of Narsai's contemporary Isaiah of Scetis, which was 'clearly widely read in Syriac monastic circles, both East and West',[106] we find a similar identification of Elijah's struggle against Baal as a struggle against the demonic. Isaiah loosely sums up Elijah's speech of 1 Kgs. 18: 'You may call the names of your Gods, and I will call mine', whence he argues that Satan will only gain power over a human if the human follows Satan's will instead of God's.[107] However far-fetched this interpretation of the biblical Elijah may be, it shows that Narsai's description of the eschatological struggle is not without model. And Shubhalmaran still knows the motif over a century later: in a list in which he provides seven reasons why Elijah was chosen for the struggle against the Antichrist, his third item makes the same point as Isaiah and Narsai: 'Among our forefathers there was none who was seething like him with zeal against the demons and their servants and for the love of his creator'. The sixth item gives the reason for Elijah's unique qualification: he was perfect in self-restraint (ܪܚܡܘܬܐ) and virginity (ܒܬܘܠܘܬܐ).[108]

Narsai mentions two more things: first, this struggle against the Antichrist ('son of perdition', according to 2 Thess. 2:3) is actually a struggle against all spirits (or demons: ܪܘܚܐ), and in fact against Satan who presides over all demons and whose 'evil inclination from the beginning' was seen by the Creator in advance. Elijah was appointed for the struggle with *him*, just as Isaiah had put it. Second, in Elijah's struggle Narsai sees all of 'our generation' struggling. Thus, while the language points to a future event on the whole, it is not difficult for the audience to identify everybody's daily struggle with Satan in the scene. Indeed, the addressees of the sermon are 'the children of spiritual practice' (ܒܢܝ ܕܘܒܪܐ) who hear the voice of Elijah as their example. At the end of the sermon Narsai exhorts his hearers: 'A great war will he open against us – come, let us fabricate an armament that excels his tyranny! ... With the spear of his rage has he resolved to tear down the

106. Sebastian P. Brock, Art. 'Isaiah of Scetis', in idem *et al.* (eds.), *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of Syriac Heritage* (Piscataway, 2011), pp. 211–12.

107. Éliane Poirot, *Les prophètes Élie et Élisée dans la litterature chretienne ancienne* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 407–8.

108. Lane, *Book*, pp. 182 and 183. Shubhalmaran also knows, like Narsai, of the preselection of Elijah for the final struggle.

house of our soul – let us attach love as an armour lest we succumb!'[109] These are certainly measures to be taken in the present instead of at a later time.

This is the best suited example for the fact that an 'end time' sermon can no less be used for a monastic purpose than an 'other world' sermon. It represents a real counterpart of Ephrem's internalized 'other world' eschatology. And maybe it provides us with a further criterion for how to distinguish rather 'historical' or 'political' apocalypses from those which are made more or less for monastic inspiration. The more the Antichrist is depicted as a human, a political figure, a tyrant pre-modelled in the 'little horn' of Dan. 7:8 (cf. Dan. 12:21–45), the more we may assume that the intention of the whole text is a political one. On the other hand, the more the difference between the Antichrist and Satan is obliterated, the more we may assume that the text is interested in the rather general spiritual struggle of the ascetic against Satan.

This difference does not depend on the structure of a text's 'antichristology', that is, how Satan and the human end time tyrant are seen to be related. Theories have ranged from an equation of both[110] to the strictly non-incarnational view of the fourth century[111] which is retained in Shubḥalmaran.[112] Narsai introduces 'temple' terminology in a most creative way, adapting the prediction of 2 Thess. 2:4, 'he will sit in the temple of God', as: 'He intrudes into the temple of flesh, and lives there and troubles the mind, in imitation of the word of the Father: "in the temple of our body"'.[113] This reminds us immediately of what was said about the mystics' idea of the Divinity living in the human temple of the ascetic – Narsai presents us with a negative picture! At any rate, in my opinion it is not antichristological theory which is important. Rather it is crucial to establish whether the 'story' of the Antichrist is told as Satan's story or not. In both of Narsai's sermons, as well as in ApocPsClem, the devil basically remains the acting subject of the narrative, whereas in Ephr lat or in Shubḥalmaran's end time sermon, the Antichrist is much more a (historical) figure in his own right.

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109. BM Or 9396, fol. 177a.
110. Firmicius Maternus (4th cent.): *diabolus ipse antichristus est*: Bousset, *Antichrist*, pp. 88–89. For more, see Binder, *Asket*, pp. 282–300.
111. Cyril of Jerusalem (15,11–12) reports that Satan will 'introduce' a *man*, a sorcerer who seizes political power: McCauley, *Cyril*, p. 54. – Cf. Ephr gr: τίκτεται δὲ ἀκριβῶς ἐκ κόρης μιαρᾶς τὸ ἐκείνου [Satan's] ὄργανον. Οὐχ οὕτως δὲ σαρκοῦται: Ephr gr B, p. 226.
112. Lane, *Book*, p. 171: the demon (ܪܝܫܐ) enters the mother of the son of perdition while he was conceived in fornication (that is, among humans). This may be meant by the demon's 'mingling' in Ephr lat (see above).
113. Mingana, *Narsai*, p. 3.

Using this criterion, sense may be made of the two contradictory Antichrist models in Ephr gr B. In fact, he is called a human in the passage where both the recensions of Ephr gr as well as Ephr lat coincide and where there are some historical reflections. But he is called the 'demon' who flies in the air, changing his shape and scandalizing the faithful by hosts of flying demons just in the passage which is only in Ephr gr B. Here then we are given another clue that the text was worked on by someone who had a monastic interest.

4. Conclusion

In this survey, I set out with the presupposition that a monastic appeal, if at all, might be found in an 'other world' instead of an 'end time' scenery. But this has proved insufficient. The propagation of ascetic lifestyle, first and foremost virginity, but not only this, also the hermit's garb, has indeed been found in *other world* texts (ApocPaul, HoP). But other features – like weeping, stillness, tomb dwelling and cautioning against demonic illusions – appear in an *end time* sermon (Ephr gr). Those other world texts that propagate values by depicting heavenly or infernal consequences adapt this for monasticism only partly (HoP, ApocPaul) and maybe by secondary embellishment (ApocPaul), but basically address all of Christianity. Traces of the practice of meditating apocalyptic themes have been found in both types (HoP, Ephr gr, Shubhalmaran).

'Internalized apocalypticism', which may be associated with meditational practice, and results in emotional anticipation of the *eschaton*, has been discovered in other world texts (CommDiat on Lk 17,21, LtP, HoP, Shubhalmaran). But a real equivalent of internalization within end time sermons has been developed by Narsai who equates the ascetic's everyday struggle against Satan with Elijah's eschatological struggle against the Antichrist. Ephr gr seems to be a start in a similar way but is not as much developed. On the other hand, of the *merkavah* scenes only HoP, and not Ephr gr and not sApocDan, hints at some kind of a mystical union. So it turns out that 'end time' texts, at first glance appearing less suitable for the advancement of continuous ascetic life, prove capable of doing so. But again, it seems barely possible to reduce a text to this single focus.

Has apocalyptic thought been written down for monks? It would not be too surprising if much of it was written *by* monks – they were experts in meditational-visionary life as well as in theological training. However, we cannot maintain that all apocalyptic thought was written *for* a monastic setting. So, no general statement can be made. Only of LtP and

Narsai's two sermons can it be said with some certainty that they were designed intentionally *for* ascetics, and probably we can add HoP to the list. Others propagate asceticism in a secondary move. The tradition of Ephrem lat and gr, originally a political instigation against the emperor Julian, seemingly underwent recensions in favour of an ascetic perspective. Shubḥalmaran's End Time Sermon, drafted for Church politics, was given an ascetic touch in its final chapter. This shows us how he as a monk was used to apply apocalyptical thought. But on the whole it can now be seen that not only genre but even motif often remain insufficient criteria for indicating for whom and for what purpose a text was written. Sometimes we can deduce from the context for which parenetic use they are employed. Otherwise motifs may simply be part of the apocalyptic inventory.

A last word must be said about the range of this investigation. There is no claim of complete coverage even within its limits, namely Greek and Syriac literature from the Post-Constantinian era till the end of Antiquity. Outside these limits different results may well be expected. I have omitted the situation in the West and in Egypt[114], in later Byzantine texts[115] and in Judaism.[116] And even more approaches to the 'hypostatizing and historicizing' of the Antichrist[117] and to the end time tale have been omitted, such as in:

* exegesis (for example, Origen on Matt. 24, Chrysostom on Dan. 7 and 11–12, Theodore on 1 and 2 Thess., or Oecumenius on Rev.);
* liturgy (the lectionaries conserving older apocalypses like 2 Baruch or 2 Ezra); or even
* propaganda and anti-propaganda (Procopius' *Anecdota* on Justinian, George of Pisidia on Heraclius, or the *Syriac Alexander romance*).

114. See Daley, 'Apocalypticism'; for Egypt esp. pp. 35–39. To be sure, ApocPaul can well be of Egyptian provenance.

115. I may adduce Alexander Golitzin, 'Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men: The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Nicetas Stethatos, and the Tradition of Interiorized Apocalyptic in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical Literature', *DOP* 55 (2001), pp. 125–53, which deals with Nicetas' mystology of the eleventh century. On several occasions this paper inspires the later article Golitzin, 'Setting', on sAPocDan.

116. Golitzin, 'Earthly Angels', pp. 129–30, introduces the Jewish *hekaloth* literature of the Talmud era, studied by Gershom Sholem and Maria Himmelfarb, as apocalypses of ascent (*aliya bammerkaba*).

117. Wording ('Hypostasierung und Historisierung') by Martin Wallraff, 'Antichrist und tausendjähriges Reich in der Antike', in Mariano Delgado and Volker Leppin (eds.), *Der Antichrist. Historische und systematische Zugänge* (Studien zur christlichen Religions- und Kulturgeschichte 14; Stuttgart, 2011), pp. 114–23.

Apocalypses proper are rare in the field studied. Before Jerusalem was conquered by Persians and Arabs, and before the seventh century resumed producing literature of the genre, such as hApocEl and sApocDan,[118] I only know of those 'other world' apocalypses in the tradition of Apoc-Paul, and of the 'end time' *Oracle of Baalbek* (5th cent.).[119] That means that at a time when established Eastern Christianity was relatively secure, no need was felt to resort to the remedy of apocalypticism,[120] not even at the time shortly after 500 CE for which the end of the world had been calculated.[121] This is not an era of the genre of 'apocalypse'.

So we must not be surprised that in a few cases authors probed new ways of using apocalyptical motifs. They dealt with the struggle of everyday spiritual life, and certainly they sometimes helped the monastic community to keep their commitment and their identity.

118. Works like Ephr syr and the famous *Ps.-Methodius* do not even belong to the genre but present themselves as sermons.

119. Alexander, *Oracle*. – ApocPaul was followed by ApocMary and others.

120. Cf. Daley, 'Apocalypticism', pp. 39–42. If the apocalyptical Ephr gr complex originated from the time of Emperor Julian, it represents the era of the last real threat to Christianity from within the Roman Empire.

121. For Byzantine end time speculation around 500 CE see Mischa Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians* (Hypomnemata 147; Göttingen, 2003), pp. 65–66 with a list of 25 contemporary 'end time catastrophes', and pp. 67–91 with an overview of contemporary authors who calculate or do not calculate the end of the world. For contemporary Syriac literature, see Peter Bruns, 'Endzeitberechnungen in der syrischen Kirche', in Wilhelm Geerlings (ed.), *Der Kalender. Aspekte einer Geschichte* (Paderborn, 2002), pp. 122–39. I tend to believe that the cited end time sermons of Narsai who lived until 504 CE were instigated by such end time speculation, of course with a non-speculative spiritual answer to the question.

THE YOUNG DANIEL:
A SYRIAC APOCALYPTIC TEXT ON THE END,
AND THE PROBLEM OF ITS DATING

Sebastian BROCK

The little-known Syriac work, entitled 'On our Lord and on the End', though not itself a text of any great importance for the study of apocalyptic literature, does nevertheless raise a number of problems which are of wider concern, since they apply to the study of many other representatives of this genre of literature. The present paper falls into two distinct parts: the first simply presents the facts available, while the second concerns the interpretation of those facts.

I

The work, whose end is missing, is transmitted in a single twelfth-century Syriac biblical manuscript in the British Library (Add. 18715). The manuscript contains the Old Testament Prophets and is designated 12d2 in Peshitta Institute's editions of these books. What is remarkable is that the work, attributed to 'the Young Daniel', is presented as if it was part of the group of books associated with Daniel in Peshitta (and Septuagint) manuscripts: thus after Daniel, Bel and Susanna comes our text, attributed to *Dani'el z'ura*, with the introductory words 'Again Daniel was seen by the People that he was greater than all of them'. The translation of *Dani'el z'ura* is not without a problem: although I here keep to what has become the traditional way of taking it, it is quite possible, in view of the introductory words, that it should be understood as 'the small(er book of) Daniel', or 'the Little Daniel'. In support of the traditional 'The Young Daniel', however, one could adduce Susanna verse 45, where Daniel is referred to as *z'ura*, where 'young' is certainly intended.

A missing folio means that the end of the work is not available, and the next surviving folio contains the *Letter of Jeremiah.*

The work was first made available in 1972 (exactly a hundred years after the completion of Wright's *Catalogue*)[1] in an unpublished Hamburg

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1. William Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the Year 1838*, I-III (London, 1870-72). *The Young Daniel* is to be found

dissertation, *Die Schrift "Vom jungen Daniel" und "Daniels letzte Vision". Herausgabe und Interpretation zweier apokalyptischer Texte*, by H. Schmoldt. Schmoldt, who divided the work into eight chapters, held that it was basically a Jewish work, dating from the late Second Temple or soon after, with some subsequent Christian interpolations, chiefly in chapters 1 and 2. *The Young Daniel*, or at least its Jewish core, would thus join two other apocalyptic works from that period preserved in Syriac, the *Apocalypse of Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Ezra* (IV Ezra). This dating was generally followed by the few modern studies of Pseudepigrapha which happened to mention the work, notably by Garcia Martinez,[2] who considers chapters 3–5 and 7–8 to be purely Jewish, and concludes that 'The Jewish work (or works) on which it [*The Young Daniel*] is based concur with the apocalyptic writings of the first centuries [CE]'. Similarly, in his valuable *Introduction* Denis described the work as a fragment of a 'judéo-rabbinique' work written originally in Aramaic[3] (this had been suggested as a possibility by Schmoldt).

Often adduced in support of an early date is a passage in the long poem on Syriac writers and their works by 'Abdisho' (died 1318). In this famous poem, which could be described as the earliest history of Syriac literature, 'Abdisho' mentions that Hippolytus composed a commentary on the *Small Daniel* and on Susanna,[4] and earlier on he gave a listing of biblical books which includes 'Daniel, Judith, Esther, Susanna, Ezra and the Small Daniel'.[5] While a commentary on Susanna by Hippolytus is indeed known in Syriac,[6] there is no trace of one on our present text, and it is very possible that the reference is, in fact, to Bel and the Dragon, in which case the passage is of no relevance for the dating of *The Young Daniel*.

In 2000 Miron Slabczyk provided an edition, with Esperanto translation, of another Daniel apocalypse,[7] which he considered to be 'a fuller recension' of *The Young Daniel* (whose variants he gave in the apparatus to his text).

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on ff. 239v–241v of Add. 18715 (Wright, *Catalogue*, I, p.19); Wright did not notice that f. 242r picks up with the *Letter of Jeremiah* 31.

2. Florentino Garcia Martinez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 9; Leiden, 1992), pp. 159–60.

3. Albert-Marie Denis, *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique* (Turnhout, 2000), II, pp. 1301–1302. His statement that it was a source for the Armenian *Seventh Vision of Daniel* and the Greek *Apocalypse of Daniel* seems to be without any basis.

4. Ed. Joseph S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III.1 (Rome, 1725; repr. Hildesheim, 1975), p. 15.

5. Assemani (ed.), *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III.1, p.6 (the sequence of books here is not significant and will be due to metrical considerations.

6. See André de Halleux, 'Une version revisée du commentaire d'Hippolyte sur Suzanne', *Le Muséon* 101 (1988), pp. 297–341.

7. Miron Slabczyk, *Apocalipso de Danielo profeto en lando Persio kaj Elamo* (Arcado eldonajo: privata instituto por esploro de siria literaturo; Vieno, 2000).

By coincidence another scholar, Matthias Henze, was preparing an edition of the same text (preserved only in Harvard Syr. 142),[8] and this was published in 2001 under the title *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*.[9] Only at a late stage was Henze able to take cognizance of Slabczyk's work, though he considered the connection with *The Young Daniel* to be much looser. Besides an introduction where he adduced good arguments for a seventh-century date for the work,[10] Henze provided an English translation and extended annotation. *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* is a completely new addition to the numerous apocalypses under that prophet's name.

The publication of this new *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* definitely requires a re-consideration of the dating of *The Young Daniel* in view of the clear literary links of some sort or other between the two works. Various different opinions have been given of the relationship between the two. As noted earlier, Slabczyk supposed a close relationship, with the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* constituting a fuller recension of the same text. Henze, by contrast, though recognizing that they were 'related in a number of ways' and acknowledging that some 'verbatim parallels existed', considered that the two texts were just 'variant accounts of the same apocalypse'.[11] In his useful compendium, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, DiTommaso like Henze, plays down any idea of a close relationship between the two texts.[12] While Henze and DiTommaso are certainly correct in stating that the two works are independent of one another, they would both seem to underestimate the extent to which the two texts share whole passages in common: one has only to juxtapose the two texts where they have material in common to realise that there are entire blocks of text where the two are identical, or if there are differences, these are only minor. This close relationship was set out in a visual form, with the two texts set out in parallel where they

8. *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* features within a collection of monastic texts; this might fit with Alexander Golitzin's suggestions concerning 'interiorized apocalyptic' in his '"Earthly angels and heavenly men". The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Niketas Stethatos, and the Tradition of "Interiorized Apocalyptic" in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical Literature', *DOP* (2001), pp. 141–49.

9. Matthias Henze, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 11; Tübingen, 2001).

10. He gives a *terminus post quem* of 629/30 and *ante quem* of 690/91 (pp. 13–14); for his evidence, see section II, below.

11. Henze, *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, pp. 9–11.

12. Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* 9 (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 20; Leiden, 2005), pp. 122–23, who holds that they are 'fundamentally unrelated and that any points of contact are a result of shared traditions or an independent dependence on sources'. (DiTommaso refers to the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* as 'the Revelation of Daniel the Prophet').

have text in common, in my review article on the two publications,[13] and it is also made clear in the recent Italian translation of *The Young Daniel* by Balzaretti, who italicises all matter that is also to be found in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*.[14]

What, then, can be said about the nature of the relationship? Besides two fairly large blocks of text in common, there are also two smaller passages, and one short passage where they are more loosely related. Furthermore, it is important to note that the sequence of the shared material is not the same in the two texts, which indicates that it is not a case of one borrowing from the other, but that they both draw on a common source. These differences in sequence can most readily be seen in tabular form, which I set out in two ways, corresponding to the different sequences in each:

(1)

Young Daniel		Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel
3:1	~	13 beginning
3:2	~~	13 end
4:19–22a		14a
7:1–45		14c, 15, 16a
7:46		18a
7:47–52		16a
7:54–58		20b
7:69*		14b
8:1–16[ ]		21, 22

(2)

Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel		Young Daniel
13 beginning	~	3:1
13 end	~~	3:2
14a		4:19–22a
14b		7:69*
14c		7:1–20
15		7:21–40
16a		7:41–45
18a		7:46
20b		7:54–58
21, 22		8:1–16[ ]

13. Sebastian Brock, 'Two editions of a new Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel', *JbAC* 48/49 (2005/2006), pp. 7–18. The passages in common are also italicised in my translation of *The Young Daniel*, in J. Ashton (ed.), *Revealed Wisdom: Studies in Apocalyptic in honour of Christopher Rowland* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 88; Leiden, 2014), pp. 267-85.

14. Claudio Balzaretti, 'L'Apocalisse del Giovane Daniele (Syr. Dan.)', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 42 (2006), pp. 109–29. Balzaretti also gives the Syriac text in consonantal transcription. A new edition is forthcoming in the Festschrift for Michael Stone (ed. L. DiTommaso and others).

Which of the two texts preserves the sequence of the common source better is by no means clear, though the situation for chapter seven of *The Young Daniel* may suggest that the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* preserves the original order better there. It should also be kept in mind that one or other of the two texts may well preserve further passages from the common source, though it is difficult to see how such passages (if they exist) might satisfactorily be identified.[15]

Before proceeding further, however, it will be helpful to outline the contents and structure of *The Young Daniel*.

Chapters one and two, at least in their present form, are clearly Christian, though written in slightly coded language. They purport to be a prophecy of Christ, who is referred to as 'the Life of God', where the Syriac *hayye d-alaha* could also be translated 'Salvation of God'.[16] This is coupled with a warning of judgement that would result from any future rejection of 'the Life of God'.[17] These two chapters have nothing corresponding in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*.

Chapters 3–5 evidently form a unit, and 3:1 opens with the words 'After these things, when *I, Daniel,* was in the region of *Fars and Elam,* in the reign of *Darius the king,* there was *revealed* to me by the *Spirit of Holiness* what was going to happen in the last days'. This opening verse has several verbal coincidences (italicised above) with the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* and it seems quite likely that we have here an indication of what very probably was the title of their common source, perhaps in the form 'The Revelation of Daniel in Fars and Elam, during the reign of Darius'. Although there are no verbal parallels in 3:2, this content of this verse does have some similarity to the ending of chapter thirteen in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*:

The Young Daniel	Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel
3:2 And I wrote down the visions and sealed them so that they might be (available) for the latter generations, in order that those who understanding might (be able to) discern, ...	The wise and those who keep the covenant will understand this book, and, at the end of ends, let them be moved by it.

15. One pointer might be phrases which turn up both in the common passages and then elsewhere only in one of the two texts; thus *pur'ana d-rugza*, 'retribution of wrath' (not biblical), features in 7:19 = *Syr. Apoc. Dan.* 14, and then again, alone, in *Syr. Apoc. Dan.* 18.

16. As Sara Stroumsa kindly pointed out to me, this might suggest an origin in the Hebrew *yeshu'at elohim*; since, however, the Peshitta renders both occurrences of this phrase (Ps. 98:3 and Isa. 52:10) by *purqaneh d-alaha*, rather than by *hayye d-alaha*, such an origin seems unlikely.

17. The phrase 'the Life of God' is also found in 4:29 and 32, which indicates that chapters 1 and 2 were not originally a work separate from the later chapters.

The rest of *The Young Daniel* 3 lists various afflictions that God will
bring upon humanity in punishment by means of a single tribe (3:5) who
will be the vehicle for great destruction.[18] It is stressed, however, that all
this is in conformity with 'the will of the Lord' (3:3, 24, 35; 4:33).[19] In
chapter four 'the king of the east'[20] appears and, among other things, he
will 'assail the city of idols'. None of this has any correspondence with
the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* until we reach 4:19–22a, where the two
texts provide (with only very minor variations) exactly the same passage,
which opens with the words 'At that time the peoples from the north will
rebel'. The parallel abruptly ceases in 4:22b, and there are no parallels
with the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* again until chapter seven. Later on
in chapter 4 there are a couple of further references to 'the Life of God'
(4:29, 32), who had already featured in chapters 1–2.

Chapter six, which again has no parallel in the *Syriac Apocalypse of
Daniel*, is in the form of a narrative in the first person, beginning
'I, Daniel, was sorrowful … ' What follows could be described as a reflec-
tion on the part of Daniel on the sad situation brought about by the
turmoil foretold in the previous three chapters. This chapter ends with
the words (6:16–18). 'When you have seen all these things that have taken
place, <recognize> that they are from above, but will take place on earth.
But I am unable to speak and explain concerning them; but what no one
has explained, I have explained'.

The last two chapters, seven and eight, of *The Young Daniel*, have a
more or less verbatim correspondence with the *Syriac Apocalypse of Dan-
iel* throughout, the only exception being a passage at the end of chapter 7;

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18. A striking feature is listed in 3:7 (see also 3:36), 'They will grow their hair like
that of women and their clothing will be like sackcloth'; for this, compare the seventh-
century Revelation of John the Less, which speaks of 'a people whose appearance is that
of women, among whom will arise a warrior whom they will name a prophet' (that is,
Muhammad); see J. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles with the Apocalypses
of each one of them* (Cambridge, 1900), p. 18* (Syriac), 36 (translation). Could this be a
clue to the date of the final form of *The Young Daniel* (as opposed to the 'common
source')?

19. For a similar concern, compare John bar Penkaye, *Rish Melle* (ed. Alphonse Min-
gana, *Sources Syriaques* 1 [Mosul 1908], pp. 53, 91, 123, 168; all these, however, have 'the
will of God'), evidently having in mind some who considered certain events went against
the will of God; at a much later date, the fall of Edessa to the Seljuk Zengi in 1144 led to
a famous dispute between Dionysios bar Salibi and John of Mardin over this point.

20. *Young Daniel*, 4:2, 17, and again in the damaged passage at the end of chapter 7
(no parallel in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*); compare also 5:5 (in 5:6 'he will transfer
the governance to the West'). In the Hebrew Bible there are only kings of the North and
South. A 'king from the East' features in the *Oracle of Baalbek* (early 6th century), lines
180, 186, 206; cf. Paul Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek: the Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek
Dress* (Washington DC, 1967), pp. 20–21.

this unfortunately happens to be very damaged in the manuscript (these verses are denoted by Schmoldt with an asterisk). Chapter 7 contains a long list of predictions of signs that will be seen, and at the end of the chapter *The Young Daniel* shares with the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* a reference to 'the horn of the west' (verse 69*), but there is no correspondence for the renewed mention of the 'king of the east' (verse 58).

Chapter eight predicts the advent of two mysterious figures, first, a monstrous male from the tribe of Levi (verses 1–5), and then the 'Son of Perdition' (designated, however, in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* as 'the crooked serpent, the false Messiah'). Descriptions are given for both figures; those of the Antichrist figure have some rather loose parallels with the description of the Antichrist in the *Apocalypse of Elijah* and related texts,[21] but otherwise there are no links with any of the other descriptions of the Antichrist in other Daniel pseudepigrapha.[22] Chapter 8 breaks off at the lacuna in the manuscript near the end of verse 16. with the words: 'His stature is exalted above the mountains, on a level with the clouds of heaven. With him is an army of serpents| < ... >'. In the parallel text in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* the text continues '... and camps of Indians. Then the gates of the North will be opened before him, and the army of Mebagbel will come out, and the multitude of the Agogites and Magogites ...'. The *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* continues for another nineteen chapters, ending with the Second Coming of Christ. With the exception of the reference to the 'gates of the North being opened' the remainder of the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* is of no concern for the question of the dating of *The Young Daniel*, to which we can now turn.

II

Henze plausibly argued for a seventh-century date for the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, and this seems not to have been seriously challenged. What is of importance for the present quest is to know whether the evidence for a seventh-century date is to be found in the common source of the two texts, or not; if it does, then both texts must be of at least a slightly later date, and the much earlier dating for *The Young Daniel* will need to be abandoned, at least for the form of the work in which it comes down to us.

21. See below, note 25.
22. See below, note 26.

Henze's strongest piece of evidence for a seventh-century date frustrat-ingly comes just after the lacuna in *The Young Daniel* begins: while the phrase 'the peoples of the North' has a biblical source (Jer. 50:9), 'the gates of the North' do not; instead, they provide a link with the tradi-tions that developed concerning Alexander the Great: in order to keep out Gog and Magog he built gates of iron in the Caucasus. The fusion of the Alexander legend with apocalyptic scenarios is first to be found in various Syriac texts: the *Syriac Alexander legend*, a poem on Alexander wrongly attributed to Jacob of Serugh (d. 521), and another poem, 'on the End', wrongly attributed to Ephrem (d. 373). All of these texts have plau-sibly been dated by Reinink to the time of Heraclius's victorious cam-paigns, and more specifically to the years 629/30.[23] The theme was sub-sequently taken up in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius, now dated pretty certainly to 691/92.[24] Since the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* has no links at all with the Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypse*, this means that 'the gates of the North' in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* provide a *terminus post quem* of 629/30 and a *terminus ante quem* of 691/92.

As we have seen, the text of *The Young Daniel* tantalizingly breaks off just before the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*'s mention of 'the gates of the North'. Did *The Young Daniel* continue on with the same reference? If so, it would mean that the 'common source' used by *The Young Daniel* must also date from at least the seventh century. Or does the new sen-tence in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* represent a break in the use of the 'common source', in which case it is of no help in dating *The Young Daniel*? Unfortunately there is no means of telling for certain either way.

One may, nevertheless, ask whether there is any other evidence in *The Young Daniel* which might point to a seventh-century date? In the first place, it is quite striking that descriptions of Antichrist figures are hardly found in texts earlier than the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, which is generally

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23. See especially Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende als politisch-religiöse Propagandaschrift für Herakleios' Kirchenpolitik', in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz and L. van Rompay (eds.), *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church His-tory* (OLA 18; Leuven, 1985), pp. 263-81, and idem, 'Alexander the Great in seventh-century Syriac Sources', *Byzantinorussica* 2 (2003), pp. 150-78; both articles are reprinted in his *Syriac Christianity under Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Rule* (Aldershot, 2005), chapters III and VI. Editions of the texts in question are: Ernest A.W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1889), pp. 144-58 (translation), 255-75 (text); Gerrit J. Reinink, *Das syrische Alexanderlied* (CSCO 454-455, Scr. Syri 195-196; Leuven, 1983); Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones* III (CSCO 320-321. Scr. Syri 138-139; Leuven, 1972), no. V.

24. Gerrit J. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (CSCO 540-541, Scr. Syri 220-221; Leuven, 1993); for the date, see CSCO 541, pp. xii-xxv.

dated to the fifth century.[25] Although the descriptions of the monstrous figure from the tribe of Levi and of the Son of Perdition which feature in both *The Young Daniel* and the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* do not have any real parallels in the other descriptions that are to be found elsewhere,[26] they do contain a rare and intriguing phrase which otherwise is only found referring to the Antichrist in a Syriac text which is firmly dated to around 600. In *The Young Daniel* 8:6 reference is made to 'the arrival of the heartless one (*shmiṭ lebba*)[27] ... from the extremities of the east', and he is evidently the same as the 'Son of Perdition[28] who will then be revealed. This rare phrase turns up in two martyr acts, once used by the martyr addressed to the tyrant,[29] and once used by the king with reference to the martyr who is intent on dying, rather than renouncing Christ.[30] Much more relevant, however, is the appearance of the phrase in an apocalyptic section of a monastic work by Shubhalmaran, the East Syriac metropolitan of Karka d-Beth Slok (modern Kirkuk) at the turn of the sixth/seventh century:[31]

> Also the blessed Paul hinted about the end and the arrival of the heartless one (*shmiṭ lebba*), saying 'The mystery of wickedness has already begun to take effect, provided only that what now has control is removed from the midst'[32] – that is, the controlling and constraining concern[33] that controls of the divine mercy, which (lasts) to the final fixed time of which our Lord alone is aware – and then abandonment will take place and 'wickedness shall be revealed',[34] 'the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition',[35] in whom the

25. See Michael Stone and John Strugnell, *The Books of Elijah Parts 1-2* (Montana, 1979), Fragment 11 'The Appearance of the Antichrist', pp. 27–39; also D. Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt. The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1993), pp. 117–25.

26. See the Tables in Klaus Berger, *Die griechische Daniel-Diegese* (Studia Post-Biblica 27; Leiden, 1976), pp. 115–20, Exkurs VI: Die Physiognomie der Antichrist im Rahmen der spätantiken Physiognomie.

27. Literally '(with) heart extracted'.

28. 'The false Christ' in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* (where he is definitely the same as 'the heartless one').

29. *Acts of Stratonike and Seleukos*, in Paul Bedjan (ed.), *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* IV (Paris, 1894), p.46.

30. With reference to Pusik in the *Martyrdom of Simeon bar Sabba'e* (ed. Michael Kmosko, *Patrologia Syriaca* II [Paris 1907]), col. 775.

31. D. Lane, *Šubhalmaran, The Book of Gifts* (CSCO 612–613, Scr. Syri 236–237; Louvain, 2004), pp. 171 (text), 160 (translation, which misses the sense of *shmiṭ lebba*). The translation here is mine.

32. 2 Thess. 2:7.

33. *btilutha*; John bar Penkaye, *Rish Melle* (ed. Mingana, *Sources Syriaques* 1, p. 166) was later to make the same identification.

34. 2 Thess. 2:8.

35. 2 Thess. 2:3.

Murderer[36] from the time of Creation dwells and is revealed. He will be born of a virgin who plays the harlot, from the seed of the Jews.

It should be noted that neither *The Young Daniel* nor the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* makes any use of 2 Thess. 2:7, with its reference to 'the restrainer'; this might perhaps suggest that their common source is earlier than Shubhalmaran, seeing that 2 Thess. 2 features in most subsequent Syriac apocalyptic texts.

Finally, it is worth mentioning a few features mentioned in passages that must belong to the 'common source': 7:32, 'dust from the sky', and 7:33, 'mountains will become ash', both could well reflect the dramatic effects caused by some volcanic eruption. Similarly, later in the chapter, the specific memory of the great earthquake that ruined Berytus and the accompanying tsunami[37] may be reflected in 7:46 and especially 47 'And the mountains of the earth will shake, and the springs of the earth will run dry, and many rivers will be turned backwards, (47) At that time towns will be covered by the sea, and cities will be engulfed in the sea'. A few verses later, in 7:49, there is an interesting difference between the two texts: *The Young Daniel* here has 'and many cities will come to an end through plague (*mawtana*), and villages and hamlets will burn with fire'; by contrast, in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* we find for the first half of the verse 'and many cities will be subdued by tribute (*madatta*)'. The former clearly fits the general context better (and again could be a reflection of the terrible plague of the early 540s), while the latter could well be a change made by the final editor of the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, writing at a later date when the memory of the sixth-century plague had been superseded by the sense of oppression brought about by the tax system imposed by the new Arab rulers – something that was to become a regular feature in apocalyptic texts of the late seventh and early eighth century.[38]

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The prime aim of this study has been to consider what evidence there might be for dating the 'common source' that provides the extensive

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36. John 8:44.

37. *Zuqnin* ['Ps.-Dionysius'] *Chronicle* (based on John of Ephesus), ed. Jean-Baptiste Chabot (*CSCO* 104, Scr. Syri 53; repr. Leuven, 1954), II, pp. 133–36; tr. Witold Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle*, Part III (Liverpool, 1996), pp. 119–21 (the dating in this chronicle has gone astray; the earthquake took place in 551).

38. Thus, for example, Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, 13:3; *Revelation of John* (ed. Harris), pp. 18–19.

passages shared by *The Young Daniel* and the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*. We will never know (unless the final folio, or another manuscript, of *The Young Daniel* should some day turn up) whether *The Young Daniel* ever included a reference to the 'Gates of the North' (which would provide at least a *terminus post quem* of 629/30); if it did, then not only would a seventh-century date for the 'common source' be assured, but some later date would also be required for the whole work as we have it. In spite of the uncertainty about this particular point, there does, nevertheless, seem to be a reasonably clear indication that this 'common source' is very unlikely to be earlier than the latter part of the sixth century, namely the presence of a detailed physiognomy of the Son of Perdition, and in particular his description as *shmiṭ lebba*, for which the only parallel is to be found in another Syriac text datable to c. 600. Once at least a late sixth-century date is seen as a likelihood, then certain other apocalyptic features, some not usually found elsewhere, might perhaps be seen as reflecting the traumatic experiences of the plague of the mid-century and the earthquake of 551. In any case, if, as it thus seems very probable, the 'common source' dates from at least the latter part of the sixth century, then of course the rest of *The Young Daniel* must be later still. Although many questions still remain, nevertheless it seems clear that this work does *not* belong to the apocalyptic literature of the early centuries of the Christian Era, as had originally been thought to be the case.

THE END IS COMING – TO WHAT END?
MILLENARIAN EXPECTATIONS IN THE SEVENTH-CENTURY EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN[1]

Lutz GREISIGER

> Without the Second Coming, the Christian view of history is reduced to nonsense.[2]

> That ... [the] millennium was ... depicted in *earthly colours* goes without saying. Even Revelation cannot content itself with the heavenly joy of sitting with bare bottom on a damp cloud, twanging the harp with a more or less bloody hand and singing hymns for all eternity.[3]

The 'End of the World as we know it' continues to exert an ongoing and compelling fascination on our collective imagination, demonstrated by such box-office hits as *Deep Impact, 2012* or *World War Z* and countless other, 'popular'- as well as 'high'-culture global-disaster scenarios. An anticipation of a world such as we *do not yet know it* seems to be much less attractive or even plausible to most people.[4] Thus, under the spell of this more or less secularized, catastrophic apocalypticism, we tend to overlook a significant strand of eschatological thought, likewise inherited from the Early Church and its Early Jewish predecessors: millenarianism.[5]

2. Cyril Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London 1980, repr. 1994), p. 201.
3. 'Daß ... [das] 1000jährige Reich in irdischen Farben geschildert wurde, versteht sich. Selbst die Offenbarung kann sich nicht mit der himmlischen Freude begnügen, wonach man mit nacketen 4 Buchstaben auf einer feuchten Wolke sitzt und mit mehr oder weniger blut'ger Hand die Harfe schlägt und Chorale [sic] singt in Ewigkeit.' Friedrich Engels, 'An Karl Kautsky, 28. Juli 1894', in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 39 (Berlin 1973), p. 276-77, here 277 (cf. idem, 'Zur Geschichte des Urchristentums', in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 22 [Berlin 1963, repr. 1972], pp. 447-73).
4. See, for example, the essays in pt. 2, 'The Secularization of Apocalypticism', in Stephen J. Stein (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 3, *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age* (New York-London 2000), pp. 325-484.
5. Recently the number of publications on the subject has increased considerably – see, for example, Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids MI-Cambridge, 2001); Catherine Wessinger (ed.),

Many Christians of the first centuries of the Common Era insisted that the End would be preceded by a penultimate period of near perfection on earth and within historical time. Before the final judgement of all human beings, including the resurrected dead, and the eventual consummation and destruction of the world Christ would return to reign, together with the righteous ones, for a long period (frequently thought to last a thousand years, a millennium) of peace, abundance and justice. By the fourth century this millenarianism had become a minority opinion among Christian writers. The realism of the hope of an earthly period of 'carnal' fulfilment had been discredited as an indecent and Judaizing heresy and had come to be rejected by most theologians. The eschatological promises found in the scriptures, especially in chapter 20 of Revelation, had increasingly become subject to an allegorizing and spiritualizing interpretation. Furthermore millenarianism was countered by the doctrine (as perhaps most famously taught by Augustine in the West and, later, Andrew of Caesarea in the Greek-speaking East) that that earthly millennium had long begun and was, in fact, the age of the Church, ushered in by Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Relatively few studies have been undertaken in early Christian millenarianism; fewer still have attempted to elucidate the undercurrent it appears to have subsided into until its re-appearance in the high Middle Ages. Much of this hesitation arises from the fact that such an endeavour would have to overarch a dauntingly wide space of time, cross linguistic and cultural boundaries as well as trespass upon more than one other scholars' domain.[6] The following pages deal with the seemingly anachronistic (re-)appearance of millenarianist discourses in the seventh century, half-way as it were, between their Late Antique occultation and their Medieval 'revival'. They are also meant to contribute to reconstructing the religio-political climate during the period under discussion and to reassess the larger environment in which Islam, the third great Abrahamic tradition, took shape.

Three major motifs or themes may be discerned that are indicative of the circulation of such millenarianist discourses.

The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism (Oxford, 2011); Richard A. Landes, Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience (Oxford, 2011); forthcoming also Lutz Greisiger, 'Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and Messianism', in Adam Silverstein and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds.), Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions, ch. 15.

6. Cf. Walter Nigg, Das ewige Reich: Geschichte einer Hoffnung (Zürich, 1954); Paul J. Alexander, 'The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses in the Medieval West and the Beginnings of Joachimism', in Ann Williams (ed.), Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves (Essex, 1980), pp. 55-106.

I. 'AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED ...'

Then, after the passing away of the city [that is, the deluge of Constantinople], the events of the end will begin. Some people say that after the fulfillment of the reign of the gentiles God will see to it that the divine tribes (θεόσκηπτρα) of Israel will arise to reign until the completion of the seventh age, adducing as proof the saying of Isaiah: 'It shall come to pass in the latter days, when [the number of] the gentiles has been completed, that the Lord God will raise an ensign for the sheep which have been dispersed among the gentiles and gather the lost [sons] of Israel in the holy city of Jerusalem, and it will be for Israel as when they left the land of Egypt,'[7] and the saying of the blessed Paul: When the full number of the gentiles come, then all Israel will be saved.[8]

Now, these authors agree in this opinion, but the martyr Hippolytus says that when Antichrist comes the Jews will be deceived first,[9] and his word is confirmed by Christ who said to the Jews: I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; another will come in his own name, and him you will receive.[10] It is clear that God will gather them in the city of Jerusalem and return to them what is theirs in order to remove once and for all the excuse they find in their dispersal, for if he did not do that, they would say in the judgement: 'If you had gathered us in Jerusalem and restored to us what belongs to us, we would long ago have believed in Christ, destroying the pretext for envy that the gentiles are preferred to us.' But now when they have been gathered and have received what belongs to them and still remain in the same disbelief, how can they be saved, when Antichrist immediately will come out amidst them? They will believe in him, according to the fearful voice of the Son of God [as quoted above]. For God the Only who said, I am the truth[11] does not lie. By gathering them together for a while he will in the first place deprive them of this defense. For Paul said that they will be saved not from eternal punishment, but from so many years' wandering about in foreign lands and from the abuse of the gentiles and their untold shame. After living in such distress and in such ridicule, a laughingstock among the gentiles for so many years, they will be saved from their slavery and their yoke as they are gathered together in their native city, but not, as I have already said, from the eternal punishment. For, those who were not persuaded by the tribulation to believe in the life-giving and only-begotten Son of God, how shall they be persuaded by the so-called joy (ἡ νομιζομένη χαρά)?[12]

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7. Cf. Isa 11:12.16.
8. Rom. 11:25–6.
9. Ps.-Hippolytus, *De consummatione mundi* XXIII, ed. H. Achelis (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 1; Leipzig, 1897), p. 298.
10. John 5:43.
11. John 14:6.
12. Lennart Rydén, 'The Andreas Salos Apocalypse: Greek Text, Translation, and Commentary', *DOP* 28 (1974), pp. 197–261, here pp. 221–22.

This passage from the *Apocalypse of St Andrew the Fool* (*Andreas Salos*) reveals, despite its conventionally bitter anti-Jewish polemic, some rather unexpected ideas that deserve closer attention. The *Apocalypse* is appended to the *Life* of the Saint composed by a certain Nicephorus in tenth century Constantinople. The problem of the dating of the obviously independent text of the *Apocalypse* itself has often been discussed, but remains unresolved; estimations range from shortly after 640 CE to the tenth century.[13] Yet what is important for the present question is that 640 – there is ample reference to the Arab invasion of the 630s in the text – provides a *terminus post quem*, telling us that ideas presented in it were discussed in Byzantium *at least as late* as the seventh century.

The eschatological expectations the author is referring to revolve around the Holy City and the return of the people of the Old Covenant, the Jews, to her. Based on scriptural promises from the *Book of Isaiah* and from the *Letter to the Romans* by the apostle Paul, this outlook represents a quite un-Judeophobic convergence of Christian and Jewish messianic hopes, an *eschatological inclusivism* that, rarely documented as it is, tends to be overlooked by scholars as an exotic exception to the rule, a two-headed cow as it were, the dubious news of which is not worth the attention of any sensible observer.[14] As if our author could not wait to justify such an avoidance he goes on to give the return of Israel to Zion a sharp anti-Jewish twist: they will indeed return, but for no other purpose than to become followers of the Antichrist, by implication none else than the Jews' Messiah, thereby demonstrating their damnation, once and for all.

However, what Pseudo-Andrew's rhetoric in this second section also reveals is that 'these authors' whose 'opinion' he wants to refute, reckon it as part of the divine economy that the return of the Jews is the precondition to their 'being saved', presumably their acceptance of Christ, which Paul had predicted. It would need a study on its own to reconstruct who 'these authors' are, whom the apocalyptist wants to refute in

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13. Cf. Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13; Princeton NJ, 1997), pp. 305–307.

14. However see, besides the literature referred to on the following pages, Wolfram Kinzig's studies 'Philosemitismus angesichts des Endes? Bemerkungen zu einem vergessenen Kapitel jüdisch-christlicher Beziehungen in der Alten Kirche', in Athina Lexutt and Vicco von Bülow (eds.), *Kaum zu glauben: Von der Häresie und dem Umgang mit ihr* (Arbeiten zur Theologiegeschichte 5; Rheinbach, 1998), pp. 59–95; '"Non-Separation": Closeness and Co-Operation between Jews and Christians in the Fourth Century', *VC* 45 (1991), pp. 27–53; 'Jewish and "Judaizing" Eschatologies in Jerome', in Richard Kalmin and Seth Schwartz (eds.), *Jewish Culture and Society under the Christian Empire* (Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 3; Leuven, 2003), pp. 409–29.

this summary manner.[15] At any rate, the element of their thought which he attacks in particular, namely that they view this Jewish messianic restorationism in a positive light, has been a central motif of early Christian millenarianism.[16]

It may suffice here to quote one example to illustrate this, from Justin Martyr's (ca. 100–165) *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, a work often considered, somewhat ironically, as downright anti-Jewish or even anti-Semitic.[17] In a passage from chapter eighty Justin has his Jewish interlocutor ask him:

> But tell me, do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful (εὐφρανθῆναι) with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? ...
> Then I (Justin) answered, '... I and many others are of this opinion, and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware ... I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.'[18]

In contrast to this scenario, that is, that the Jews will return only after the Second Coming and their acceptance of Christ the one quoted by the author of the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* appears rather radical: it is not before their resettling of Jerusalem and the Promised Land that Christ will return to be accepted by them. The glorious restoration of the people of Israel is an essential event in the millennium as expected by Justin and others. That in the apocalyptic vision, referred to by Pseudo-Andrew, this restoration does not come as a reward for but as a *precondition* of the Jews' conversion might reflect an attempt to come to terms with real events of the early seventh century.

In 614 Jews had indeed taken over the Holy City. They had come with the army of Sāsānid Persia on its conquest of the eastern parts of

15. For an overview cf. F.J. Caubet Iturbe, '*Et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret*, Rom. 11:26: Su interpretación por los escritores cristianos de los siglos III–XII', *Estudios bíblicos* 21 (1962), pp. 127–50.

16. See, with rich bibliographical references, the studies of Kinzig (n. 14) and Stefan Heid, *Chiliasmus und Antichrist-Mythos: Eine frühchristliche Kontroverse um das Heilige Land* (Hereditas 6; Bonn, 1993).

17. Cf., for example, David Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 5; Leiden–Boston–Köln 2002).

18. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 80, cp. 26, in *Iustini Martyris Dialogus cum Tryphone*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich (Patristische Texte und Studien 47; Berlin–New York, 1997); transl. Thomas B. Falls, *Saint Justin Martyr, The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho...* (The Fathers of the Church 6; Washington DC, 1977').

the Byzantine Empire.[19] Under a messianic leader, in several early medieval apocalyptic *midrashim* named Nehemiah ben Hušiʾel,[20] a Jewish army or militia had aligned itself with the Persian troops in their invasion of Syria-Palestine, had conquered Jerusalem together with them and had been left in control of the city by the Persian military government. While a substantial part, if not all, of the city's Christian population had been deported to Persian Mesopotamia, the messianic militants had free rein to begin re-Judaizing the Holy City. As Christian sources tell us, they destroyed the holy places of idol-worshippers, that had been left undamaged during the war, attempted to force Christian prisoners of war to convert to Judaism and, again according to apocalyptic *midrashim*, began to re-establish the cultic and sacrificial worship on the Temple Mount.[21]

The vision of the Jewish Messiah, aka the Antichrist, leading the Jews back from exile to the Holy Land and the Holy City, as ascribed to Saint Andrew the Fool, may well have been a polemic reaction to this messianic episode that lasted a number of years. If we accept this possibility we may further wonder whether the 'pro-Jewish' scenario so vehemently rejected by the author may not have originated as an opposing narrative about the millennium having commenced with the Jews' take-over of Jerusalem in 614.

19. For an outline of the events cf. Geoffrey Greatrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Pt. II, AD 363–630* (London–New York, 2002), pp. 182–228; Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge–New York, 2003); Beate Dignas and Engelbert Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity: Neighbours and Rivals* (Cambridge–New York, 2007), pp. 44–49; Lutz Greisiger, *Messias – Endkaiser – Antichrist: Politische Apokalyptik unter Juden und Christen des Nahen Ostens am Vorabend der arabischen Eroberung* (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 21; Wiesbaden, 2014).

20. Most of them are now easily accessible in John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Resources for Biblical Study 45; Atlanta GA, 2005 = Leiden–Boston, 2006).

21. C. Clermont-Ganneau, 'La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614 (J.-C.)', *Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale* 2 (1897), pp. 137–60 (='The Taking of Jerusalem by the Persians AD 614', *Palestine Exploration Fund – Quarterly Statement* 30 [1898], pp. 36–54); Józef T. Milik, 'La topographie de Jérusalem vers la fin de l'époque byzantine', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 37: *Mélanges offerts au Père Mouterde* (1960), pp. 127–89; Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine: A Political History from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest* (= ירושלים² תשי"ב,...ביוזאנטין, ביזי רומא וביזאנטין = *Geschichte der Juden im Zeitalter des Talmud...*; Berlin, 1962, New York, 1976, repr. Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 259–65; Brandon M. Wheeler, 'Imagining the Sasanian Capture of Jerusalem: The "Prophecy and Dream of Zerubbabel" and Antiochus Strategos' "Capture of Jerusalem"', *OCP* 57 (1991), pp. 69–85; Bernard Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VIIᵉ siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1992), pp. 154–61; Greatrex and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Pt. II*, pp. 190–93; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 78–80; Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity*, pp. 117, 230. For a comprehensive reconstruction see Greisiger, *Messias – Endkaiser – Antichrist*, ch. 1.4–1.5.

Given the *Apocalypse's* uncertain dating such an interpretation cannot stake any claim beyond mere conjecture, without independent supporting evidence. We may find such evidence in a source of a less disputed date which was composed around 640 and reworked a few decades later, the Syriac *Sermon* (*mēmrā*) *about the End*, falsely ascribed to St Ephrem the Syrian (306–373).[22] It contains a narrative that indeed seems to reflect a similar reaction to the Jewish messianic movement of the 610s:

> And the evil one (the Antichrist) will arise,
> and he will come and enter into Jerusalem.
> He will build and erect Zion,
> and make himself God,
> and he will enter the Temple to settle [there],
> as the apostle wrote to us.[23]
> And the Jews will boast of him,
> and will raise and come to him.
> And he will blaspheme, saying:
> 'I am the Father and the Son,
> and the first and the last,
> besides me there is no God.'[24]
> And at that time ten thousand Jews will deny him,
> and they will answer him with the truth:
> 'You seduce the creatures!
> Truly, He whom our fathers
> have hung on the wood [of the Cross] at Golgotha,
> it is *He*, who has redeemed the creatures,
> and *He* has ascended to Him who had sent Him!'[25]

After this repudiation by the Jews, Pseudo-Ephrem's Antichrist threatens all who do not believe in him with execution (but it is not explicitly stated that he orders the Jews to be killed) and then proceeds quite successfully to deceive the Christian nations instead, only eventually being stopped by the Lord descending from Heaven. While a large number, perhaps the majority, of Jews will oppose the Antichrist he will with ease win over many Christians.

Even though neither Pseudo-Andrew's *Apocalypse* nor Pseudo-Ephrem's *Sermon* depict a readily recognizable millenarian scenario of

22. Cf. Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Pseudo-Ephraems "Rede über das Ende" und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebenten Jahrhunderts' in *Aram* 5 (*A Festschrift for Dr. Sebastian P. Brock*, 1993), pp. 437–63 (= in idem, *Syriac Christianity Under Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Rule* [Collected Studies Series No. IV; Aldershot, 2005]).

23. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:4.

24. Cf. Isa. 44:6.

25. Pseudo-Ephrem, *Sermon on the End* 381–397, in *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III*, ed., transl. Edmund Beck (*CSCO* 320–321, Scr. Syri 138–139; Louvain, 1972), vol. 1, p. 43 (text); vol. 2, p. 90 (transl.).

the eschatic events (Pseudo-Andrew in fact does contain further allu-
sions to such a scenario as will be seen below) they both present a quite
real, 'carnal' restoration of the Jewish people and their state in the Holy
Land and in the rebuilt Holy City *on earth*, a perspective with quite
unequivocal millenarian implications. Most millenarianist writers of the
Early Church[26] such as Justin Martyr assumed that the Jews would return
only *on condition* of their prior conversion. In contrast both those
'authors' Pseudo-Andrew polemicizes against, and Pseudo-Ephrem
expect that conversion to occur only after the restoration: *first* the Jewish
messianic hopes will be fulfilled; *then* they will accept Christ. Only later,
upon His Second Coming, will Jews and Gentiles face Judgement and
either enter His heavenly Kingdom or be cast into Hell. Taking the Greek
Constantinopolitan and the Syriac Near Eastern texts together, it
becomes apparent that both originated in a favourable reaction to the
news that Israel's messianic restoration had been made a *fait accompli* by
the Jewish militants in Jerusalem, and thus bear witness to a millenari-
anism even closer to Jewish messianism than that of the classical period.

II. THE COSMIC SABBATH

If one wants to reconstruct Christian eschatological expectations in
the early Islamic period, the most obvious text to look at is certainly the
Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, composed about 692,[27] the Greek
and Latin versions of which began to circulate shortly afterwards[28]
(versions in Slavonic, Coptic, Armenian and Arabic exist or have once
existed as well), and which became *the* extra-Biblical reference work for
apocalyptic eschatology throughout the Middle Ages and virtually all
over Christendom.[29]

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26. Cf. also the overview about the Antichrist Myth and its association with the Mes-
sianic hopes of the Jews in the works of the early Church Fathers given in Heid, *Chilias-
mus und Antichrist-Mythos*, pp. 188–230.

27. Francisco Javier Martinez (ed. and trans.), *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early
Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius* (Ph.D. Diss., Catholic University
of America, Washington DC, 1985), pp. 58–201; Gerrit J. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse
des Pseudo-Methodius*, 2 vols. (CSCO 540–541, Scr. Syri 220–221; Louvain, 1993).

28. Ed. Willem J. Aerts and Georgius A.A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-
Methodius: Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen* (CSCO 569–560,
Subsidia 97–88; Louvain, 1998); *Apocalypse Pseudo-Methodius; An Alexandrian World
Chronicle*, ed., transl. Benjamin Garstad (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 14; Cam-
bridge MA–London, 2012), pp. 2–71, 74–139.

29. Paul J. Alexander, 'Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works and Motifs:
The Legend of the Last Roman Emperor', *Medievalia et humanistica*, N.S. 2 (1971),

Introduced by the words 'In this last millennium, which is the seventh', the *Apocalypse* gives a vivid picture of a time of rest (following the defeat of the 'Sons of Ishmael', that is, the Muslims, by the 'King of the Greeks'):

There will be peace on earth, the like of which there has not been [before]. For this is to be the final peace of the end of the world. There will be joy (*hadūtā*) on the whole earth; men will dwell in great peace; the churches will be renewed; the cities will be rebuilt, and the priests will be set free from tax. At that time, priests and [lay]men will be at rest from trouble, care and anxiety. For this is that peace of which He spoke in His Gospel: 'There will be great peace, *the like of which there has not been [before]*.'[30] And mankind will live at rest: they will eat and drink; they will rejoice with merry heart; men will take wives and women will be given to men; they will build buildings and plant vines ... rejoicing and exulting, without evil or the care for evil, without fear or trembling in their hearts.[31]

As the narration goes on this turns out to be by far not the '*final* peace of the *end of the world*'. Severe calamities and dramatic events lie ahead: the havoc wrought on mankind by Gog & Magog, their annihilation by God's intervention, the appearance of the Antichrist, the return of the Cross to Golgotha by the 'king of the Greeks' followed by his abdication and decease, and finally the Antichrist's reign of terror.[32]

Only then (and we will see below what this 'then' means quantitatively), with the coming of 'our Lord' and His casting the Antichrist into the 'Gehenna of fire', will He 'make us worthy of His heavenly kingdom along with all those who do His will, and we will offer up glory, honor, worship and praise now and for all times, and forever and ever. Amen.'[33]

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pp. 47-68 (= in idem, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* [Collected Studies 71; London, 1978, Nr. XII]); idem, 'The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses'; Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies 96; New York, 1998²), pp. 70-73.

30. Cf. Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19. It remains somewhat of a mystery that the author here replaces 'affliction, tribulation' (*ūlṣānā*) of the Gospel text with 'peace' (*šaynā*), even if one assumes, as Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, pp. 196-97, n. 29, and Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, vol. 2, p. 67, n. 4, do, a conflagration with 1 Thess. 5:3 and Matt. 24:37-39. The broader context of the narrative (see below), however, suggests that Ps.-Methodius conceived of the 'peace' as in the long run illusory, one of God's means to test the believers.

31. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, 11,1; 13,15-18 (ed. Reinink, vol. 1, pp. 24, 40-41; transl. Martinez, pp 139; 150). Cf. Ezek. 28:26.

32. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, 13,19-14,12 (ed. Reinink, vol. 1, pp. 41-47; transl. Martinez, pp. 151-54).

33. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, 14,13-14 (ed. Reinink, vol. 1, pp. 47-48; transl. Martinez, pp. 154).

A question rarely addressed in the scholarly literature is: why did the Syriac composer of the *Apocalypse* choose Methodius of Olympus as its pseudepigraphical author, an Anatolian teacher and writer (and perhaps bishop) of the late third/early fourth century?[34] Gerrit Reinink, who has provided us with the text's edition and translation, answers[35] this question by calling our attention to a number of fragments from two of Methodius of Olympus's works, the *Symposium* (also called *On Chastity* or *On Virginity*)[36] and the *Aglaophon* (or *On the Resurrection*), that have survived in Syriac florilegia and catenae dateable to the sixth-tenth centuries.[37] Reinink concludes that the *Symposium* in particular 'will have ... been held in high esteem' in the Syrian monastic circles of which the author of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* probably was a member.

However this claim does not quite stand up to closer inspection: the total number of these fragments is quite small and they mostly consist of just a few lines; among them the quotations from the *Aglaophon* are by far the majority; and none of those from the *Symposium* is taken from its ninth chapter, or *discourse* – which, as we will see below, is the very part of that work that could have possibly inspired our Syrian writer to ascribe his visions to Methodius. The 'esteem' then, in which

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34. The details of his life are shrouded in mystery; even the date of his (alleged) martyrdom, conventionally given as 311 (in the persecution of Diocletian) is not to be established with any certainty, nor is/are the seat/s of his bishopric (Olympus [in Lycia] or Patara and, later, Tyre?), if he, in fact, held any. Cf. Franz Diekamp, 'Über den Bischofssitz des hl. Märtyrers und Kirchenvaters Methodius', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 109 (1928), pp. 285–308; Kurt Quensell, *Die wahre kirchliche Stellung und Tätigkeit des fälschlich so genannten Bischofs Methodius von Olympus* (Theol. Diss., Heidelberg, 1953); H.A. Musurillo (trans.), *St. Methodius. The Symposium, A Treatise on Chastity* (Ancient Christian Writers 27; New York–Ramsey NJ, 1958, reprint 1988), pp. 3–5; 8–9; 170–73, n. 11; Katharina Bracht, 'The question of the Episcopal See of Methodius of Olympus Reconsidered', *StPatr.* 34 (2001), pp. 3-10.

35. See for the following synopsis the introduction in Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, vol. 2, pp. VI–VII.

36. Also *Convivum decem virginium, De castitate, De virginitate, Exhortatio ad virgines* or *De virginibus*.

37. *Symposium*: W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838*, vol. 2 (London, 1871), no. DCCCLVII (8th c.), p. 932; no. DCCCLVIII (8th c.), p. 960; no. DCCCLXII (9th c.) pp. 1003, 1012, 1013; *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, ed. Joannes Baptista Pitra, vol. 4, *Patres Antenicaeni* (Paris, 1883, repr. 1966), no. VIII, pp. 206, 438–39. *Aglaophon*: Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, no. DCCXXIX (6th c.), p. 645; no. DCCCLV (7th c.), p. 917; no. DCCCLVIII (8th c.) p. 967 (same ms. as above, p. 960); no. DCCCLXIII (10th c.), p. 1005; no. DCCCLXIV (10th c.), p. 1009; *Analecta Sacra*, ed. Pitra, no. I–VII, pp. 201-206 (text), 434–38 (transl.). See also *Florilegium Edessenum anonymum (Syriace ante 562)* ed. Ignaz Rucker (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Abteilung 5; Munich, 1933), pp. 10-12; cf. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, pp. 54-55, n. 109.

Methodius was held among the Syrians, to judge from the available evidence, seems to have been rather humble; worse, the key text for our subject was apparently not exactly available at the next bookstall down the street.

The single argument for claiming the Syrian author's odd choice of Methodius as his *nom de plume* to be obvious or reasonable is 'that Methodius's millenarianism could serve the author of the *Apocalypse* to expand his division of world history in millennia ... by the view that in the seventh millennium the end time would begin.'[38] In the seventh century this concept had been well-known for quite some time among Syrian Christians: the chronographical model of the Great Week in which the entirety of world history is played out in typological repetition of the creation week, seven 'days', each, in divine measurement,[39] amounting to a thousand years. Obviously, this typology had to include a *sabbatical millennium* of some sort.[40]

As for the somewhat inexplicit millenarianism against which Pseudo-Andrew polemicizes, we now recognize additional evidence for it in his sentence 'Israel will arise to reign until the completion of the *seventh age*.' The seventh and last period of history, the cosmic Sabbath will see the return and reign of the People of the Old Covenant; it will be the millennium of Israel's redemption.

As mentioned above, Methodius of Olympus only expresses his millenarianism[41] in the ninth discourse of his *Symposium*[42] in any

38. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, vol. 2, pp. vi–v.

39. Cf. Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8.

40. Alfred Wikenhauser, 'Die Herkunft der Idee des tausendjährigen Reiches in der Johannes-Apokalypse', *Römische Quartalschrift* 45 (1937), pp. 1–24; idem, 'Weltwoche und Tausendjähriges Reich', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 127 (1947), pp. 399–417; Witold Witakowski, 'The Idea of *Septimana Mundi* and the Millenarian Typology of the Creation Week in Syriac Tradition', in René Lavenant (ed.), *V Symposium Syriacum 1988, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, 29–31 août 1988* (OCA 236; Roma, 1990), pp. 93–109.

41. Cf. Nathanael Bonwetsch, *Die Theologie des Methodius von Olympus* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, N.F. 7.1; Berlin, 1903, repr. Nendeln, 1970), pp. 124–25; Peter Heseler, 'Zum Symposium des Methodius', *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 6 (1928), pp. 95–118; 10 (1933), pp. 325–41; Musurillo, *St. Methodius. The Symposium*, pp. 20, 34–5; Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1991, repr. 1993, repr. Peabody MA, 2003), pp. 61–64; Lloyd G. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus: Divine Sovereignty, Human Freedom, and Life in Christ* (Washington DC, 1997); Alexander Bril, 'Plato and the sympotic form in the Symposium of St Methodius of Olympus', *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum – Journal of Ancient Christianity* 9 (2005), pp. 279–302.

42. Methodius, *Symp.*, 9, in *Methode d'Olympe. Le Banquet*, ed., transl. Herbert A. Musurillo (Paris, 1963), pp. 262–81; transl. Herbert Musurillo, *St. Methodius. The Symposium*, pp. 131–40; see also 'Des heiligen Methodius von Olympus Gastmahl, oder Die

comprehensible manner,[43] only occasionally alluding to it elsewhere. In order to fully appreciate Pseudo-Methodius's imagery of the 'great peace' it is worthwhile comparing it with the 'original':

> In the seventh millennium we shall celebrate the great Feast of the true Tabernacle in that new creation where there will be no pain,[44] when all the fruits of the earth will have been harvested, and men will no longer beget or be begotten,[45] and God will rest from the work of His creation. For God made heaven and earth and completed the entire universe in six days: *And on the seventh day He rested from the works which He had done. And he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.*[46] Thus under a figure (συμβολικῶς) we are bidden to celebrate a feast in honor of the Lord ... when all the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, that is, when this world shall come to an end at the time of the seventh millennium, when God will really have finished the world and will rejoice in us.[47] For even now He is still creating ..., the earth still yields its fruit, ... the number of men is still growing through creation, the sun still rises to rule over the day and the moon over the night ... But when the days shall be accomplished and God shall cease to work in this creation of His ... [on] the great day of the resurrection, then will our Feast of Tabernacles be celebrated to the Lord. The things mentioned in Leviticus[48] are merely types and figures of this Feast ...[49]

For Methodius, man's ability to live a life in chastity or virginity is the supreme manifestation of his divinely bestowed free will that makes for his potential to be restored to the perfection of his primordial, Paradise-dwelling ancestors.[50] Therefore, for him it is only consequential to conceive of the millennium, the latter-day Feast of the Tabernacles, in an allegorical manner, as an abstract, immaterial stage, its joys being perfectly spiritual:

Jungfräulichkeit', transl. Leonhard Fendt, in *Dionysius Areopagita, Gregorius Thaumaturgus, Methodius von Olympus* (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter[2] 2; Munich, 1911), pp. 271-397. See also his *De resurrectione*, in *Methodius*, ed. G. Nathanael Bonwetsch (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 27; Leipzig, 1917), pp. 217-424 (Greek text with German transl. of the Slavonic fragmm.).

43. In discussing his 'apocalyptic conception' Musurillo judges that 'Methodius' work at times reflects the cobwebbed, cluttered mind of the pedant, never profound enough to be satisfying, full of good intentions but deeply illogical and emotional.' In Musurillo (trans.), *St. Methodius. The Symposium*, p. 21.

44. Cf. Rev. 21:4.
45. Cf. Luke 20:34-6, Rom. 14:17.
46. Gen. 2:1-2.
47. Cf. Ps. 103:31.
48. Lev. 23:39-43.
49. Methodius, *Symposium* 9,1, ed., tr. Musurillo, *Methode d'Olympe. Le Banquet,* pp. 264-67; transl. Musurillo, *St. Methodius. The Symposium*, pp. 131-34.
50. Cf. Bonwetsch, *Die Theologie des Methodius*, pp. 130-35, passim; Musurillo, *St. Methodius. The Symposium*, pp. 18-21; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, pp. 63-64; Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus*, pp. 64-84.

God's creative activity has reached its end; entering with Him into this cosmic Sabbath relieves the faithful from all earthly distress *and* pleasure; there will be no pain and no procreation. Historically, Methodius marks the final stage in the process of the spiritualization of millenarianism, which was largely a reaction to its denigration as a 'carnal' and Judaizing misconception by opponents such as Dionysius of Alexandria, Origen or Eusebius - over the first three-and-a-half centuries.[51]

If we now compare this depiction of the seventh millennium with that of the Syrian author who ascribes his vision to the same Methodius of Olympus, we can only be puzzled: his 'peace' is of just the opposite type to that one; Pseudo-Methodius's millennium appears as an earthly feast with all bodily pleasures, eating, drinking, even work: building, planting, harvesting, and - *horribile dictu* - sex.

When Pseudo-Andrew on his part polemicizes against the expectation of a time that 'will be for Israel as when they left the land of Egypt', he bears witness to a materialistic counter-version also of Methodius's spiritualistic Tabernacles-millennium typology, being current at his time (that is, the seventh century or later). According to that materialistic typology there will be a period in between the Exodus from the present world and the arrival in the heavenly Promised Land, a period in which 'we' will dwell in Tabernacles *on earth*.

Given the apparently rather limited reception of Methodius of Olympus in Syriac Christianity, and the stark contradiction of his views by the author of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* concerning an aspect as crucial as the conception of the (seventh) millennium, it remains a mystery why the latter text was ascribed to the Greek father in the first place.

In any case, there is one more peculiarity, or complex of peculiarities, of Pseudo-Methodius's millennium: it is neither ushered in by the return of Christ to rule over the world for that period, nor will it be inhabited by the resurrected righteous ones, nor even is it peace from beginning to end.

III. THE EMPIRE

The first sentence of chapter eleven in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* reads: 'In this last millennium, which is the seventh, ... the kingdom of the Persians will be uprooted, and ... the sons of Ishmael will come

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51. Cf. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus*, pp. 47-64; Heid, *Chiliasmus und Antichrist-Mythos*, pp. 141-87.

out from the desert of Yatreb (i.e. Yahtrib/Medina) ...'[52] This is perhaps
the shortest extant contemporary account of the dramatic political events
of the seventh century. In 628 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius managed
to repel the Persian armies that had threatened the empire to an unprec-
edented degree for 25 years (a defeat after which the Sāsānid Empire was
to survive for less than two decades); and, as if to defy an all too lofty
Constantinopolitan sense of triumph, Arab forces began to invade Syro-
Mesopotamia in the 30s, expelling the Byzantines for good in the second
half of that decade.[53]

The Arab-Muslim rule, called a 'time of chastisement (mardūtā)' by
the apocalyptist, would last, according to his chronology, ten weeks of
years, that is, 70 years, whereupon the 'king of the Greeks (malkā
d-Yawnāyē)' would put an end to that rule – exactly the time that had
elapsed between the Hijra in 622 and the composition of our apoca-
lypse.[54] What follows upon this Byzantine victory is the eschatic 'peace'
of unspecified length, which will be ended by the invasion of Gog & Magog,
lasting one year-week,[55] the last Roman emperor's handing over the
empire to God in Jerusalem,[56] and the reign of the Antichrist.[57] For the
latter there is again no specific time period given. Subtracting the 7 year-
weeks for the Muslims' rule and one for Gog & Magog's, and assuming
that the Antichrist will not reign all too long, there are some 900 years
or more remaining for the 'peace on earth, the like of which there has
not been [before]' – which comes sufficiently close to an actual millen-
nium.

What we have before us in Pseudo-Methodius's narrative of the events
preceding the millennial great peace, obviously is an updated version of
a prophecy that had most likely been put in circulation by the Byzantine
imperial propaganda at a time when there was no Arab threat to be seen
on the horizon as yet, and the empire was still busy fighting the Persians.
This prophecy is reflected in Surah 30 of the Qur'ān: 'The Roman Empire
has been defeated in a land close by [that is, Syria-Palestine]; but they,

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52. Ps.-Methodius, Apocalypse, 11,1 (ed. Reinink , vol. 1, p. 24; transl. Martinez ,
p. 139).
53. For an overview of the events see the works quoted in n. 19 and Walter E. Kaegi,
Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests (Cambridge, 1992).
54. Cf. Reinink, Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius, pp. 39–41, nn.
55. Ps.-Methodius, Apocalypse, 13,19–21 (ed. Reinink, pp. 41–43; transl. Martinez,
pp. 151–52).
56. Ps.-Methodius, Apocalypse, 14,2–6 (ed. Reinink, pp. 44–45; transl. Martinez,
pp. 152–53).
57. Ps.-Methodius, Apocalypse, 14,6–13 (ed. Reinink, pp. 45–47; transl. Martinez,
pp. 153–54).

after [this] defeat, will soon be victorious within a few years ... On that day shall the Believers rejoice (*yafrahu*)'. Surah 30 is generally believed to have originated in the Meccan period and may well date from the very end of that period, the year of the Hijra, 622 CE, when emperor Heraclius started his great counter-offensive against the Persian enemy. A prediction which appears to be a more elaborate version of this same prophecy is to be found in the also roughly contemporary History of Theophylact Simocates (Simocata, Simocatta) where it is put into the mouth of the later Sāsānid king Xusrō II. (591–628), uttered allegedly at the time of emperor Maurice (582–602):

> The Babylonian race (i.e. the Persians) will hold the Roman state in its power for a threefold cyclic hebdomad of years (i.e. three year-weeks). Thereafter you Romans will enslave the Persians for a fifth hebdomad of years. When these very things have been accomplished, the day without evening will begin, and the expected fate will achieve power, when the forces of destruction will be handed over to dissolution and those of the better life hold sway.[58]

There has been some scholarly debate as to whether the clause 'the expected fate will achieve power' is correctly translated this way and it has been suggested to read it as 'the [Byzantine] power will come to an end', instead.[59] At the same time scholars agree that the prophecy served Byzantine propagandistic purposes during Heraclius's military campaigns

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58. Theophylact, *History*, 5,15,3–7, in *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae* (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana), ed. Carolus De Boor and Peter Wirth (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 316–17; *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, transl. Michael and Mary Whitby (Oxford, 1986, repr. 1988, repr. London, 1997), p. 153.

59. Paul J. Alexander translates 'καὶ τὴν προσδοκωμένην λῆξιν ἐπιβαίνειν τοῦ κράτους' as 'et se fera la fin du pouvoir (byzantin) à laquelle on s'attend.' ('Historiens byzantins et croyances eschatologiques', in *Acts of the 12ᵗʰ International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, vol. 2 [Belgrade, 1964], [= in idem, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), no. xv], here pp. 4–5). Cf., in favour of Alexander's transl. G.J. Reinink, 'Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende als politisch-religiöse Propagandaschrift für Herakleios' Kirchenpolitik', in Carl Laga, Joseph A. Munitiz, and Lucas van Rompay (eds.), *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday* (Leuven, 1985) (= in Reinink, *Syriac Christianity* [n. 22], no. III), here pp. 270–71, n. 28; idem, 'Heraclius, the New Alexander. Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius', in idem and Bernard H. Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 2; Leuven-Paris-Dudley MA, 2002), pp. 81–94; and idem, 'Alexander the Great in Seventh-Century Syriac "Apocalyptic" Texts', *Византинороссика* 2 (2003), pp. 150–78 (= in idem, *Syriac Christianity* [n. 22], no. VI). Cf. the interpretations in accordance with the Whitbys' transl. in *Theophylaktos Simokates, Geschichte*, transl. Peter Schreiner (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 20; Stuttgart, 1985), p. 320, n. 784; Thérèse Olajos, *Les sources du Théophylacte Simocatta historien* (Byzantina Neerlandica 10; Leiden, 1988), pp. 55; 151; Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan*

against the Persians – which would amount to nothing less than a 'propaganda of doom' if one were to accept this alternative reading. The prediction of the Empire's impending end would not exactly be suited to uplifting the morale of its troops and populace.

The non-catastrophic reading quoted here is confirmed by a text that arguably represents a third version of our prophecy, a passage in the Syriac *Alexander Legend*,[60] which was composed shortly after the Byzantine victory in 628.[61] Here Alexander the Great, presented as the forerunner and type of Heraclius, predicts that 'Persia will be destroyed by the Romans and all kingdoms will be laid waste; this [kingdom of the Romans] however will endure and rule until the end of time, [when the king of the Romans] will deliver the earthly kingdom to the coming Christ.'[62] These few lines, in terms of the schedule of events presented in them, read quite like the prediction of a 'better life' in Theophylact's *History*, and the rather 'telegraphical' Qur'ānic one of the 'joy of the Believers'. It is rather obvious then, that all three prophecies must go back to one single source that described a dawning new *Pax Romana*, a golden age of Byzantine world dominion, that would last until the end of time.

In fact, the imperial propaganda had long presented Heraclius as a redeemer king: he was liberating the Christian empire from its enemies, was about to unite the quarrelling factions of Christendom under the ecumenical dogma of the *One Energy*, later *One Will*, in Christ;[63] he even, as certain rumours would have it, converted Persia, the pagan world empire as it were, to Christianity.[64] He gave up the title *imperator* and instead acted as 'King faithful in Christ', the founder of a royal

Warfare (Oxford Historical Monographs; Oxford, 1988, repr. 2002), p. 240, n. 35; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, p. 182.

60. *Nešḥānā ḏ-Aleksandrōs*, in *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo Callisthenes*, ed., transl. Ernest A.W. Budge (Cambridge, 1889, repr. Amsterdam, 1976, repr. Piscataway, 2003), pp. 255-75, 144-58.

61. G.J. Reinink, 'Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende'.

62. *Alexander Legend*, ed., transl. Budge, pp. 275, 158.

63. Cf. Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit* (Berliner byzantinistische Studien 6; Frankfurt a.M., 2001); Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 212-16; 269-71; Marek Jankowiak, *La controverse monothélite: Une approche politique* (Travaux et mémoires – Monographies; Paris, forthcoming); Greisiger, *Messias - Endkaiser - Antichrist*, ch. 2.3.2.

64. Alexander Markus Schilling, *Die Anbetung der Magier und die Taufe der Sāsāniden: Zur Geistesgeschichte des iranischen Christentums in der Spätantike* (CSCO 621, Subsidia 120; Louvain, 2008), pp. 284-98; Cyril Mango, 'Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse Sassanide. II: Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la Vraie Croix', *T&MByz* 9 (1985), pp. 105-18; *Reversio Sanctae Crucis* 7-8, in Stephan Borgehammar, 'Heraclius Learns Humility: Two Early Latin Accounts Composed for the Celebration of *Exaltatio Crucis*', *Millennium* 6 (2009), pp. 145-201, here 157-60, 182-84.

dynasty, a concept quite alien to the Roman political tradition but very much befitting the dignity of a new *King David* that he had also assumed, the role of the God-chosen ruler of the Christian *New Israel*.[65] All these propagandistic expressions of what the emperor was aiming for, hint at the notion of an imperial redemption, ushering in a millennium of quite a peculiar kind.

Even though the 'king of the Greeks' of Pseudo-Methodius's vision vanquishes the Persians[66] *and* the Muslims, events of the 620s and the anticipated near future, it is highly significant that the 'great peace' of almost a full millennium is being brought about by the victory of that king. What the author has obviously done to arrive at the scenario he presents, is to adopt and update the 80-year-old promise of a universal, long-lasting period of peace, justice, welfare and piety under the rule of the Christian kings in Constantinople in the wake of the Empire's victory over the Persians, projecting it into a future when the Empire would defeat the new, Muslim oppressors. In this millenarianism, Gog & Magog, Antichrist and the Final Judgement – in short all the unpleasant prospects commonly associated with 'the End' – are postponed, together with the Resurrection and the Second Coming, to a very remote future at the end of the millennium. In terms of the modern typology, as yet applied predominantly to North-American Protestantism from the eighteenth century onwards, we may conclude that Heraclius and his officials propagated a *post-millenarian* golden age of the Empire.

Post-millenarianism, defined as the belief in a millennium that is *followed* by the Second Coming, is marked by its adherents' optimism, faith in the world's perfectibility and a sense of human responsibility. Accordingly in the America of the *Second Great Awakening* (1st half of the 19th c.),

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65. Irfan Shahîd, 'The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius', *DOP* 26 (1972), pp. 293–320; Suzanne Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius, Byzantine Imperial Ideology, and the David Plates', *Speculum* 52 (1977), pp. 217–37; James Trilling, 'Myth and Metaphor at the Byzantine Court: A Literary Approach to the David Plates', *Byz.* 48 (1978), pp. 249–63; Irfan Shahîd, 'Heraclius, Πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς', *DOP* 34/35 (1980/81), pp. 225–37; idem, 'On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius', *Byz.* 51 (1981), pp. 288–96; Claudia Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios, Georgios Pisides und die Perserkriege', *Varia III* (*Poikila Byzantina* 11; Bonn, 1991), pp. 73–128; ead., 'David – Christus – Basileus: Erwartungen an eine Herrschergestalt', in Walter Dietrich and Hubert Herkommer (eds.), *König David - biblische Schlüsselfigur und europäische Leitgestalt: 19. Kolloquium (2000) der Schweizerischen Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Freiburg-Stuttgart 2003), pp. 367–82; Uehli Zahnd, 'Novus David - Νέος Δαυιδ: Zur Frage nach byzantinischen Vorläufern eines abendländischen Topos', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 42 (2008), pp. 71–87.

66. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse* 10,6; 11,3 (ed. Reinink, vol. 1, pp. 23, 24; transl. Martinez, pp. 139, 140 [nn. 185; 187], and see their respective annotations).

for example, a strong 'reform impulse' made itself felt in both the religious and secular arenas, leading to initiatives and organizations devoted to causes such as peace, temperance, religious education, abolitionism, women's rights, and, last but not least, missionary outreach to all kinds of groups, among them, and certainly not least in their turn, the Jews.[67]

Attempts at converting Jews, especially converting *the* Jews, usually do not enjoy very enthusiastic support by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, either on the grounds of the assumption that all Jews destined to become Christians had done so back in the times of Christ, the apostles and the early church, the remainder being doomed for all eternity, or because, applying the words of the apostle Paul quoted above to a future conversion of the Jews carried a strong eschatological index; actively promoting it was tantamount to 'forcing the End'.

In a royal monarchy such as the one Heraclius strove to transform the empire into, the responsibility for an improvement of political, sociocultural and religious affairs in a millennium-like period would obviously lie, first and foremost, with the king; this would be all the more so in an endeavour as momentous as the salvation of Israel. Also if that king was to convince the populace that living under his rule actually was living in the earthly millennium, he would hardly be able to avoid the *obligation* of converting the Jews. At least he certainly would, given success in this respect, raise his chances of convincing even the most stubborn sceptics of his divinely ordained mission.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that Heraclius, after he had overcome the Persian peril, proceeded to do exactly that. Carrying the most sacred relic of the True Cross, which the Persians had 'deported' together with the thousands of Christians from Jerusalem to Ctesiphon in 614, back to the Holy City, he may first have learned about the recent messianic episode upon his arrival in Palestine. He did not hesitate to decree an amnesty for all Palestinian Jews;[68] neither, upon learning about the involvement of

67. Stephen J. Stein has proposed dropping the categories 'pre-' and 'postmillenarianism' altogether and instead differentiating between 'religious' and 'secular millenarianism', both with a 'catastrophic' and a 'progressive' sub-type. The application of this new typology to pre-modern phenomena remains to be tried out. Idem, 'American Millennial Visions: Towards Construction of a New Architectonic of American Apocalypticism', in Abbas Amanat and Magnus Bernhardsson (eds.), *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America* (London-New York, 2002), pp. 187–211, here 199–200.

68. Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales* 271, in *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien. Ausgewählte Geschichten und Legenden kompiliert von Sa'id ibn Baṭriq um 935 A.D.*, ed., transl. Michael [= Michel] Breydy (CSCO 471–472, Scr. Arabici 44–45; Louvain, 1985), pp. 108–109. He had done something similar at the capitulation of Edessa: Greatrex and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Pt. II*, p. 225.

Benjamin, his host in the Jewish town of Tiberias, in the uprising, did he punish him, but instead took on the task of converting him himself.[69]

According to the narrative contained in two most probably Near Eastern texts surviving in Latin translation, Heraclius, on his arrival in Jerusalem approaching the city walls from the Mount of Olives,[70] apparently first entered the esplanade of the former Temple through the Eastern Gate. Some scholars have suggested that that gate (known to Christians as the 'Golden' one) as it stands today, may have been built in Heraclius's time and that then even the designing or building of the Dome of the Rock might have been begun.[71] Contrary to the scholarly virtual consensus on the exact date of the *Restitutio Crucis*, the late German Byzantinist Paul Speck argued, that it took place not in March 630 but on September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, 628[72] – which happens to have fallen on the tenth day of the Jewish month of Tishrei,[73] that is, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. The Jewish followers of Neḥemiah ben Ḥusi'el, who had apparently died some time earlier, had consequently identified him, retrospectively, as the suffering and dying Messiah ben Joseph. Learning that they now awaited the Messiah ben David to accomplish their redemption, Heraclius may well have hoped to assume that role himself: a Christian new King David and earthly representative of the Son of David who would become the redeemer of the People of Israel.[74] His patience, however, did not last long. In 632 he attempted to realise that conversion by force and issued a decree ordering all Jews in the

69. Theophanes, *Chronicle*, A.M. 6120, in *Theophanis chronographia*, ed. Carl de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883–1885, repr. in 1 vol. Hildesheim, 1963, 1980); *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813*, transl. Cyril Mango, Roger Scott (Oxford, 1997), pp. 458–59. For another (story about a) conversion of a Jew associated with Heraclius cf. Paul Magdalino, 'Constantinopolitana', in Ihor Ševčenko and Irmgard Hutter (eds.), *Ἀετός: Studies in honour of Cyril Mango, presented to him on April 14, 1998* (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1998), pp. 220–32, here 220–22.

70. *Reversio S. Cr.* 14–17; *Sermo ex. S. Cr.* 17–21 (ed., transl. Borgehammar, pp. 186–89; 198–201).

71. Francis E. Peters, 'Who built the Dome of the Rock?' in *Graeco-Arabica* 2 (1983), pp. 119–38; Cyril Mango, 'The Temple Mount AD 614–638', in Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (eds.), *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, 2 vols. (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 9,1–2; Oxford, 1992–1999), vol. 1, pp. 1–16.

72. Paul Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier: Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros* (Poikila Byzantina 9; Bonn, 1988), pp. 356–77; idem, 'Zum Datum der Translation der Kreuzreliquien nach Konstantinopel', in idem (ed.), *Varia VII* (Poikila Byzantina 18; Bonn, 2000), pp. 167–77; cf. also Holger A. Klein, 'Niketas und das wahre Kreuz: Kritische Anmerkungen zur Überlieferung des Chronicon Paschale ad annum 614', *BZ* 94 (2001), pp. 580–87.

73. Result from *Kaluach3* (kaluach.com) and *Rosetta Calendar* (rosettacalendar.com).

74. Greisiger, *Messias - Endkaiser - Antichrist*, chs. 2.4.1–2.4.4.

empire to be baptised.[75] Just like virtually all the other ambitious projects of his great reform program, the conversion of Israel failed.[76]

The surviving evidence of Heraclius's attempts at this conversion and, by implication, his (initial) readiness to readmit those Jews who would newly have become Christians to Jerusalem to serve God together with the Gentiles in the ecumenical sanctuary of the Third Temple, brings us back to the eschatological inclusivism from the first section of this essay. What Pseudo-Andrew's polemic, Pseudo-Ephrem's sermon and Heraclius's messianic (self-)representation all demonstrate is that a millenarianist rationale for a (relatively) benign attitude towards Jews, even at times of a Jewish revolt against the Christian empire, were at hand and even obvious as late as the seventh century. Besides this non-anti-Jewish political dimension of the millenarianism current at the time, it was common to associate the imminent 'great peace' with a quite earthly fulfilment in a millennial sabbath, so common that even a relentless exhorter for penitence such as Pseudo-Methodius felt the necessity to leave space for it in his apocalyptic timetable. And finally, centuries after the classical period of the 'Christian idea of progress' and the political theology it was re-cast into by Constantine and Eusebius,[77] it appeared useful and persuasive enough to Heraclius and his propagandists to be revived in an astonishingly creative and fresh version: *imperial post-millenarianism.*

75. For a synopsis and discussion of the sources and their interpretations in the secondary literature see Greisiger, *Messias - Endkaiser - Antichrist,* ch. 2.2. For the alleged mass murder of Palestinian Jews after the Restitution of the Cross see ibid., ch.2.4.4.

76. Late Antique attempts at a forcible conversion of Jews with the intention of promoting the Millennium are documented elsewhere as well - see, for example, Severus of Minorca, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews,* ed., transl. Scott Bradbury (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford, 1996), there esp. ch. VI. of the introduction, pp. 43-53.

77. Cf. Theodor E. Mommsen, 'St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the City of God', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12 (1951), pp. 346-74; Wolfram Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana: Die Idee des Fortschritts in der Alten Kirche bis Eusebius* (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 58; Göttingen, 1994); Klaus M. Girardet: *Der Kaiser und sein Gott: Das Christentum im Denken und in der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen* (Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. - Millennium Studies in the culture and history of the first millennium C.E. 27; Berlin-New York, 2010), esp. pp. 150-63.

MANAGING ANGER, FEAR AND HOPE AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM: ANASTASIUS OF SINAI, ANTIOCHUS, ZACHARIAS OF JERUSALEM AND SOPHRONIUS OF JERUSALEM*

Yannis PAPADOGIANNAKIS

'Is it true of all the evil things done by the Arabs against the lands and nations of the Christians, that they have done them against us completely at God's command and with his approval?'[1] This anonymous enquiry by an unknown Christian poignantly captures the deep crisis that these momentous events entailed for Christian communities. 'Certainly not!' Anastasius replies and, as if to empathise, by acknowledging and validating the feelings of the enquirer he goes further by amplifying his reply, graphically portraying the shameful treatment meted out to Christians and their sacred places and objects:

> God forbid that we should say that God urged them to throw down and trample upon his holy body and blood, or on the relics of his holy Apostles and martyrs. There are thousands of other things that they are doing to us which are not pleasing to God: they unjustly maltreat many, they persecute others for their faith, they shed the just and innocent blood of others, they defile God's altars and venerated places, they force religious women with a long practice of virginity to enter unwillingly into marriage.

This question and Anastasius's answer from his collection of questions and answers concretise and sum up with unusual clarity and immediacy some of the most important issues that exercised contemporary Christians and condense themes that recur across most contemporary

1. Anastasius of Sinai, *Quaestiones et responsiones*, 101, p. 230 in Joseph A. Munitiz, *Anastasios of Sinai: Questions and Answers* (Turnhout, 2011) where all translations come from. For a critical edition see Anastasius of Sinai, *Quaestiones et responsiones*, ed. by M. Richard and J.A. Munitiz (CCSG 59; Turnhout, 2006). On Anastasius' literary and theological output, see Karl-Heinz Uthemann, *Anastasios Sinaites: byzantinisches Christentum in den ersten Jahrzehnten unter arabischer Herrschaft*, 2 vols. (Arbeiten Zur Kirchengeschichte 125; Berlin, 2015).

Christian literature.[2] The way in which Anastasius replies shows he wants to make clear that he was making at least some of his enquirer's sentiments his own. And to keep hope alive so that his community does not lapse into total despair but also to satisfy their deep psychological need for justice in the form of restoration of the previous order he conjures up the image of an avenging God[3] who through his prophet Zechariah declares: 'I have been jealous with great jealousy for Jerusalem, and for Sion, and I am angry with great anger against those who joined together against you. Because for my part I was only slightly angry with you but they joined together against you for evil' [Zech. 1:14-15]. Thus, on the strength of this precedent Anastasius assures them of the Muslims' future punishment: 'For these deeds they will certainly pay with an eternal hell.' And he continues: 'However since what has been happening must seem strange (ξένα) to many and perhaps even difficult to accept with faith, listen to an example taken from scripture itself connected with this subject.'

In what follows Anastasius seeks to reassure his community that in fact there is nothing unique at play here by invoking the biblical precedent

2. On the importance of this collection in general, see John Haldon, 'The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief', in Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Papers of the First Workshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (Princeton NJ, 1992), pp. 107-47. On the role of this collection in assessing the impact of the Muslim conquest and the processes of self-definition that it further catalysed, see more recently Yannis Papadogiannakis, 'Christian Identity in the Seventh-Century Byzantium: The Case of Anastasius of Sinai', in J. Kreiner and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Motions of Late Antiquity: Essays on Religion, Politics, and Society in Honour of Peter Brown* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 20; Turnhout, 2016), pp. 249-67. On the historical context of Anastasius and the Arab conquest, see Robert Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Princeton NJ, 1995); Bernard Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VIIe siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1992), pp. 67-182; Glen W. Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity* (Waltham MA, 2012); Lutz Greisiger, 'The Last Roman-Persian War of 602-28: Near Eastern and Constantinopolitan Fears and Hopes', *Adamantius* 19 (2013), pp. 359-70.

3. Cécile Dogniez, 'Les habits de la vengeance divine dans la Septante', in Mireille Loubet and Didier Pralon (eds.), *Eukarpa: études sur la Bible et ses exégètes en hommage à Gilles Dorival* (Paris, 2011), pp. 85-96; Stephen Butler Murray, *Reclaiming Divine Wrath: A History of a Christian Doctrine and Its Interpretation* (Oxford-New York, 2011), pp. 9-45 and 47-103; see also both contributions by Markus Witte, '"Barmherzigkeit und Zorn Gottes" im Alten Testament am Beispiel des Buchs Jesus Sirach', pp. 176-202 and Gunnar af Hällström, 'Wrath of God and His Followers: Early Christian Considerations', in Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann (eds.), *Divine Wrath and Divine Mercy in the World of Antiquity* (Tübingen, 2008), pp. 239-47.

of Israel, which was handed over to the Assyrians by God's permission in order to be punished in a mild and kindly way:

> God handed Israel over to them mildly but those lawless men treated them mercilessly. That is why He wiped out the Assyrians, because they had treated Israel wickedly, just as in the case of Pharaoh, because he also treated the Jews cruelly and harshly, God drowned him in the sea, which is what we hope will also happen to these in a short time.[4]

'Although conquests were unexpected, they could not go unexplained'[5] and to this end Anastasius is not alone in using what has been called 'a typological view of history'[6] that involved 'reading the Old Testament history of Israel into the contemporary experience of the embattled Christian empire.'[7] This understanding was premised on the belief that 'Byzantine theocracy was based on the principle that the Christian empire was the earthly manifestation and anticipation of the kingdom of Christ, which superseded all other terrestrial realms; in other words it was the messianic kingdom announced by the OT prophets and awaited by the Jews along with the true anointed of God.'[8] Like many Christian authors before and after him, he clearly intended the plight of Israel related in his response as a guide to be read and used as a way of making sense of their current plight, and he urges contemporary Christians to see themselves as part of a longer running pattern of God's chastising love for his sinning people and his redemptive concern. This motif, shared by many of his contemporaneous Christian authors,[9] informed ancient thinking that sought to understand and explain catastrophic events (natural and man-made) in theological and moralistic terms, by ascribing them to divine anger

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4. Anastasius of Sinai, *Quaestiones et responsiones*, 101 (transl. Munitiz, *Anastasios of Sinai*, p. 231).

5. John Lamoreaux, 'Early Eastern Christian Responses to Islam', in John Tolan (ed.), *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (London–New York, 1996), pp. 3–31, at p. 3.

6. Michael G. Morony, 'Apocalyptic Expressions in the Early Islamic World', *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998), pp. 175–77, at p. 177. Y. Katzir, 'The Conquests of Jerusalem 1099 and 1187: Historical Memory and Religious Typology', in Vladimir P. Goss (ed.), *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange Between East and West During the Period of the Crusades* (Kalamazoo MI, 1986), pp. 103–13.

7. Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson, 'Introduction', in Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson (eds.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington DC, 2010), pp. 1–38, at p. 19.

8. Magdalino and Nelson, 'Introduction', p. 28.

9. Bernard Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1992), pp. 129–49; David Olster, *Roman Defeat, Christian Response, and the Literary Construction of the Jew* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 72–84 and 99–115.

for sins committed.[10] The differences between Christian and non-Christian thinking on the matter notwithstanding,[11] this rationale cut across religious boundaries.

Anastasius concludes his response by hinting at the psychological impact of the conquest on his congregation:

> It is necessary for us to be aware of these things, so that when you see these lawless men closing the churches, shedding blood, persecuting some people unjustly and mercilessly, and committing other crimes, you will not be angry (ἀγανακτῆτε) with God, but realise clearly that they are acting thus because of their own godlessness, and that they await the worst possible hell.

Anastasius describes the emotional state of his flock, which is experiencing a feeling of alienation, disbelief at the current situation and even anger at God for the afflictions that befell their communities and their faith. As Wilken put it: 'That "holy Jerusalem" would be "laid waste" was beyond belief, and feelings that few Christians fully understood came rushing to the surface for the first time.'[12] These emotions shaped his community as an 'emotional community', that is, a community of people who felt (or were expected) to feel the same emotions (anger, fear, hope) as a response to loss and affliction.[13] Anastasius is at pains to guide his readers, faced as he is with Christians who are angry with God. Many Christians felt like this. This crisis that swept over the empire and Christianity is reflected most vividly in the voice of an anxious Christian asking: 'Whence is it obvious that we Christians

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10. See Maijastina Kahlos, 'Divine Anger and Divine Favour: Transformations in Roman Thought Patterns in Late Antiquity', in Henriette Harich-Schwarzbauer and Karla Pollmann (eds.), *Der Fall Roms und seine Wiederauferstehungen in Antike und Mittelalter* (Millennium-Studien 40, Berlin, 2013), pp. 177–93. Also Fritz Graf, 'Earthquakes and the Gods: Reflections on Graeco-Roman Responses to Catastrophic Events,' in Jitse Dijkstra, Justin Kroesen and Yme Kuiper (eds.), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity. Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 95–113; Edward Watts, 'Interpreting Catastrophe: Disasters in the Historical Works of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Socrates, Philostorgius, and Timothy Aelurus', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2.1 (2009), pp. 79–98.

11. Graf, 'Earthquakes and the Gods', p. 111.

12. Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven–London, 1992), p. 231.

13. Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *AHR* 107/3 (2002), pp. 821–45, at p. 842: 'These are [precisely] the same as social communities – families, neighborhoods, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships–they allow the researcher looking at them to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.'

believe in the best faith under the sky? For each faith considers itself to be more pious than the rest.'[14] As well as anxiety the question conjures up a climate of religious competition and antagonism.[15] In the face of such apocalyptic destruction, faith in divine providence, let alone benevolence, was hard to maintain, challenging any confidence in the rewards of faithfulness.

Anastasius is invested in the process of managing these emotions in part by invoking Israel's tribulations, as it had suffered the same loss and affliction but God's divine plan did not allow its people to perish. Moreover, by invoking the wrath of God who will punish the invaders and will restore everything as it should be, he wants to satisfy the deep psychological need for consolation and justice through punishment of the wicked that is very much in evidence in apocalyptic literature.[16] This was not the only occasion that required Anastasius to address his fellow Christians. As a consummate controversialist and a caring pastor he can be seen at work castigating the moral failings of his flock, and reiterating and expanding on this theme in his homiletic work too.[17]

PIETISTIC CLICHÉS?

Coming to terms with a crisis called for adopting and adapting long-established discourses and employing modified but recurrent motifs, conventions and strategies. This explains the use of the theme of sinning believers feeling the full force of God's chastising love that runs through

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14. Ps. Athanasius, *Quaest.* 42, in *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem*, PG 28, 623–24.

15. Papadogiannakis, 'Christian Identity in the Seventh-Century Byzantium'.

16. 'A situation in which God's faithful people suffer and their enemies triumph demands a vindication of God's justice, in the deeply rooted Old Testament sense of justice *for* the oppressed which has to be at the same time justice *against* the oppressors. Hell then is fundamentally a triumph for God's righteousness'. In Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden–Boston, 1998), p. 134; see also David C. Sim, 'Coping with the Present by Reinventing the Future: Apocalyptic Texts as Crisis Management Literature', in David C. Sim and Pauline Allen (eds.), *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature: Thematic Studies from the Centre for Early Christian Studies* (London, 2012), pp. 29–45. On the apocalyptic as consolation, see Wolfram Brandes, 'Endzeitvorstellungen und Lebenstrost in Mittelbyzantinischer Zeit (7-9. Jahrhundert)', *Varia* III (*Poikila Byzantina* 11; Bonn, 1991), pp. 9–62 for a fine overview of contemporary apocalyptic literature.

17. On his homiletic corpus, see Uthemann, *Anastasios Sinaites*, vol. 2, pp. 790–800. On Anastasius as a homilist, see Joseph Munitiz, 'Anastasios of Sinai: Speaking and Writing to the People of God', in Mary Cunningham and Pauline Allen (eds.), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 227–45; and Uthemann, *Anastasios Sinaites*, vol. 1, pp. 332–67.

contemporary apocalyptic and non-apocalyptic literature.[18] While a theological *topos*[19] it was by no means divested of any emotional impact; instead, it was a *topos* with significant emotional investment that helped keep hope alive and helped Christians develop and maintain the resilience that enabled them to endure repeated crises and indeed to recover from them.[20] 'Models and topoi, then, may be able to convey "genuine" statements about the experience of the self and they may also be able to serve as the most effective way to communicate or represent aspects of emotions or the inner world to others. In other words, they are not a barrier to interpreting emotional experience, but a potentially privileged access.'[21]

An important corollary to this theme was that just as the people of Israel were considered the chosen people who despite repeated punishments for their sins were not allowed to perish but were saved instead, so would the Byzantines triumph in the end. This is why 'the Old Testament provided not only substance but also an authentic style of discourse for an embattled theocratic society.'[22] This theological reading of loss and affliction while looking into the past in order to make sense of the present, seeks 'to bring a more radical change and turns its gaze to the future ... seeing it as an impulse for changing one's life and the need for this change comes from an expected future, an eschatology.'[23] Thus, in

18. Cynthia Villagomez, 'Christian Salvation through Muslim Domination: Divine Punishment and Syriac Apocalyptic Expectation in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998), pp. 203–18.

19. Moss highlights the importance of topoi thus: 'commonplaces are cultural material with both past and present currency within a given language community; their reference is to opinions commonly accepted as valid; they are deployed primarily as tools for argument in discourse designed to promote and reinforce culturally sanctioned modes of thought; and furthermore, commonplace propositions have a ritualized character that makes of them recognizable modes of communication coded for universal reception, be it as familiar forms of verbal expression, hackneyed metaphors, normative rules, or recurring patterns.' In A. Moss 'Power and Persuasion. Commonplace Culture in Early Modern Europe', in D. Cowling and M.B. Bruun (eds.), *Commonplace Culture in Western Europe in the Early Modern Period I: Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Revolt* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 39; Leuven, 2011), pp. 1–17, at p. 1.

20. 'a source of comfort to Christians was the notion that God's divine order was clear: His justice continued to rule and His judgments were clearly present; on the one hand, Christians were continuing to be punished for their disobedience, but at the same time, Muslims were being punished for their sins, including their acts of oppression against Christians'. In Villagomez, 'Christian Salvation Through Muslim Domination', p. 216.

21. Mary Garrison, 'The study of emotions in early medieval history: some starting points', *Early Medieval Europe* 10/2 (2001), pp. 243–50, at p. 247.

22. Magdalino and Nelson, 'Introduction', p. 21.

23. Graf, 'Earthquakes and the Gods', p. 111.

assessing the strategies of Christian authors in using *topoi*, among other strategies, to address their audiences' concerns it is important 'to reject the widespread notion that dismisses *topoi* in medieval texts as by definition antithetical to the expression and communication of genuine feelings.'[24]

ANTIOCHUS

Emotional communities were not static entities. They were affected not only by the ebb and flow of emotions aroused by external events but constituted by the active intervention of various actors, in this case Christian authors, who were invested in creating unanimity of religious feeling out of disunity.[25] Such an emotional community was created and addressed by Antiochus the monk[26] in his *Pandect of the Holy Scriptures*,[27]

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24. 'Such a view is a figment of a postromantic sensibility, with little relevance to a literary and moral formation which prized authority and example. Curtius himself made that point, and so it is all the more ironic that (perhaps more through osmosis than sustained reading) his surpassingly erudite European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages has had the effect of popularizing the word *topos* so effectively that it has become a dismissive label bandied about with little sensitivity to the underlying principles of the Latin educational system and poetics which ensured the longevity and vigour of rhetorical commonplaces (for that is what *topoi*, places, are) – a system in which the grammatical and rhetorical was not easily sundered from the moral and ethical. Clichés? Or shared structures of meaning? While the use of quotations or clichés can in some cases provoke legitimate questioning of the veracity of an account, one should also be aware that apparently prefabricated units of expression (*topoi*, quotations, allusions and proverbs) may have been chosen precisely because of their communicative power. To assert this possibility is not to claim that *topoi* have such resonance in every instance, but rather to signal the need for a reading open to a maximal rather than a minimal interpretation of apparently stereotyped expressions.' In Mary Garrison, 'The study of emotions', pp. 245–46. *Pace* Kaldellis who asserts that: 'and while it was common to ascribe imperial defeat and natural disaster to God's anger at human sin, this explanation was *only a pietistic cliché* invoked in response to individual events. It never constituted a theology of God's intervention in history and never clarified the nature of divine justice in relation to human history. Any sin would do for this purpose or even sin in general, with no need to point to specific historical deeds.' In Anthony Kaldellis, 'The Literature of Plague and the Anxieties of Piety in Sixth-Century Byzantium,' in F. Mormando and T. Worcester (eds.), *Piety and Plague: From Byzantium to the Baroque* (Kirksville MO, 2007), pp. 1–22, at p. 4 [emphasis mine].

25. For a compellingly-argued adjustment of Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities, see Angelos Chaniotis, 'Displaying Emotional Community – the Epigraphic Evidence', in Ed Sanders and Matthew Johncock (eds.), *Emotions and Persuasion in Classical Antiquity* (Stuttgart, 2016), pp. 93–111.

26. On Antiochus see Peter Hatlie, 'A Rough Guide to Byzantine Monasticism in the Early Seventh Century', in Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation* (Leuven, 2002), pp. 205–26.

27. Antiochus the Monk, *Pandect of the Holy Scriptures*, PG 89, 1413–1856.

where he chooses to address his emotional community with an homily on *Compunction* ('katanyxis'),[28] which was appropriately excerpted in the Strategius's *Capture of Jerusalem*.[29] Antiochus opens the homily with a vision of the souls being judged by God, prescribing three emotions: fear of God, compunction and shame.

> Compunction (κατάνυξις) brings about tears and weeping and comes about by thinking of the fearful day (φοβερά ἡμέρα) of the Judgement and the recompense for our words and actions and of the shame (αἰσχύνη) when we stand before the heavenly tribunal before the humans, angels and all the heavenly powers, when everything will be laid open, when each one of us will be held to account, when no one will be able to help anyone, when everything hidden will be revealed, even those [things] that only our conscience and God who scrutinises our conscience is aware of, but not our heart. God who 'fire goes before him and consumes his adversaries on every side' (Ps. 96[97]:3). When those who are condemned to the outer darkness prepared for the devil and his angels and others who are banished to the eternal fire and others to the sleepless worm and Hell (Tartarus).

The placing of a climactic scene of exposure and judgement in the presence, and the gaze of a critical or even accusing audience of humans, angels and all the heavenly powers is meant to stimulate the prospective sense of fear and moral shame of every Christian and to act upon the audience's fear of punishment and compunction.[30] Thus, fear of God and shame before the heavenly tribunal pave the way for compunction. Subsequently, Antiochus calls his community to compunction (κατάνυξις) and goes on to describe its workings. 'Meditation with compunction and prayers brings about the fear of God in us', he states. He then lists a number of biblical proofs culminating in a verse from Ps. 126(125):6, a thanksgiving psalm that may reflect the sixth century BCE return of Israel from exile, 'going they would go and weep'. Like Anastasius, Antiochus alludes to the plight of Israel as a type for their current plight. The Babylonian captivity foreshadowed, for Antiochus, the current loss of Jerusalem and current captivity by the Persians. 'We must bitterly lament the loss for them and for us. First for the burning of the holy city of

28. Antiochus the Monk, *Homily on Compunction*, PG 89, 1761–65.

29. The standard edition is *La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614*. Ed. Gérard Garitte, 2 vols. (CSCO 202–203, Scr. Iberici 11–12; Louvain, 1960), preserving the Georgian recension of the Greek, lost original. For the Arabic recension see *Expugnationis Hierosolymae A.D. 614: Recensiones Arabicae*. Ed. Gérard Garitte, 4 vols. (CSCO 340–341, 347–348, Scr. Arabici 26–27, 28–29; Louvain, 1973–74).

30. On the background of this idea and its historical development see Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians Through the Rhetoric of Hell: "Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth" as Paideia in Matthew and the Early Church* (Tübingen, 2014). Also A. Thom Mertens *et al.* (eds.), *The Last Judgement in Medieval Preaching* (Turnhout, 2013).

Jerusalem and the removal of the Holy cross to Persia and for those who perished in so many wars because they were part of our body (σύσσωμοι: to be one body with) and our faith (ὁμόπιστοι).[31]

To understand why Antiochus prescribes the emotion of compunction we need to unpack the term somewhat in order to fully grasp its emotional weight and to better understand its role. This will illuminate why he then links this directly with the end of times and loss and affliction. The term comes from the language of spiritual direction and was elaborated theologically by John of Climacus among others, Antiochus's contemporary. From its Old Testament background, in which it meant a prick or a sting that urges one to go forward, the term 'κατάνυξις', was adopted into Christian spiritual language where it took on associations not only of remorse or regret but also of the following:

> Compunction, therefore, does not simply involve remorse or regret, but also incitement, a pressing forward, a call to perfection. Its significance is not merely negative but definitely positive. Hausherr rightly observes that the term implies a piercing, a shock, coming from the outside. ... It would be more correct to say that the actual piercing derives from grace. However, it may either arrive from without, whether directly from God or indirectly through some other person whom we meet or perhaps through a word we hear, or else from within, through the heart, in which case it again originated in God.[32]

Tears are another effect of compunction: the gift of compunction brings about the gift of tears.[33] Unlike John of Climacus or Barsanuphius of Gaza, however, Antiochus links the feeling of compunction with a concrete, contemporary and momentous historical event-, the capture and sacking of Jerusalem by the Persians. He also invests it with eschatological significance as he correlates it with the feeling of shame for wrong deeds before God in the Final Judgement.

'God thirsts after our salvation', Antiochus continues, and 'desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' [1 Tim. 2, 4], stressing the importance of tears of compunction. Loss and affliction

31. Antiochus the Monk, *Homily on Compunction*, PG 89, 1764B–C.

32. John Chryssavgis, *John Climacus: From the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 135. On *katanyxis* see Marguerite Harl, 'Les origines du mot et de la notion de "compunction" dans la Septante et chez ses commentateurs (Katanussesthai)', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 32 (1986), pp. 3–21.

33. Barbara Müller, *Der Weg des Weinens: die Tradition des "Penthos" in den Apophthegmata Patrum* (Göttingen, 2000). Kallistos Ware, '"An Obscure Matter": The Mystery of Tears in Orthodox Spirituality', in Kimberley C. Patton and John S. Hawley (eds.), *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination* (Princeton NJ, 2005), pp. 242–73; Martin Hinterberger, 'Tränen in der byzantinischen Literatur. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Emotionen', *JÖB* 56 (2006), pp. 27–51.

were bound to cause an intensification of emotions such as sorrow for one's sinful life, fear of damnation, despair of forgiveness, and joy (or hope) at detecting signs of election. These are all features that permeate contemporary collections of *erotapokriseis*, homilies, and the apocalyptic literature as well.

ZACHARIAS OF JERUSALEM

Fear and hope are also conjured up in a letter to the Christian community in Jerusalem attributed to Zacharias of Jerusalem.[34] The letter was written in captivity but was sent to his congregation in Jerusalem when it had just been freed from the Persians (628) and is a highly emotive exhortation to repentance. It still survives in Greek but is also included in Strategius's account of the fall of Jerusalem, in which patriarch Zacharias is a central character.[35] Zacharias's letter reveals the many and conflicting meanings and feelings that the Persian conquest caused in each community. Above all, it highlights how the fall of Jerusalem dealt a blow to the fabric of social life and damaged the bonds holding people together, thus impairing the prevailing sense of communality.[36]

Zacharias begins his letter by lamenting his captivity using the language of the psalms: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, also wept, when we remembered Sion,*[37] adding poignantly 'and Golgotha and the life-giving sepulchre and ἀειμνήστου Bethlehem', expressing his despair (*I lifted up my eyes to the mountains- from where will my help come?*).[38] He implores his audience in Jerusalem who were (*redeemed by the Lord ... whom he redeemed from an enemy's hand*) to listen, alluding to Psalm 107(106):2. What is striking is that there seems to have been a feeling of complacency among members of the Christian community who, having been relieved from the Persian yoke, reverted to their own sinful ways. Zacharias warns them against arrogance and conjures up the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, a classic set-piece of Christian eschatology regarding the Final Judgement, to instil the fear of God in

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34. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3227-34.
35. See Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 218-24.
36. On the impact of the fall of a city in antiquity see Jerry Toner, *Roman Disasters* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 136-43, 153-70.
37. Ps. 137(136): 1.
38. Ps. 121(120):1.

this community.[39] He warns Christians to avoid behaving like the rich man of the parable lest they come to the same end as he:

See, and fear and watch yourselves that, by living like the rich man in luxury and comfort, not having suffered any grief, you are not rewarded with interminable (ἀθανάτους) punishment. Watch lest by enjoying wine and drinks in this life you thirst for a tiny drop of water there [in the after-life]. Think carefully lest by having been spared of servitude here, you are separated from the vision of God there. The Lord has not spared you because you are righteous but because He wanted to give you more time to repent, because you are lazy and the future is unknown. For they are not worthy of forgiveness those who, despite seeing their fellow Christian brothers' sufferings, they do not mend their ways.[40]

To drive his point home Zacharias invokes the power that shudder and fear exert on those who attend a cross-examination in court.[41] 'Do you not see', Zacharias continues, 'how many shudder and fear (φρίττουσι καὶ φοβοῦνται) and refrain from bad deeds in the courtrooms when someone else is cross-examined?' Then he asks his community not to be surprised that some virtuous people were held captives while some of the lawless were set free.

Like other pastors, Zacharias is drawing on the implications of the capture of Jerusalem to create and solidify bonds between members of the community. His admonitions contribute to the shaping and height-ening of a sense of community in which divine justice prevails where human justice has failed. Zacharias continues by quoting 1 Cor 12:26 ('if one member suffers, all suffer together with it') and 2 Cor. 11:29 ('who is weak and I am not weak?'). The Pauline image of Christians as one body leads Zacharias to a similar pronouncement about his

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39. In a similar vein in the early eighth-century *Apocalypse* of Ps.-Athanasius, fear of God is prescribed thus: 'do not be negligent in instructing every one in the fear of God, for you will be responsible for their souls at the unbiased tribunal of God, the true Judge. But if you instruct them and they do not listen to you their sin will come down upon themselves, for not having received [what you] taught them, as [it is written]: ["Each one] shall carry [his own burden]"', in Francisco J. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius* (Ph.D. Diss. Cath-olic University of America, Washington DC, 1985), vol. 2, p. 473. See Bernd Witte, *Die Sünden der Priester und Mönche, Koptische Eschatologie des 8. Jahrhunderts nach Kodex M 602 pp. 104–54 (Ps. Athanasius) der Pierpont Morgan Library* (Arbeiten zum spätan-tiken und koptischen Ägypten 12; Altenberge, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 120–21 (edition), and vol. 2, pp. 89–93 (commentary).

40. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3229 B-C.

41. On the construction of these emotions in ancient experience, see Douglas Cairns, 'A Short History of Shudders', in Angelos Chaniotis and Pierre Ducrey (eds.), *Unveiling Emotions II: Emotions in Greece and Rome: Texts, Images, Material Culture* (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 55; Stuttgart, 2014), pp. 85–106.

community (ἕν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἀμφότεροι). Sensing perhaps their diminished sense of compassion for fellow human sufferers he coaxes his community, in a rhetorically masterly manner, to share in the captives' affliction (θλίψιν).[42]

Throughout this part of the letter the eschatological perspective of the Final Judgement is never allowed to slip from view. Zacharias warns that the time of the recompense (ὥρα τῆς μισθαποδοσίας) has arrived: 'There will come a time, and this time is now, where those who lived in comfort will be condemned like the rich man; whereas those who suffered grief will join Lazarus in chorus'. Zacharias is warning his community in Jerusalem not to boast of having been spared captivity, instead calling them to show the spirit of repentance and to think about the day they will face God in the Final Judgement.

At the same time, in an effort to find a silver lining amidst the turmoil into which the capture of Jerusalem threw its Christian community, Zacharias invokes the *deus medicus* motif; by allowing current affliction (the capture of the city), God healed the community of its problems: 'For can you not see how many murders this threat averted? How many riots it stopped? How many illicit affairs it put an end to? How many grudges it swept away?'

Zacharias remarks that those who are in captivity inexorably succumb to many sins.[43] That this was a widespread concern affecting many Christian communities faced with catastrophic violence and disruption is evident in the writings of his contemporary Anastasius of Sinai, who, in his collection of questions and answers, was asked to address this issue and to offer his advice: *Quaestio* 76: 'As we see some women who go astray while they are also slaves in captivity, what is one to say about them?'[44] Anastasius offers a nuanced reply, layering his response with a number of insights:

> The women who go astray for the sake of pleasure and wantonness fall under a greater condemnation, whereas those who do not do so because of want and necessity under a lesser, just as in the case of thieves, where the one who steals food out of hunger commits a more venial sin than does one who is not in want and robs. But in the case of each sin, many differences

42. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3232A: 'γίνεσθε τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῖς δεδεμένοις ὡς συνδεδεμένοι, τοῖς ἀτεκνουμένοις ὡς θρηνοῦντες, τοῖς μαστιζομένοις ὡς συναλγοῦντες, τοῖς διωκομένοις ὡς συμφεύγοντες τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις ὡς συναιχμάλωτοι'.
43. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3232 C-D.
44. Noel Lenski, 'Captivity and Slavery among the Saracens in Late Antiquity (CA. 250-630 CE)', *Ant. Tard.* 19 (2011), pp. 237-66. Also Youval Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. by Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge MA-London, 2009), pp. 25-57.

are to be borne in mind; the women who adorn and paint themselves in their own lands would deserve a different pardon from those who deck themselves in gold and show no shame while living in the middle of slavery and in the presence of their own sisters loaded with chains.

Anastasius seems to allude here to women who enjoyed the luxuries resulting from possibly converting to Islam or from becoming concubines to non-Christians and adds: 'Similarly any other sin and profligacy and luxury that we commit while living in the midst of captivity is more griev-ous than the irregularities of those who fall into sin while living at ease.'[45] Zacharias draws a contrast between the hardships of the captives and the life of his Jerusalem congregation. 'Compared to them, you are rela-tively much better off' Zacharias reminds his community, urging them to remember to 'pray for one another so that you may be healed' [Jas. 5:16]. Zacharias insists that they must constantly pray for their brothers in order to placate God. The use of the term 'τόν Κύριον καταλλάξησθε'[46] alludes to the biblical idea – as further elaborated by Paul and worked out by the church fathers – that, as sinners, and therefore enemies of God, they need to reconcile themselves with God by persuading Him to give up his anger against them.[47] He then returns to the plight of his captive community in Persia: 'Compare your situation to theirs and watch yourselves and feel compunction (κατανύγητε)', he says in an effort to induce their compunction for the plight of the captives. Then, in a series of *homoioteleuta*, he poignantly contrasts the circumstances of his Jerusalem congregation with that of the captives in Persia: 'You in churches and they in jails; you in comfort, they in chains; you in relaxa-tion, they in grief; you in baths, they in the deserts; you in joy, they in dire need. You are served; they serve others [in slavery].'[48] 'Do not be uncaring', Zacharias warns, 'for the measure you give will be the meas-ure you get' [Matt. 7:2].

Of particular importance to Zacharias was the fact that wickedness had increased while the love of his fellow Christians had grown cold.

45. Anastasius of Sinai, *Quaestiones et responsiones*, 76 (transl. Munitiz, *Anastasios of Sinai*, p. 191). On women's life in captivity, see Yvonne Friedman, *Encounter Between Enemies: Captivity and Ransom in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 162–86.

46. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3232D.

47. On the terms καταλλάσσω and καταλλαγή, see Stanley E. Porter, *Katallassō in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings* (Cordoba, 1994).

48. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3232D-3233A: 'ὑμεῖς ἐν εὐκτηρίοις, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν δεσμωτηρίοις; ὑμεῖς ἐν σπατάλῃ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν μετάλλοις; ὑμεῖς ἐν ἀνέσει, οὗτοι δὲ ἐν πένθει; ὑμεῖς ἐν βαλανείοις, καὶ οὗτοι ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις; ὑμεῖς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει, αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀνάγκῃ; ὑμεῖς δουλεύεσθε, αὐτοὶ δὲ δουλεύουσι.'

No one seemed to love their brother. Zacharias reminds his community of his admonitions from a previous encounter with them in Galilee, in which he had warned them against the hatred against their brethren, their lack of compassion for their brethren and their failure to keep the apostolic commandments. He continues by conjuring up the reaction of his audience during that encounter who retorted by opining rather complacently 'that [surely] God loves human beings (φιλάνθρωπος) and He did not create humans in order to destroy them and would save us as a gift.[49] Zacharias's letter is evidence that not everyone, when confronted by catastrophic events, thought about the history of salvation in the same terms. This complacent attitude leads Zacharias to induce the fear of God, castigating them by citing Ps. 144(145):20: *The Lord watches over all who love him and the sinners He will destroy.* He reminds them that God will destroy all sinners and will 'give to each one his recompense' [Rom. 2:6]. It is their excuses when 'concocting pretexts for sins' [Ps. 141(140)] that brought about God's wrath. Zacharias remarks that, 'we were all punished but not all of us experience this affliction equally'. He then urges his community to strive to help those in need and, turning to the more affluent members of his community, his tone becomes harsher:

> Are you not afraid of God, oh man? Does your conscience not scourge you by seeing Christ dragged and slaughtered by the infidels while you hide away your money? Why, while you are capable of saving a soul, which is worth more than the whole world, do you not save it but you become, instead, a murderer? For when some-one is capable of saving his brother, and does not do so eagerly, the Lord will exact his [brother's] blood from his hands.[50]

The idea that he who saves a fellow human being is saving Christ is reminiscent of Matt. 25:31-46. Thanks to influential homilists and theologians like John Chrysostom who had emphasised this idea, the notion of the 'poor Christ' had become widespread in Byzantium.[51] Zacharias

49. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3233A.

50. Zacharias of Jerusalem, *Epistula*, PG 86, 3233C-D: 'οὐ φοβῇ τὸν Θεόν, ἄνθρωπε; οὐδὲ αὐτὸ τὸ συνειδός σου μαστίζει σε, ὅτι ὁρᾷς τὸν Χριστὸν ὑπὸ ἀνόμων συρόμενον καὶ σφαζόμενον, καὶ σὺ τὰ χρήματα κατακρύπτεις; καὶ δυνάμενος σῶσαι ψυχήν, ἧς ὅλος ὁ κόσμος οὐκ ἀντάξιος, οὐ σώζεις, ἀλλὰ γίνῃ ἀνθρωποκτόνος; ὅταν γάρ τις δυνάμενος σῶσαι τὸν ἀδελφόν, μὴ σώσει προθύμως, ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ λοιπὸν τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἀπαιτήσει Κύριος.

51. Rudolf Brändle, *Matth. 25, 31-46 im Werk des Johannes Chrysostomos: eine Beitrag zur Auslegungsgeschichte und zur Erforschung der Ethik der griechischen Kirche um d. Wende vom 4. zum 5. Jh.* (Basel, 1979); Pius Angstenberger, *Der reiche und der arme Christus: die Rezeptionsgeschichte von 2 Kor 8,9 zwischen dem zweiten und dem sechsten Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1997); Sherman W. Gray, *The Least of My Brothers: Matthew 25:31-46: a History of Interpretation* (Atlanta, 1989).

may well be suggesting here the ransoming of fellow Christians that is attested in other texts from this period. Anastasius of Sinai's *Diègêmata Stèriktika*[52] allude to similar practices, as does the *Life of John the Almsgiver* according to which the patriarch of Alexandria paid significant sums to ransom Christian captives.[53] Zacharias concludes his letter with a warning and an exhortation. Compassion is not realised only with money, and going further he is asking his community to share vicariously in the sufferings of their captive brothers by mortifications, praying and fasting. With this dramatic plea Zacharias aligns himself with previous Christian pastors who, impelled by and amidst crises, seized the opportunity to articulate 'the emotional structure of a perfect society, one in-which no personal suffering could be tolerated by wider society and each individual was held in the comforting embrace of the church.'[54]

In guiding his flock on how to feel about one another and their wider current circumstances and by prescribing compassion, love of one's neighbour, repentance and fear of the imminent Final Judgement, Zacharias is setting emotional norms with rewards (Paradise) and sanctions (Hell) according to clear emotional expectations, educating and structuring their sensibility in relation to their daily lives and helping them to come to terms with the aftermath of a big crisis.

SOPHRONIUS OF JERUSALEM

Like Zacharias, Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem who succeeded Zacharias, in his sermons and his Anacreontic poems, lamented the fall of Jerusalem with literary sophistication and skill, beseeching God for the punishment of the Persians.[55] In the process of doing so, he seeks to interpret, manage and improve the emotions of his emotional community. Appealing to a vindictive notion of justice, Sophronius seeks to

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52. André Binggeli, 'Anastase le Sinaïte: Récits sur le Sinaï et Récits utiles à l'âme: édition, traduction, commentaire', 2 vols. (Ph.D. Diss. University of Paris, 2001), II, 21, vol. I, p. 566.

53. Hippolyte Delehaye, 'Une vie inédite de saint Jean l'Aumônier', *AB* 45 (1927), pp. 5-74, at p. 23. Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine*, p. 40.

54. Toner, *Roman Disasters*, p. 166.

55. For analysis, see Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 226-32; Bruno Lavagnini, 'Sofronio: compianto per Gerusalemme occupata dai Persiani (614)', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, NS. 33 (1979), pp. 3-7, offers an Italian translation. On Sophronius' reaction to the Muslim conquest, see also David Olster, *Roman Defeat, Christian Response, and the Literary Construction of the Jew*, pp. 99-115 and, more recently, Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley CA, 2014), pp. 241-50.

comfort, console and reassure his flock by keeping alive the hope of seeing their conquerors and persecutors finally vanquished and humiliated: 'Christ may you see to it that Persia is soon seen burning in revenge for the holy places' and 'Christ may you subdue the ill-starred children of God-hating Persia by the hands of the Christians.'[56] The same emotion of vindictive justice is cultivated in the context of an homily *on the Nativity* delivered at the Church of Theotokos on Christmas Day of 634 and, while Muslims had surrounded but not yet conquered Jerusalem, Sophronius used the fall of Jerusalem as an opportunity to exhort his audience to break with the failings of the past and reform:

> If we shall do this [Christ's will] ... having true and orthodox faith we will blunt the Ishmaelite sword, turn away the Saracen knife, and break the Arab bow; then in no short time we shall see the heavenly Jerusalem and behold the miracles in it and look upon the thaumaturge Christ himself ... therefore I summon, urge you and beseech you to desire for Christ God, so that whatever our power, we may reform ourselves and take pride in repentance, and in that atonement purify and curb the flow of deeds that are hateful to God. For if we live thus, as dear and pleasant to God, we may laugh at the fall of the Saracens who oppose us, soon make their ruin feeble, and know their final destruction. For their blood-loving swords will enter into their own hearts, their bow will be shattered (Ps. 37:15), and their weapons will ensnare them, and they will provide for us a way free from fears.[57]

Elsewhere in his *Homily on Holy Baptism*, a digression that could well have been lifted from an apocalypse draws a direct link between the evils that befell his congregation and their sinful behaviour that brought about Jesus's displeasure and wrath. His rhetoric escalates when recounting the catastrophic events in an effort to make them feel more deeply the extent of the community's suffering and loss and to stir them into sombre contemplation of their sins:

> But the present circumstances are forcing me to think differently about our way of life, for why are [so many] wars being fought among us? Why do barbarian raids abound? Why are the troops of the Saracens attacking us? Why has there been so much destruction and plunder? Why are there incessant outpourings of blood? Why are the birds of the sky devouring human bodies? Why have churches been pulled down? Why is the cross mocked? Why is Christ, who is the dispenser of all good things and the

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56. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Anacreontics*, 14.73–74, 14.91–92 (ed. M. Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica* [Rome, 1957], pp. 102–107). See Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 226–31 and Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, pp. 98–99.

57. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *On the Nativity*, 3, p. 508 in Hermann Usener, 'Weihnachtspredigt des Sophronios', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 41 (1886), pp. 500–16.

provider of this joyousness of ours, blasphemed by pagan mouths so that he justly cries out to us: 'Because of you my name is blasphemed among the pagans' and this is the worst of all the terrible things that are happening to us.

Proceeding from Mark 24:15 he points out that, by occupying Jerusalem, Muslims have fulfilled Christ's prophecy that one day the abomination of desolation would stand in the Holy Place:

That is why the vengeful and God-hating Saracens, the abomination of desolation clearly foretold to us by the prophets, overrun the places which are not allowed to them, plunder cities, devastate fields, burn down villages, set on fire the holy churches, overturn the sacred monasteries, oppose the Byzantine armies arrayed against them, and in fighting raise up the trophies [of war] and add victory to victory. Moreover, they are raised up [κατεπαίρονται] more and more against us and increase their blasphemy of Christ and the church, and utter wicked blasphemies against God. These God-fighters boast of prevailing over all, assiduously and unrestrainably imitating their leader, who is the devil, and emulating his vanity [τύφον] because of which he has been expelled from heaven and been assigned to the gloomy shades. *Yet those vile ones would not have accomplished this nor seized such a degree of power as to do and utter lawlessly all these things unless we had first insulted the gift [of baptism] and first defiled the purification, and in this way grieved [λελυπήκαμεν] Christ, the giver of gifts, and prompted him to be angry with us, good though he is and though he takes no pleasure in evil, being the fount of kindness and not wishing to behold the ruin and destruction of men. We are ourselves, in truth, responsible for all* these things and no word will be found for our defence. What word or place will be given us for defence when we have taken all these gifts from him, befouled them and defiled everything with our vile actions?[58]

Throughout the homily Sophronius uses the language of pollution and defilement in order to highlight the causes of their current plight. At issue here is that pollution from sin altered the relationship of sacred trust that God has with His people.[59] Thus, Christ's wrath manifests itself for the sake of justice and mercy and for the conversion to pious feelings. For this *topos* to work, however, there is the hope, if not the certainty, that if Christians mend their ways and repent God will spare his

58. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *On Holy Baptism*, 166–67, in Παπαδόπουλος-Κεραμεύς, Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1879, repr. Brussels, 1963). Transl. by R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: a Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton NJ, 1997), pp. 72-73.

59. On the use of the language of pollution to describe the Muslim conquests during the Crusades, see Penny J. Cole, "'O God the Heathen Have Come to Your Inheritance' Ps. 78:1. The Theme of Religious Pollution in Crusade Documents, 1095-1188', in Maya Schatzmiller (ed.), *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria* (Leiden, 1993), pp. 84-111.

creatures. As a result of this, the future offers a beacon of hope and a guide for enduring through tribulation. On this note, Sophronius concludes his homily.

CONCLUSION

Visions of the end are never allowed to slip from view in non-apocalyptic texts even as they are given different degrees of focus, allowing us to glimpse the muted landscape of Christian communities in troubled times. Unlike some contemporary apocalyptic texts, the authors of contemporary collections of questions and answers, homilies and encyclical letters clearly do not envision the return of the king of the Greeks who will restore the kingdom to its former glory.[60] And hypostatised notions of evil as the figure of the Antichrist or the devil, which are sporadically present, do not figure as prominently as in other contemporary apocalyptic works. However, like apocalyptic texts, these *erotapokriseis*, homilies and letters work only when, or precisely because, they engage social *mores*; like contemporary apocalyptic literature, fear, despair, anger and hope for retribution and deliverance appear in contemporary *erotapokriseis*, letters and homilies. Through these texts, which gave fuller voice to the concerns of their audiences, it is possible to see the sort of emotions that were specific to these communities and the ways in which, in the process of addressing and managing their communities, Christian pastors sought to inculcate emotional norms by encouraging, prescribing and authorising specific emotions while discouraging others, developing at the same time patterns of feeling and relating that shaped both the personal and collective life of their communities.

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60. On this apocalyptic scenario, see more recently Lutz Greisiger, *Messias - Endkaiser - Antichrist: Politische Apokalyptik unter Juden und Christen des Nahen Ostens am Vorabend der arabischen Eroberung* (Orientalia Biblica Et Christiana 21; Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 183–286.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION AS AN ANTIDOTE TO APOCALYPTIC EXPECTATIONS: ORIGENISM IN THE SERVICE OF JUSTINIAN'S RELIGIOUS POLITICS

Istvan Perczel

1. Introduction: The Questions and Answers of Pseudo-Caesarius: a Work by Theodore of Caesarea, Justinian's Advisor and the Leader of the Isochrist Origenists

In two previous studies – 'Finding a Place for the *Erotapokriseis* of Pseudo-Caesarius: A New Document of Sixth-century Palestinian Origenism' and 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople: Theodore of Caesarea at the court of Justinian' – I investigated the milieu of provenance, the doctrinal background and the authorship of the *Questions and Answers* (=QA) attributed to Caesarius, the brother of Gregory of Nazianzus.[1] Also, I came to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the work's seemingly anti-Origenist stance, it was written by a member of the sixth-century movement deemed 'Origenist'. Also, in an attempt at identifying the author of the work, I came to the conclusion that, once the elements we have had about the author even before are combined to these recognitions, we obtain a clear phantom image of the author, which perfectly coincides with the figure of Theodore, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, nick-named 'the Wine-sack' (*Askidas*). This Theodore was the main advisor of Justinian in religious affairs during the period between 536 and 553; also, according to Cyril of Scythopolis, he was one of the leaders of the 'Isochrist Origenist' party. The *Isochrists* constituted one faction of the 'Origenists' so-called, which was accused by its opponents – that is, both the anti-Origenist Sabaite monks and their fellow-Origenist *Protoktist* monks of Firminus' Lavra – of professing the doctrine that, in the final Restoration of all the

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1. These were 'Finding a Place for the *Erotapokriseis* of Pseudo-Caesarius: A New Document of Sixth-century Palestinian Origenism', in *Palestinian Christianity: Pilgrimages and Shrines, ARAM Periodical* 18–19 (2006–2007), pp. 49–83, and 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople: Theodore of Caesarea at the court of Justinian', in H. Amirav and F. Celia (eds.), *New Themes, New Styles in the Eastern Mediterranean (5th–8th Centuries): Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Encounters* (LAHR 16; Leuven, 2017), pp. 137–71. This essay owes much to Roger Scott, who kindly read and commented upon a previous version of it.

rational beings to the original bliss, there will be no difference between Christ and the divinised saints: all of them will be equal to Christ.[2]

If the hypothesis that Theodore of Caesarea is the real author of the Pseudo-Caesarian *Questions and Answers*, is correct, this means that, in principle, this piece of writing should contain the 'Isochrist Origenist' doctrine. Given the historical context, which I tried to outline in the previous study,[3] even if this doctrine is expressed, it can only be found in a hidden manner, so that it would not be manifest for a superficial reader but would be clearly indicated, even exposed, for those initiated. In other words, it would be *encoded* in seemingly innocent, or even striking but at the face value incomprehensible, passages. Now, if there is an *encoding*, there should also be a *decoding*, revealing the original intention and thought of the author. However, a decoding endeavour is always risky: one might risk at the end not to find what there is in reality but what one wishes to see. For avoiding such an illusion, at the end of the previous study I formulated six general methodological principles that should guide, at least in the form of a methodological working hypothesis, the decoding endeavour. These I called the *principles of intentionality, of individual coherence, of respect, of the existence of encoded languages, of symmetry*, and *of efficiency*.[4]

Now, trying not only to apply but also to refine these methodological principles, I will scrutinise what Pseudo-Caesarius teaches about the final end of mankind and see whether this corresponds in one manner or another to what we know, from the anti-Origenist sources, about the *Isochrist* doctrine. However, here one should formulate a strong methodological *caveat*. While we have almost no other method to establish the presence or absence of the *Isochrist* doctrines in the *Questions and Answers* of Pseudo-Caesarius, than a comparison to the testimonies of the anti-Origenist documents and, given the prominent role of Origen and Evagrius in the anti-Origenist condemnations, to metaphysical passages of these two theologians, one cannot take it for granted that the doctrines thus discovered would perfectly correspond to those condemned as 'Isochrist Origenism'. In fact, in the case of anti-heretical condemnations, there are all the chances that some distortion happened. Yet, this methodological difficulty also implies the greatest promise of the

2. On this issue, see Perczel, 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople', §4, pp. 147–56.

3. Perczel, 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople', §4, pp. 147–56.

4. Perczel, 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople', §6, pp. 168–71.

inquiry at hand. If it is true that, with the Pseudo-Caesarian *Questions and Answers*, we are keeping in our hands the *grande œuvre* of the most prominent representative of the *Isochrist* doctrines, then, their decoding promises to provide us with the understanding of what these doctrines were according to the intentionality and comprehension of their authors, as over against the intentionality and comprehension of their detractors. It goes without saying that, for disentangling such a difficult but promising problem, one will have to make a necessarily complicated attempt, presupposing much background knowledge in early Christian exegesis and philosophico-theological speculation, all of which is sophisticated enough even when not encoded. So, I must ask my readers to follow the argument patiently.

2. THE 'RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS' ACCORDING TO THE ANTI-ORIGENIST DOCUMENTS

According to the anti-Origenist documents, the *'Isochrist* Origenists' taught that there was originally a unique created substance, called *henad*, which comprised all the rational beings in an equal state, one of them being Christ, who obtained this status of being the Anointed by remaining unshaken in the initial 'movement' (κίνησις) or 'perturbation' (κλόνος) that shook and broke into pieces the original unity. Also, according to this doctrine, there will be a final Restoration to the original *henad*, in which every rational being, including those who are now in the demoniac state equalling damnation, would attain the same status, so that there would be no difference between the minds, all of them having become Christ-like, or even Christs.

Examples for this alleged doctrine are the following two anathemas from 553 AD, condemning this teaching, an earlier anathema from 552, namely from the confession of faith of a 'repentant Origenist', Theodore, bishop of Scythopolis in Palestina Secunda,[5] as well as an apophthegm of Theodore of Caesarea, recorded in the (now lost) acts of the same council of 553, which epitomise the subject of the present essay.

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5. On Theodore of Scythopolis being a nominee of Theodore of Caesarea see Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Saint Sabas* in E. Schwartz (ed.), *Kyrillos von Skythopolis* (TU 49,2; Leipzig, 1939), pp. 197,4-198,6, treated together with its Syriac translation in Mt. Sinai New Finds MS M11N, in Perczel, 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople', pp. 150–56.

Anathema 12:

> If one says that the celestial virtues, all human persons, the Devil and the
> spiritual forces of evil *will be united to God the Word just like the Intellect*
> *whom they call Christ*, who is in the form of God but has emptied himself
> as they say, and that the Kingdom of Christ will have an end, let such a
> person be anathema![6]

Anathema 13:

> If one says that Christ *will not have any difference from any one of the*
> *rational beings either in his substance, or in his virtue, or in his activity*, but
> all will be at the right hand of God, just as they had been in their legendary
> pre-existence, let such a person be anathema![7]

Anathema 11 of Theodore of Scythopolis:

> If one says or thinks or teaches that we will become equal to our Saviour,
> Christ our God, who was born from the holy Mother of God and Virgin
> Mary, and that God the Word will become united to us as to the ensouled
> flesh born from Mary, *according to substance and hypostasis*, let such a
> person be anathema![8]

A fragment from the Fifth Chapter of the (lost) Origenist florilegium of
the Acts of the fifth ecumenical council:

> Theodore the Wine-sack, the Cappadocian, said: 'If now the Apostles and
> the Martyrs make miracles and are in so great honour, then, *if in the Res-*
> *toration they were not to become equal to Christ*, what kind of Restoration
> would it be for them?'[9]

In the previous study, I have mentioned that I am inclined to consider
the mythical elements mirrored in the condemnatory texts as fragments
of a coherent philosophical myth of the Platonist type, which should not

6. *ACO* IV,1, p. 249: Εἴ τις λέγει, ὅτι ἑνοῦνται τῷ θεῷ λόγῳ οὕτως ἀπαραλλάκτως αἵ
τε ἐπουράνιαι δυνάμεις καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ ὁ διάβολος καὶ τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς
πονηρίας, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ νοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος παρ' αὐτῶν Χριστὸς καὶ ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
καὶ κενώσας, ὥς φασιν, ἑαυτόν, καὶ πέρας ἔσεσθαι τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀνάθεμα
ἔστω.

7. *ACO* IV,1: Εἴ τις λέγει, ὡς οὐδὲ μίαν παντελῶς ἕξει ὁ Χριστὸς πρὸς οὐδὲ ἓν τῶν
λογικῶν διαφοράν, οὐδὲ τῇ οὐσίᾳ οὐδὲ τῇ γνώσει οὐδὲ τῇ ἐφ' ἅπαντα δυνάμει ἢ ἐνεργείᾳ.
ἀλλὰ πάντες ἐκ δεξιῶν ἔσονται τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ ὁ παρ' αὐτοῖς Χριστός, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῇ
παρ' αὐτῶν μυθευομένῃ προϋπάρξει ἐτύγχανον, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

8. *Theodori Scythopolitani libellus de erroribus Origenianis*, PG 86/1, 236 A: Εἴ τις
λέγει, ἢ φρονεῖ, ἢ διδάσκει ἐξισοῦσθαι ἡμᾶς τῷ Σωτῆρι ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ
τεχθέντι ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀεὶ παρθένου Μαρίας, καὶ μέλλειν καὶ ἡμῖν ἑνοῦσθαι
τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον, ὡς τῇ ἐκ Μαρίας προσληφθείσῃ ἐμψυχωμένῃ σαρκὶ κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ καθ'
ὑπόστασιν· ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

9. Evagrius Scholasticus, *Church History*, IV, 38, 189, 17-26.

be taken at face value, nor overwrite the Biblical story of Creation, Fall and Redemption. Rather, they intend to serve as a Platonist philosophical interpretation of the Biblical story, elaborated in a contest of philosophico-religious apology against other movements using the tool of the philosophical myth, namely Gnosticism and Manichaeism.[10] For the philosophico-theological nature of the doctrine condemned in the anathemas it is indeed interesting to see, on the one hand, the emphasis on the Aristotelian triad substance-virtue-activity (*ousia-dynamis-energeia*) in Anathema 13 of the council of 553 as well as, on the other hand, in Theodore of Scythopolis' Anathema 11 the idea that in the final Restoration (*apocatastasis*) God the Word will become united to everybody according to substance and hypostasis, which will result in an equality with Christ of all the rational beings. In both cases the equality is postulated according to the properties of the category of substance in Aristotle's *Categories*, stating that substance does not permit 'more or less' and thus any quantitative difference,[11] and that substance is always the same and one in number.[12] Therefore, there can only be one union according to substance, which, when obtained, confers equality on all those who have obtained it. The enigmatic and scandalous apophthegm of Theodore, condemned at the anti-Origenist session of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, receives its philosophical justification from these underlying considerations.

Pseudo-Caesarius treats the question of the final restoration within an acrimonious polemic against the Jews, whose condemnation and punishment by the Christian emperor he wants to obtain. In the last paragraphs of the last *Question and Answer*, Pseudo-Caesarius, speaking in the person of the Christian Church, formulates the political aim of the entire treatise as follows:[13]

> Oh, adulterous synagogue of the Jews! After so many benefaction, you crucified the Benefactor, you nailed to a wood the one Who redeemed you

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10. On this, in more detail, see I. Perczel, 'A Philosophical Myth in the Service of Religious Apologetics: Manichees and Origenists in the Sixth Century', in Yosset Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (eds.), *Religious Apologetics Philosophical Argumentation* (Tübingen, 2004), pp. 205–36. See also the critical reply of Karl Pinggéra, 'Die Bildwelt im ,Buch des heiligen Hierotheos' – Ein philosophischer Mythos?', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Mystik-Metapher-Bild: Beiträge des VII. Makarios-Symposiums, Göttingen 2007* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 29–42.

11. Aristotle, *Cat.* 3b 33–36 [Bekker]: Δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ οὐσία οὐκ ἐπιδέχεσθαι τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἧττον ...

12. Aristotle, *Cat.* 4a 10–11: Μάλιστα δὲ ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸ ταὐτὸν καὶ ἓν ἀριθμῷ ὄν ...

13. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 218, 875–907 (pp. 230–31, ed. Rudolf Riedinger, Pseudo-Kaisarios, *Die Erotapokriseis* [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller:

from them [your enemies]. You ignored the Word bearing flesh, you, who were taught about Him since your childhood and who reneged on Him as if you had been uneducated! Given that even the Law rejected you because you had killed Christ unlawfully, I am bringing to you His letter of divorce, which proclaims to all the peoples your rejection, as he shouts to you through the admirable Hosea: *She is not my wife, neither am I her husband!* (Hos. 2:2)

> So, stop, you adulteress, to claim the dowry,
> whose Bridegroom is mine, that is, of the Church from the nations![14]
> Stop, you who have lived with the Law
> but madly attacked the Lawgiver,
> who were reading the Prophets
> but killed the one about Whom they prophesied!
> Stop using the Testament
> of which I am the heiress!
> For the New abolishes the Old [Testament]
> the Gospel abolishes the Law (2 Cor. 3:11–14).[15]

For the Lord of both [Testaments] says: *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given*, not to any one of the twelve tribes of Israel, but *to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof* (Matt. 21:43); and again, to the adulteress: *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!* (Matt. 23:38) And to the Church, He says: *I will dwell in you, and walk in you; and I will be your God and you shall be my people.*[16]

You were an oyster, having in yourself the imperial *Pearl*,[17] which was taken from you so that you became a wretched and despicable devil. You were a pregnant woman under condemnation, who is punished after the childbirth. This is what the laws also teach us, as they punish the guilty women after the foetus is born.[18] For until the divine manifestation of Christ, the Law preserved the woman who was bearing the prophecies about Him. However, now, that He has come out from the pure womb, the Emperor who is worshipping Him justly punishes you and subjects you to slavery. It is this that Micah shows when he shouts: *Therefore, will He give*

Berlin, 1989]).

14. According to Justinian's legislation, if the woman committed adultery, the husband had the right to keep the dowry given by the woman's family at the wedding. See Justinian, *Nov. 22*, ed. R. Schöll and W. Kroll, vol. 3, p. 156. The allegory here is clear: the first wife were the Jews who possessed the Old Testament as a 'dowry'. As a result of their behaviour, God, their 'husband', gave the 'dowry'to another 'bride', being the Church.

15. This part is a verse in five two-lined stanzas, in a specific meter and rhyming at the end of the verses, which makes its impact more powerful.

16. The citation is from 2 Cor. 6:16, modified according to its sources in Lev. 26:11 and Ezek. 37:27, following the text of the Septuagint.

17. See Matt. 13:45–46.

18. I was not able to find the source of this law, which should also belong to Justinian's legislation. The editor's, Riedinger's, note *ad locum*, referring to Luke 2:22-24, is misleading.

them up, until the time that she which travaileth, hath brought forth (Mic. 5:3), so that, if God had not been awaiting the birth of the one Who was born according to us for our sake and your final awakening and cure, which you, ungrateful and unthankful people, who are studying the Law in vain, have not chosen up to now, you would have been annihilated since long.[19] Yet, even now, He allowed time for repentance, giving you the chance to change to the better and to believe and confess that Jesus Christ is not a mortal man but *true God and eternal Life* (1 John 5:20), as the lofty Evangelist John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, who came from among you, says in his letters.

If indeed this passage should be attributed to Theodore of Caesarea, as I believe the case to be, it seems to have been written as an exordium to Justinian's anti-Jewish legislation, which culminated in *Novella* 146 *On the Hebrews*. This *Novella* was promulgated on 8 February 553, when Theodore was at the zenith of his power. It is presented as a benign law, responding to the requests of the emperor's Jewish subjects, who wanted to have the permission to read the Hebrew Scripture in the vernacular, of which the emperor approves with the expectation that this would lead the Jews to convert individually to Christianity. At the same time, the legislator also out-ruled the Rabbinic exegesis of the Law and the Prophets. This piece of legislation can be considered as the very first forceful intervention of a Christian legislator into the life of the Jewish community, with the aim of destroying it.[20] In a similar vein, the *summa theologica* of the Pseudo-Caesarean *Questions and Answers* seems to aim at providing a theological justification to this intervention. Central to this propaganda was the refutation of the traditional view, based on a Pauline teaching, regarding the eschatological role of the Jewish people. If Paul and his Christian exegetes taught that at the end of the times the entire people of Israel would recognize Christ and obtain salvation,[21] Pseudo-Caesarius/Theodore of Caesarea maintained that the Pauline teaching was to be interpreted allegorically, as referring to the *apocatastatic* state of all humanity and not to the Jewish people, and that the Jews as a people had no share in salvation.

19. Here I have changed the editor's punctuation, which resulted in a sentence without predicate.

20. The intricate intertextual relationship between Novella 146 and the *Questions and Answers* of Pseudo-Caesarius, as well as a more exhaustive treatment of Pseudo-Caesarius' anti-Jewish polemic should be the subject of a separate publication.

21. See Rom. 11:11–16. The most prominent exponent of the doctrine of the salvation of the entire Jewish people at the end of history is St John Chrysostom in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, PG 60, 585–87.

In propagating this idea, Theodore must have responded to popular views, since the Justinianic era was filled with eschatological expectations: while the end of the times was awaited by many, Roman aristocrats, such as Procopius and John Lydus, seem to have considered Justinian as the Antichrist or a precursor of the Antichrist. At the same time, the imperial propaganda, as witnessed by John Malalas and Cosmas Indicopleustes, seems to have maintained that no imminent end was to be expected; that the year 6,000 from the creation, for which the end of the times had been expected, had already passed and coincided with the lifetime of Christ, which inaugurated Christ's millennial rule; that Justinian was, in fact, the guardian of a Christian Roman empire, which was destined to last until the second coming, for another 500 years.[22] Again, Pseudo-Caesarius' argument that the final conversion of the Jews as a people was not to be expected, seems to be closely connected to this propaganda. Yet, at the same time, the theological underpinning of this view, though cryptic, is foreshadowing the imminent condemnation, carried out by the same Justinian, of the theological and spiritual movement, to which Pseudo-Caesarius/Theodore of Caesarea apparently belonged.

3. QA 217 AND 126: 'THE MIND SEEING GOD' AND THE PLENITUDE OF THE NATIONS

3.1. Denying the Salvation of the Jews in Favour of Universal Salvation

One of the theses, using which Pseudo-Caesarius argues against the eschatological salvation of the Jews as a people, is taken directly from the allegorical exegesis of Origen, whom he otherwise disparages throughout the whole work. According to this argument, the words of Paul: 'when

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22. On these expectations and Justinian's propaganda, see Roger Scott, 'Malalas, The Secret History, and Justinian's Propaganda', *DOP* 39 (1985), pp. 99–109, reprinted in R. Scott, *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century* (Variorum collected studies series, CS 1004; Farnham–Burlington VT, 2012), text no. IX. See also, more recently and in greater detail, R. Scott, 'Justinian's New Age and the Second Coming', in ibid., no. XIX, and the extensive literature cited there. Yet, Scott proposes that Justinian's propaganda presented him as the emperor preparing the imminent Second Coming. It seems to me that a combined analysis of Malalas, Cosmas and Pseudo-Caesarius suggests a different interpretation of the number of years that had passed since the creation: according to the imperial propaganda reflected in these texts, the Christian Roman empire already belongs to the thousand-year reign of Christ prophesied in Rev. 20. I am enormously grateful to Roger Scott for drawing my attention to these issues that remain the subject of an ongoing friendly debate between us.

the plenitude of the Nations will enter, then the whole Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:25–26) do not mean[23]:

[t]hat the Jews will be saved and called back at the end of time, but that those who in the purity of their mind and in faith see God; for this is the interpretation of the word Israel: 'the Mind that sees God' (νοῦς ὁρῶν θεόν), which is generally accepted, even by the Jews. *For not all those who are from Israel are Israel; nor, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called* (Gen. 21:12). *That is, the children of God are not those who are the children of the flesh* – says the same Apostle (Rom. 9:6–8). And again: the Lord says in the gospels: *for many be called*, that is, the Israelites and the Christians, *but few chosen* (Matt. 20:16) that is, those who are being saved. Thus, when the plenitude of the Nations, that is, the Church comprehending all the people[s] (ἡ πάνδημος ἐκκλησία), will enter, that is, to the judgment, then the whole Israel, that is, 'the Mind that sees God', which means all mortal men who, through faith and piety, possess the knowledge of God, will be saved.

Far from being generally accepted, this interpretation of the name Israel comes from Origen (see for example, *Frgm. in Lucam*, 66g, 3–4). Of course, it is also true that the same interpretation can be found in other authors as well, who followed in the footsteps of Origen, such as in St Antony's *Letters*[24] and in St John Climacus' *Ladder*.[25] The claim that the Jews themselves also accept this interpretation may refer to Philo, who several times explains Israel as meaning 'the one who sees God'. However, for Philo, this is not so much the mind (*nous*) but rather the soul, whose vision of God depends on the activity of the mind, sometimes allegorically represented by Moses, the leader of the people.[26] The text plays on the ambiguity of the word *pas*, 'all', standing with the singular. In this sense πᾶς βροτὸς διὰ πίστεως καὶ εὐσεβείας γνῶσιν ἔχων θεοῦ may either mean 'all those mortals who know God' in contradistinction to those who do not, or the 'entire humanity', which, by then, will be a single 'Mind seeing God'.

That the second reading proposed here is indeed what was meant by the author becomes clear if we compare this text to another eschatological passage in the same work. In fact, *one of Pseudo-Caesarius' encoding*

23. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 217, 7–29 (p. 200). I have treated this passage in 'Finding a Place for the Erotapokriseis of Pseudo-Caesarius'. Here I am giving a more detailed analysis, including a number of new findings.

24. Saint Antony, *Letter Three*, English translation in S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis, 1995), p. 206.

25. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, ch. 26 (ap. 25), PG 88, 1021A; in the edition of Sophronios the Hermit (Constantinople, 1883, reissued Athens, 1979), p. 128/b.

26. Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, 3, 186; 212; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 134; *De posteritate Caini*, 63; 92 etc.

methods is to use duplicates, that is, to expose the same idea at two different places of his work, but giving different data at the two occasions, so that none of them is complete, nor comprehensible, but the whole doctrine can only be reconstructed if we put the two halves together. In some exceptional cases, we can even speak about triplicates. This, apparently, is a powerful hiding technique, already practiced to a certain degree by Evagrius, but developed to perfection by 'Caesarius' and other fifth- and sixth-century Origenist writers. Recognising this technique gives us a clue for understanding the original meaning of the fragmented texts. *In general, we may state that the recognition of any hiding technique gives a method for deciphering these texts.* This is an application of the *principle of symmetry.* As to the method at hand, I would call it the *method of the duplicates.*

So, the duplicate of QA 217 is QA 126, where Pseudo-Caesarius explains another Pauline passage, namely, 1 Cor. 15:28:

> *126 Question:* How does the Apostle say that He [Christ] will be subjected to the Father, that is, as to someone greater than Him? For he says: *when He* [the Father] *will subject all things to Him* [that is, to the Son], *then will the Son Himself also be subjected unto the One who has subjected all things to Him* (1 Cor. 15:28).

'Caesarius'' explanation is the following:

> *126 Answer:* We have to scrutinise here the lofty preacher himself [that is, Paul] who, in this passage, speaks in a more fleshly manner to those who are more childlike and *have not yet exercised the senses* of the soul *for the discrimination* (Heb. 5:14) of the higher teachings. For he says: *all of you who have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ* (Gal. 3:27), who are the multitude of the Church wearing Christ, so that now the Nations are subject to Him through the faith, in a way that the Church has not yet received the complete subjection of the Nations. For *the plenitude of the Nations* has not yet *entered* (Rom. 11:25) but every day the community receives the subjection by the addition of new believers, as if Christ were the one who receives. But when the *plenitude of the Nations* will have *entered* and the Church, which is *Christ according to the flesh* (Rom. 9:5), will have received the complete and faultless subjection, then she [that is, the Church] with all her hosts will be subjected to the One who, as if to Christ himself *according to the flesh, has subjected all things* to her (τότε καὶ αὐτὴ πανστρατιᾷ ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῇ ... τὰ πάντα, Rom. 11:25, 1 Cor. 15:28).

In the above explanation, Pseudo-Caesarius combines 1 Cor. 15:28 precisely with Rom. 11:25–26, which he is going to explain in QA 217, and identifies the Christ who will be subjected to God to 'Christ according to the flesh', that is to the human nature of Christ, identical with the

Church, which is not complete until 'the fullness of the nations will enter' (Rom. 11:25), so that the Church, that is, 'Christ according to the flesh', will be complete. Then, with all her hosts (πανστρατιᾷ – let us remember here the πάνδημος ἐκκλησία in QA 217) she will subject herself to Christ God. Finally, in the continuation of the text not cited here, 'Caesarius' combines the aforementioned two Pauline passages with a third one, Phil. 3:21, according to which Christ 'will transform the body of our humility, so that it becomes similar to the body of His glory according to the activity of His power, through which He is able to subject all things to Himself' (τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι ἑαυτῷ τὰ πάντα). This latter citation serves to prove that, in His divine nature, Christ does not become subjected, but rather receives the subjection of all things, while He Himself also becomes subjected, together with all things, in His human nature identified with the Church. Finally, the last verse of St Paul that 'Caesarius' quotes here is 2 Cor. 5,19, which says: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself' (κόσμον ἑαυτῷ καταλλάσσων), manifestly identifying the act of subjecting (ὑποτάξαι) with that of reconciling (καταλλάσσειν). With these combined interpretations of St Paul in the twin passages, we receive the following series of identifications: Christ according to the flesh (that is, the human nature of Christ) = the Church = all things (meaning the rational creature) = the world (meaning, once again, the rational creature). This entity seems to consist of two elements: the first is Israel = the Mind who sees God = all mortal man (who, through faith and piety, possesses the knowledge of God). To this, one should add the second element which is the Nations (unless we identify Israel with the Nations, though this possibility seems unlikely). All this makes sense only if one understands the Pauline expression of the Church being the body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) in an ontological, not merely allegorical, sense: the Church is the ontological 'body' of Christ, in which His divinity is 'incorporated', that is, the plenitude of the rational creature filled and transfigured by the full presence of Christ's divinity, the divine Word.

Thus, the two passages, that is, QA 217 and QA 126, if studied and interpreted together, give a coherent doctrine, which cannot clearly be deduced from either one of them. This is far from being a unique case, but rather is one of 'Caesarius'' standard writing techniques, by which he simultaneously conceals and reveals the real meaning of his teaching. And it seems to me that the two complementary passages speak about one unique thing: the final Restoration of all the rational beings, including those damned.

3.2. 'Caesarius' Reinterpreting Evagrius' Teaching on the 'Restoration of All Things'

The whole intricate and concealed doctrinal development here seems to be founded on a series taken from the *Chapters on Knowledge* (=KG) of Evagrius of Pontus, this series giving a more direct key for the interpretation of the passage than a mere intertextual analysis of the two corresponding passages of the *Questions and Answers*, which I have given in the previous section.

In fact, Evagrius many times elaborated an ontological interpretation of the symbolism of the 'body',[27] but perhaps never as completely as in the following:

> 1. KG II.5. The Flesh of the one Who Is, is the Contemplation of the Beings, whereas the Soul of the one Who Is, is the Knowledge of the Unity. So the one Who knows the Soul is called the soul of the one Who Is, whereas those who know the Flesh are called the flesh of this soul.[28]

As far as I am able to understand this enigmatic passage, its meaning is the following: the 'one Who Is' is the Father; his 'Flesh', the 'Contemplation of the Beings', is the Holy Spirit, while the divine Word is called here the 'Knowledge of the Unity' and, allegorically, the 'Soul' of the 'one Who Is', that is, of God the Father, called the Unity and conceived as assuming the role of the 'Mind' in the Trinity, allegorically described here by the three components of the human being: mind, soul and flesh.[29] Now 'the one Who knows the Soul' is the rational being who knows

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27. See for example the eleven chapters recently discovered by Basile Markesinis in the codex *Vaticanus Graecus 504*, published by him in 'Evagriana dans le *Vaticanus Graecus 504* et ailleurs', in B. Janssens, B. Roosen and P. Van Deun (eds.), *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret for his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Leuven–Paris–Dudley MA, 2004), pp. 415–34, here 417–18, which treat the symbolism of the different members of Christ's body.

28. Here and in what follows I am translating Evagrius' chapters from the Syriac, according to the edition of A. Guillaumont, *Les six centuries des "Kephalaia Gnostica"* *d'Évagre le Pontique* (PO 28,1; Paris 1958). I indicate whenever the meaning of my translation differs from Guillaumont's French translation.

29. I have tried to reconstruct Evagrius' basic metaphysical doctrine in two studies, the second correcting the errors that found their way into the first: 'Une théologie de la lumière: Denys l'Aréopagite et Évagre le Pontique', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 45/1 (1999), pp. 79–120 and 'Notes sur la pensée systématique d'Évagre le Pontique', in Mario Girardi and Marcello Marin (eds.), *Origene e l'alessandrinismo cappadoce (III–IV secolo): Atti del V Convegno del Gruppo Italiano di ricerca su «Origene e la tradizione alessandrina» (Bari, 20–22 settembre 2000)* (Bari 2002), pp. 277–97. After the publication of these studies, Basile Markesinis found new, lost fragments of Evagrius, which confirm my reconstruction: B. Markesinis, 'Evagriana dans le *Vaticanus Graecus 504* et ailleurs'; see the eleven fragments on pp. 417–18 and their interpretation on pp. 420–26.

the Knowledge of the Unity, that is, the one who knows the Word; the subject here is in the singular because, as Evagrius often emphasises, in the present fallen state of the rational beings the only such rational being or mind is Christ;[30] thus He is called the 'soul of the one Who Is', which is to be understood in the following way: Christ is called, through a transfer of the names, the Word of God the Father, although ontologically He is different. However, He is called so in a figurative sense (καταχρηστικῶς), not in the proper sense (κυρίως).[31] Finally, those who know the Flesh, that is, the Contemplation of the Beings, are the rational beings who are filled with the Holy Spirit and contemplate the beings without being in unity with God the Word (that is, the Knowledge of the Unity). They are called the flesh of this soul, that is, of Christ being in union with the Word: that is to say, they are called 'the body of Christ,' that is, indirectly, the Church.

30. See Evagrius of Pontus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, III.2: 'Christ is the one in whom uniquely is present the Unity and who has received the judgment over the rational beings'; *Chapters on Knowledge*, III.3: 'the Unity is what now is uniquely known by Christ, whose knowledge is substantial'; *Chapters on Knowledge*, IV.21: 'the unction means either the Knowledge of the Unity or it indicates the Contemplation of the Beings; and if Christ 'is anointed above His fellows' (Ps. 44 [45]:8), it is clear that He has been anointed by the Knowledge of the Unity ...'

31. See Evagrius of Pontus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, IV.18: 'The intelligible unction is the spiritual Knowledge of the Holy Unity, while the Anointed (that is, Christ) is the one who is united to this Knowledge; and if it is so, the Word is not the Anointed (Christ) in the proper sense (*qadmāiṯ*: κυρίως), just as the one who has been anointed is not God in the proper sense, but this [that is, the Word] is Anointed because of that [Christ] and that [Christ] is God because of this [the Word]'. This text corresponds to *Anathema 8* of the anti-Origenist Council of 553: 'If somebody does not say that God the Word, who is consubstantial with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, who became incarnate and became man, One of the Holy Trinity, is Christ in the proper sense, but that It is Christ in the figurative sense because of – as they say – the intellect who has emptied himself, being conjuncted to God the Word Itself and being called Christ in the proper sense, so that that [the Word] is Christ because of this [the intellect] and this [the intellect] is God because of that [the Word], let such a man be anathema!' My translation of *Chapters on Knowledge*, IV.18, differs from that of Antoine Guillaumont who translated the Syriac *qadmāiṯ* by 'au début'. However, this word means in the given context 'in the proper sense'. So *Anathema 8*, which condemns this doctrine, is an indirect testimony to the lost Greek original of Evagrius. I have made the demonstration of the identity, in Evagrius' doctrine, of the 'Wisdom of Christ' and the pre-existent intellect of Christ in my 'Notes sur la pensée systématique d'Évagre le Pontique'. This has been remarked first by Basile Markesinis, in 'Evagriana dans le *Vaticanus Graecus 504 et ailleurs*', p. 422, note 53. For the same expression in the *Chapters on Knowledge* see also IV.80: 'It was not God the Word in the proper sense (*qadmāiṯ*: κυρίως) who descended into the Hell and ascended to Heaven, but Christ who has the Word in Himself; for the mere flesh is not receptive of knowledge, but God is the object of knowledge.' [Here also Guillaumont translates: 'le Verbe Dieu d'abord', which translation does not give any good sense.]

Evagrius also speaks about the 'intelligible Israel' and the 'intelligible Nations', such as in the following chapters from the *Chapters on Knowledge*:

2. KG VI.49. Egypt means the vice, the desert the practice [of the commandments], and the contemplation of the bodies is meant by the land of Juda, while that of the bodiless, the city of Jerusalem; finally the allegory of the Trinity is Sion.

3. KG VI.71. Just as to the sensible Israel are opposed the sensible nations, so also to the *intelligible Israel* are opposed the *intelligible nations*.[32]

4. KG VI.3. The *perceptible nations* are separated from each other by [their] places, laws, languages, clothes and sometimes also in their complexions; however, *the intelligible and holy nations* are also [separated] by [their respective] worlds, bodies and knowledges, people say that also in their languages; the father of the first is Adam and of the second is Christ, whose prefiguration is Adam.

5. KG VI.24. If *all the nations will come and will worship before the Lord* (Ps. 85 [86]: 9), it is clear that even those nations that will the war will also come; and if this is so, then *the entire nature of the rational beings will worship before the Name of the Lord* (ibid.), who makes known the Father who is in Him; this is in fact *the Name that is above all names* (Phil. 2:9).

From these texts, it is clear that, in Evagrius' allegorical language, the 'intelligible Israel' means the 'people' constituted by the human beings, 'the intelligible and holy nations' mean the angelic beings, while 'the nations that will the war', as well as the 'intelligible nations that are opposed to the intelligible Israel' mean the demonic beings. These three ranks constitute for Evagrius 'the entire nature of the rational beings', which, according to him, 'will worship before the Name of the Lord', meaning in this allegory Christ or, more precisely – given the metaphysical complexity of Evagrius' Christology – God the Word. Obviously, this 'entire nature of the rational beings', consisting of the 'intelligible Israel' and the 'intelligible nations', the latter being either 'holy' or 'adverse', that is, either good or evil angels, constitutes 'the intelligible Church':

6. KG V.2. The listeners of the *perceptible Church* are separated from each other only by [their different] places, but, on the contrary, those of the *intelligible Church* are separated by [their] places and by [their] bodies.[33]

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32. For the intelligible Israel see also Evagrius of Pontus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, VI.47, 64, 66.

33. Here Guillaumont writes: 'mais ceux de l'(Eglise) intelligible, qui est opposé à celle-là ...', which seems to be an error of translation.

Based on the above allegorical interpretation of Israel, the Nations and the Church, Evagrius also treats the very same Pauline eschatological passages that we have encountered in 'Caesarius' QA 126 and 217, that is, 1 Cor. 15:27-28, Rom. 9:5 and Rom. 11:25-26, namely in the following way:

> 7. KG VI.33. When Christ will not be imprinted in various worlds and in all kinds of names, then *he also will be subjected to God the Father* and will rejoice only in His Knowledge, which [Knowledge] is not divided in the worlds and in the educations of the rational beings.[34]

Now I would propose that we apply the equivalences given by Evagrius to Pseudo-Caesarius' odd words when he says that Israel, that is to say, 'the Mind that sees God', that is, 'all mortal man who, through faith and piety, possess the knowledge of God', will be saved precisely when 'the plenitude of the Nations, that is, the Church comprehending all the people[s] (ἡ πάνδημος ἐκκλησία), will enter' (Rom. 11:25). The same doctrine is, then, reformulated in the second text, according to which, the Church, who is '*Christ* himself *according to the flesh*' (Rom. 9:5) will be subjected 'with all her hosts' to the Father, when the '*plenitude of the Nations*' will have '*entered*'.

So, if we apply the key provided by Evagrius, then, Israel should mean mankind, the nations the angelic hosts, the insistence on the completeness and faultlessness of the subjection of the nations should indicate that the demons are also included here, while the Church/Christ's flesh, to whom all the nations and Israel are submitted in the last moment should mean the collectivity of 'the entire nature of the rational beings'. That the nations might mean here the angels and that their complete

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34. 'When Christ will not be imprinted': most probably, in the Greek there stood the verb τυπόω, much used by Evagrius. According to Evagrius' teaching it is by being imprinted by the intellection of particular realities that the mind loses its purity in which it contemplates God – it loses its state of being the 'unshaken mind' and its 'immateriality': 'do not figure the Godhead in yourself when you pray, nor do permit *that your mind becomes imprinted according to some form* but, *being immaterial, approach the Immaterial* and then you will understand' (Evagrius, *On Prayer*, 66), and: 'the one who is fettered is not able to run, nor is *the mind* able to see the place of the spiritual prayer if it is serving to the passions; for it is dragged down and moved by the passionate thought and does not remain *unshaken*' (Evagrius, *On Prayer*, 71, for the 'imprinting' of the mind see also Evagrius, *On the evil thoughts*, ch. 2, PG 79, 1201, 26 etc.; *On Prayer*, 56). By losing the concentration upon the unique divine reality the mind falls into the 'worlds' – this ascetic principle is closely related to Evagrius' metaphysical teaching: the 'falling out' (ἔκπτωσις) of the ascetic from the state of 'pure prayer' (for this expression see Evagrius, *Practicos* 7.1, ed. A. Guillaumont and C. Guillaumont, *Évagre le Pontique. Traité pratique ou le Moine* [SChrét. 171; Paris 1971], p. 508; *XXXIII Chapters on the Passions*, ch. 13, PG 40, 1265, 32; *To Eulogius*, PG 79, 1117, 1) retraces the original 'falling out' from the contemplation of the first creation.

subjection means that of the angelic hosts including the demons, is suggested by the expression 'the Church comprehending all the peoples', but even more so by another one: 'the Church with all her hosts (πανστρατιᾷ)'. In fact, στρατιά, army, host, occurs twice in the New Testament, in both cases meaning angelic hosts: Luke 2:13 and Acts 7:42. I think here we encounter another encoding method, whose recognition gives us a major tool for decoding Pseudo-Caesarius, which I would call the *method of the background texts*. The recognition of a background text, presumably known to both Pseudo-Caesarius and his audience, often gives the clue for understanding an obscure passage. This encoding method consists in using certain expressions in a text, whose meaning is not defined in the text itself but can be understood on the basis of the background text.

One might argue against this interpretation that it is too complicated and that, for accepting Evagrius as the one providing the key for deciphering these enigmatic texts, one should prove that Pseudo-Caesarius was a systematic reader of his works. My answer to these two possible objections is: 1) if we are to make sense of these complicated texts, we should accept that we must necessarily make use of quite complicated hermeneutics; 2) Pseudo-Caesarius was indeed an assiduous reader of Evagrius.[35] So, I would present here an obvious quotation from Evagrius, not unrelated to the question of the *apocatastasis panton*, in order to show that Evagrius' texts give the natural framework for Pseudo-Caesarius' thought.

4. QA 14, 202 AND 133: EVAGRIUS AND PSEUDO-CAESARIUS' CHRISTOLOGY

4.1 QA 14: The Hook of the Fishing Spirit or How to Rewrite the Bible?

In QA 14, 'Caesarius'' interlocutors ask him about St Paul's words: *the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God* (1 Cor. 2:10). Their question is the following[36]: if the Trinity is consubstantial, and if it has the selfsame knowledge, how could St Paul say that the Spirit searches the depths of God, as if It would be ignorant and were seeking knowledge? Apparently, the question and the basic idea of the answer are taken

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35. To this, I have given a few examples in 'Finding a Place for the *Erotapokriseis* of Pseudo-Caesarius'. More examples are adduced here.

36. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 14, 1–4 (p. 19).

from the *Ancoratus* of Epiphanius.[37] However, the sources of its real teaching are to be looked for elsewhere.

'Caesarius" answer is as follows:[38]

14 Answer: But It [that is, the Spirit] does not search because of ignorance or curiosity as the mad Macedonius says, but because of its genuineness [that is, because it is the genuine Spirit of God]. When the divine and all-holy Spirit enters the virtuous and holy ones among the mortals, It prepares them to search the depths of God (cf. Wis. 7:27),[39] uplifting them from the immediate investigation of the letter to the higher meaning in the inquiry of the divine things. As if the mind were in some abyss and the Spirit, by the hook, would lift up from the abyss of this life the fish of the soul, which has in its mouth the precious *Stater* [coin] and *Soter* [Saviour] of all (Matt. 17:27), that is, Christ.[40] In this way the coryphee of the apostles is ordered to give to the claimants on behalf of himself and of Christ the fish of the soul, which has in its mouth Christ, the Stater, and the word of faith, as well as the ascent and praise coming from the depth of the heart (cf. Rom. 10:8).[41]

As all the texts of 'Caesarius', this one also contains a subtle doctrine, difficult to decipher. What concerns us here first is that it is constructed not simply as an interwoven scriptural commentary around the words of St Paul, which it intends to explain primarily and around the story in the Gospel of St Matthew about Peter fishing and finding a *stater* in the mouth of the fish caught but, rather, that it is constructed as a super-commentary on a pre-existent exegetical traditon, the main links in whose chain are Origen and Evagrius, while an odd text, pseudony-mously attributed to St Cyril of Alexandria, also plays a major role in forming the texture of the argument.

37. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, ch. 12, 1–6. This reference is indicated in the edition of Riedinger.

38. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 14, 6–15 (p. 19).

39. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 14: ἐπειδὰν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἐναρέτοις καὶ ἁγίοις βροτῶν γένηται τὸ θεῖον καὶ πανάγιον πνεῦμα, παρασκευάζει αὐτοὺς τὰ βάθη ἐρευνᾶν τοῦ θεοῦ ... This is a subtle paraphrase, using also St Paul, of Wis. 7:27: καὶ κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας κατασκευάζει.

40. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 14, 10–12: ὥσπερ ἐν βυθῷ τινι γινομένης τῆς διανοίας καὶ τῷ ἀγκίστρῳ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐκ τοῦ βιωτικοῦ βυθοῦ τὸν ἰχθὺν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνάγοντος ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ στόματι τὸν πολύτιμον στατῆρα καὶ τοῦ παντὸς σωτῆρα Χριστόν ...

41. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 14, 13–15: τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἰχθὺν δοῦναι τοῖς ἀπαιτοῦσιν προστάττεται ἔχοντα τὸν στατῆρα Χριστὸν καὶ τῆς πίστεως τὸν λόγον ἐν τῷ στόματι καὶ τὴν ἐκ βάθους καρδίας ἀναγωγὴν καὶ αἴνεσιν. The reference is to Rom. 10:8: 'The word is close to you in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith (τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως) that we preach, because if you confess in your mouth that Jesus is the Lord and if you believe in your heart that God rose him from the dead, you will be saved.' Riedinger gives 1 Tim. 4:6 as reference but there the correspondence is only formal (τοῖς λόγοις τῆς πίστεως).

So Origen, in his sixteenth homily on Jeremiah, commenting Jer. 16:16: 'Behold, I will send the many fishermen and they will fish them out and, after that, I will send the many hunters and they will catch them on every mountain', interprets this passage so that the fish represents the human souls who, having been caught by the disciples of Christ, die to the world and become something greater than soul,[42] that is, obviously, they become minds. Then, these minds who formerly were souls migrate to the mountains, such as the mountain of Christ's Transfiguration, where, as if through the holes in the rocks, they see the 'backside of God' (cf. Exod. 33:22–23), that is, the contemplations of the higher beings. It is from those mountains that finally the hunters, that is, the angels, will gather them and collect them in 'the resting place of the saints and the blessed in Christ.'[43]

In this interpretation of Jeremiah, Origen already outlined the later Evagrian theory of threefold contemplation: that of the corporeal beings, that of the intellections or reasons of the beings and that of God: the fishes are in the salty waters of this worldly life, they die when they are caught by Christ's disciples, but are reborn to a higher mental life in the 'mountains' of the Transfiguration, where they contemplate the higher principles of the created world, and from where they will be collected in the resting place of Christ, that is, the direct contemplation of God, at the end of time. Interestingly Origen, as far as we can judge from his extant commentary on Matt. 17:27, did not use the same pattern when commenting on the fishing of St Peter yielding the fish with the *stater* in its mouth, although the fish-soul identification can also be found there.[44]

Evagrius, in the *Gnostic Chapters*, seems to have applied the Origenian scheme of the threefold contemplation also to the story of St Matthew. In KG V.37 we read in the untampered Syriac version: 'The intelligible hook is the spiritual teaching, which lifts up the rational soul from the depths of vice to the virtue.'[45] Moreover, in KG V.40 Evagrius writes: 'The intelligible mountain is the spiritual contemplation, which is placed upon an elevated height and which is hard to approach, but when the mind will arrive there, it will see all the reasons of the subjacent objects.'

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42. Origen, *Homily on Jeremiah*, 16, 1, 32–34: ἀλλ' εὐθέως σου μεταβάλλει ἡ ψυχή καί μεταμορφοῦται καὶ γίνεται κρεῖττόν τι καὶ θειότερον παρ' ὃ ἦν τὸ πρότερον.

43. Origen, *Homily on Jeremiah*, 16, 4, 31–32.

44. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 13, 10, 39–40.

45. Evagrius of Pontus, *Chapters on Knowledge* V.37:

ܪܐܝܠܝ ܆ܚ ܆ܪܐܝܘܘܝ ܪܐܝܘܠܝ ܆ܢܘܕܪ ܪܐܝ.ܚܢ ܪܐܠܒ
܀ܪܩܘܢܝ ܪܐܝܘܠܝ ܠܝ ܪܐܝܘܝ ܪܐܝܝܐ ܢܘ ܪܠܠܝ

In these chapters, a little bit separated from each other but connected through the parallel structure of 'the intelligible [hook, mountain] ...' – a standard Evagrian literary method –, we find the same movement from the depth of the worldly vice through the virtues, up to the natural contemplation that shows the reasons of the beings.

As to Pseudo-Caesarius, he is obviously referring to this Origenian-Evagrian allegorical interpretation but, as always, displays great original-ity in the reworking. The soul-fish is living in the depth of this life but the Spirit fishes it out by means of the 'Hook'. Although this text is obvi-ously rewriting the theme of the 'intelligible hook' being 'the spiritual teaching' in the Evagrian fragment, a teaching that lifts up the soul from the vices to the virtue, yet Pseudo-Caesarius does not identify the Hook with the spiritual teaching, although it is through the Hook that the Spirit lifts up the soul. In this fragment the identity of the theological entity allegorised by the Hook is not revealed and we will have to scru-tinise other texts to understand what it means. Yet, Pseudo-Caesarius quotes Evagrius so closely that his text can be considered an indirect testimony to the lost Greek text of KG V.37, so that, on the basis of the Syriac translation and of the testimony of Pseudo-Caesarius, this original Greek can be reconstructed:

Evagrius, KG V.37, reconstructed Greek text	Pseudo-Caesarius, QA 14, 10–11
ἄγκιστρον νοητόν ἐστι πνευματικὴ διδασκαλία ἐκ τῶν βυθῶν τῆς κακίας τὴν λογικὴν ψυχὴν ἀνάγουσα εἰς τὴν ἀρετήν.	ὥσπερ ἐν βυθῷ τινι γινομένης τῆς διανοίας καὶ τῷ ἀγκίστρῳ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐκ τοῦ βιωτικοῦ βυθοῦ τὸν ἰχθὺν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνάγοντος ...
The intelligible hook is the spiritual teaching, which lifts up the rational soul from the depths of vice to the virtue.	As if the mind were in some abyss and the Spirit, by the hook, would lift up from the abyss of this life the fish of the soul ...

Another new element in Pseudo-Caesarius, even as over against Origen and Evagrius, is the identification of the *stater* in the mouth of the fish with Christ. Origen, writing his commentary on the same pas-sage of St Matthew, still stressed that Christ had sent away Peter to catch the fish with the coin for the temple tax, because the coin bore the image of Caesar, with which He, being the image of the Father, had nothing to do.[46] Thus, in Origen's thought, the 'image of Caesar' on the coin (Matt. 22:21) and the 'image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15), who is Christ, were standing in antagonistic opposition. On the contrary, Pseudo-Caesarius takes the coin with the imperial image as the figure of Christ himself. Of course, this is to a certain extent natural, given all the doctrinal

46. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 13, 10, 39–67.

developments in the Church from the third to the sixth century, which had given a positive theological function to the imperial image. The veneration of the image of the emperor had become one of the main figurative arguments against the Arians and was to become an important argument in the usage of the later iconodules, too. This positive transformation of the connotations carried by the imperial image was also unavoidable, given the changes brought about by the establishment of the Christian Roman Empire.

However, and more concretely, this new development was apparently initiated by Saint Cyril of Alexandria, who seems to be the first to understand the *Stater* as a metaphor for the Son,[47] that is, the Word of God, 'who has given his own soul as a ransom for the life of all'[48]. This is formulated in the spirit of Cyril's concept of the unity of Christ: the *Stater* bearing the image of the Emperor is a metaphor for the Image of the Father, the Logos, who is the only self of Christ: whatever Christ does, be it divine or human activity, is done by the Logos. This interpretation fits naturally in Cyril's one-nature theology: according to Cyril, when, in Matt. 17:26, Christ claims that 'the sons are free', he indicates by this the elevation of his 'nature', that is, of his one incarnate nature.[49]

Yet, another interpretation, attributed to but certainly not authored by Cyril, had gained currency in the sixth century in the apologetic literature defending Chalcedon's dyophysite theory.[50] This pseudo-Cyrillian text seems to have been invented by the Chalcedonian party, which had to put on Cyril's authority against the strict Cyrillians or miaphysites, improperly nicknamed 'monophysites', in its defence of Chalcedon. All these texts attribute this lemma to the (lost) Commentary on Matthew of Cyril of Alexandria[51] but, judged from its style and content, neither can it belong to Cyril, nor can it be dated earlier than Chalcedon, this being a very rough estimate.

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47. A search on the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database seems to indicate this.

48. St Cyril of Alexandria, *Paschal Homilies*, 13, 3, PG 77, 701A.

49. St Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, in P.E. Pusey (ed.), *Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Ioannis evangelium* (Oxford, 1872), vol. 1, p. 282.

50. For the recognition of this source of Pseudo-Caesarius I am deeply indebted to Roger Scott, who drew my attention to this text and gave me to read a forthcoming essay co-authored by himself, John Burke and Paul Tuffin, entitled 'Originality via plagiarism in the Byzantine Chronicle of Kedrenos' forthcoming in R. Tocci (ed.), Brill's *Companion to the Byzantine Chronicles*, which treats Cedrenus' utilization of the same fragment, an interesting elaboration, which does not concern us here.

51. Cyril of Alexandria, *On Matthew*, PG 72, 429B.

The citation is included in Justinian's dogmatic letter to the monks of the monastery of Enaton near Alexandria, with the following text:[52] 'Also, Saint Cyril, in his *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, says the following: "In fact, the true and intelligible *Stater*, represented as if in an image in the material one, is our Lord Jesus Christ, the double character."'

The same text can be found in the *Questions and Answers against the Monophysites* of Pamphilus the Theologian,[53] and in a lost treatise of Ephrem of Amida, Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch (526–545), read and recensed by Photius, where it is included in an extended version:[54]

Also, in the *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*: 'In fact, the true and intelligible *Stater*, represented as if in an image in the material one, is our Lord Jesus Christ, the double character.' And a little later: 'Therefore, the intelligible *Stater*, that is, the imperial coin, the double character in the unity, has offered himself for the sake of all, as if on the part of all, as a ransom for our life.'

These are, apparently, the earliest occurrences of this citation, which will be repeated, always with the intention of giving Cyrillian authority to the dyophysite doctrine, by Anastasius the Sinaite in his *Guide*,[55] Photius in his long dogmatic letter to the Armenian king Ashot,[56] the *Synodicon Vetus*[57] and the *Historiarum Compendium* of George Cedrenus.[58] Justinian's dogmatic letter is dated 542/43 and Ephrem of Amida died in 545. Pamphilus the Theologian had been identified earlier with Pamphilus of Jerusalem, a theologian of the first half of the sixth century, but Marcel Richard has shown that his work also cites Justinian's Confession of Faith dated 551 and refers to the tritheite controversy, whose beginnings

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52. Λόγος δογματικὸς ἔκ τε τῶν θείων γραφῶν καὶ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τῶι Ἐνάτωι τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων μοναχούς. See E. Schwartz (ed.), *Drei dogmatische Schriften Justinians* (Munich, 1939, reprint Milano, 1973). The citation is in ch. 145 on p. 30.

53. Pamphilus the Theologian, *Solution of diverse problems*, Quaestio 6, 289–293, in José H. de Clerck (ed.), *Diversorum Postchalcedonensium Auctorum Collectanea I: Pamphili theologi opus* (CCSG 19; Leuven, 1989).

54. Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 229, 262b (ed. R. Henry, Photius, *Bibliothèque*. T. IV: *Codices 223–229* [Paris, 1965], p. 165).

55. Anastasius the Sinaite, *Guide Along the Right Path*, 22,4.

56. Photius, *Letter* 284, 1306–11, in B. Laourdas and L.G. Westerink (eds.), *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia* (Leipzig, 1985), vol. III, p. 40. Here Photius cites the fragment in the form he has read it in Ephrem of Amid.

57. *Synodicon Vetus*, 119. The Synodicon cites a truncated version of the citation in Ephrem of Amida.

58. Cedrenus, *Chronicle*, p. 683 (ed. I. Bekker, Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae, *Compendium historiarum*, vol. 1 [Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae; Bonn, 1838]). Cedrenus cites the second half of the citation in Ephrem of Amid in its entirety.

are obscure but seems to have started sometime around 557.[59] Pamphilus is heavily dependent on Leontius of Byzantium, whom he calls at two occasions 'one of the Fathers'.[60] J.P. Junglas suggested that Ephrem of Amida should be considered one of the main sources of Leontius,[61] but Jacques Lebon has convincingly argued that the similarities between Ephrem and Leontius go back to Chalcedonian florilegia used by several polemicists, such as John the Grammarian of Caesarea, refuted by Severus in his *Contra impium Grammarium*.[62] Moreover, the two theologians belonged to opposite parties, Ephrem being on the Antiochian Chalcedonian/Anti-Origenist side, while Leontius on the Origenist side, which was going to adopt the Neo-Chalcedonian theology. Ephrem initiated the condemnation of Origenism in 542, a prelude to the imperial edict of 542/43,[63] and opposed the subsequent condemnation of the *Three Chapters*, although finally he was forced to sign shortly before his death, presumably in 545.[64] Thus, we might hypothesise an earlier origin for the Pseudo-Cyrillian fragment on the *Stater*. Be this as it may it is in the anti-Severan strife of the first half of the sixth century that the fragment gains importance and becomes commonly used in Neo-Chalcedonian circles.

The same citation seems to have greatly influenced Pseudo-Caesarius' treatment of the *Stater*. Even, apparently, his is the only contemporary detailed theological elaboration upon the theme suggested by the Pseudo-Cyrillian fragment, namely the double character of the *Stater* as a royal coin, being an allegory for the two natures of Christ. It is in fact this dyophysite utilisation of the Pseudo-Cyrillian fragment, together with the scriptural sub-text, Rom. 10:8, which reveals the Christological meaning of the end of the lemma on the fishing of the soul: 'In this way the coryphee of the apostles is ordered to give to the claimants on behalf of himself and of Christ *the fish of the soul, which has in its mouth Christ,*

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59. Marcel Richard, 'Léonce et Pamphile', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 27 (1938), pp. 27–52, reprinted in E. Dekkers *et al.* (eds.), Marcel Richard, *Opera minora* (Turnhout-Leuven, 1977), vol. 3, n. 58.

60. Pamphilus the Theologian, *Solution of diverse problems*, 6,4 and 8,5. See Richard, 'Léonce et Pamphile', p. 41.

61. See J.P. Junglas, *Leontios von Byzanz: Studien zu seinen Schriften, Quellen und Anschauungen* (Paderborn, 1908), pp. 49–56.

62. See J. Lebon, 'Éphrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche 526-544', in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Charles Moeller à l'occasion de son jubilé de 50 années de professorat à l'Université de Louvain 1863-1913* (Louvain-Paris, 1914), pp. 197–214, here 208–214.

63. See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of St Sabas*, ch. 85; ed. Schwartz, p. 191 (Syriac at Sin MS Syr M11N, fol. 101rv).

64. See Facundus de Hermiane, *Pro defensione trium capitulorum*, IV. 4, cited by Lebon, 'Éphrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche 526-544', p. 203.

the *Stater, and the word of faith, as well as the ascent and praise coming from the depth of the heart* (cf. Rom. 10:8)'. Christ the *Stater/Soter* is in the mouth of the soul, together with the 'word of faith' proclaiming that 'Jesus is the Lord', that is, His divine nature, and with 'praise coming from the depth of the heart', proclaiming that 'God rose him from the dead', that is, his human nature. This relationship, once again, links Pseudo-Caesarius to the circle of the Neo-Chalcedonian theologians close to Justinian. Also, the presence of this Pseudo-Cyrillian citation is another confirmation for dating the Pseudo-Caesarius to the mid-sixth century, established by Rudolf Riedinger.[65]

All this said, one may wonder about the theological meaning of the fish of the soul holding in its mouth the coin representing Christ. In fact, this metaphor represents a very intimate union between the soul and Christ. Apparently, this image is so important for 'Caesarius' that he even changes the gospel story when saying: 'in this way the coryphee of the apostles is ordered to give to the claimants on behalf of himself and of Christ the fish of the soul, which has in its mouth Christ, the *Stater*.' In fact, in the gospel it is only the *stater* that Peter gives for Christ and himself. However, in 'Caesarius'' version the claimants should receive, on behalf of a member of the community and of Christ, a soul in perfect union with Christ. *Now whose soul is this? Christ's, or Peter's, or somebody else's?* Apparently the soul of a typical or ideal Christian, according to the text that follows the fragment cited above:

> In this way, the coryphee of the apostles is ordered to give to the claimants on behalf of himself and of Christ the fish of the soul, which has in its mouth Christ, the *Stater*, and *the word of faith* (Rom. 10:8), as well as the ascent and praise coming from the depth of the heart. For [the Psalmist] says: *from the depth I cried to you, o Lord, Lord listen to my voice!* (Ps. 129:1) And the lofty Apostle says: *we have received the Spirit of God in order to see the gifts that He has given us* (1 Cor. 2:12). And again, the same Apostle says: *God has revealed to us through His Spirit* (1 Cor. 2:10). And again, David the singer of divine things: *I opened my mouth and drew the Spirit* (Ps. 118:131), not an airy spirit but the divine one, through which he foretold the hidden secrets of the god-manly advent of the Lord a thousand years before it happened, clearly singing: *you have shown me the unclear and hidden secrets of your wisdom* (Ps. 50:8).[66]

This is indeed an interesting doctrine: the fish of the soul is in the sea of the earthly life, but even in this state it brings in itself, more

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65. See R. Riedinger, *Pseudo-Kaisarios. Überlieferungsgeschichte und Verfasserfrage* (Byzantinisches Archiv 12; München, 1969), pp. 235–459.
66. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 14, 12–23 (p. 19).

precisely in its mouth, the *Stater*, that is, the *Soter*, the Redeemer, that is Christ. However it needs the Hook, cast into the abyss by the Spirit, in order to be taken from the sea and be uplifted on high. Then, having in its mouth both the Stater and the Hook, that is, both Christ and a still undefined entity, it already knows what has been given to it by God. At this point it is worth remembering that one of the condemned theses of the *Isochrist* faction of the Origenists, to which Theodore of Caesarea also belonged, was that in the final Restoration (*apokatasta-sis*) the saints would be united to the divine Word as now the human nature of Christ is united to It, that is, according to substance and hypostasis.[67]

Is this, then, a sign of an Isochrist doctrine? The fact that the 'fish of the soul, which has in its mouth Christ the *Stater*' is to be given as a ransom for Peter and Christ equally, indicates this direction, as this ransom had been traditionally interpreted as Christ giving his soul for the salvation of the world. Whether or not this hypothesis is true, will depend on knowing the answer to the question for what entity the allegory of the Hook stands in the fishing metaphor. Unless we are able to find this answer, the only thing that we can say for sure is that the teaching involved in this chapter is clearly Evagrian, that is, 'Origenist' and that there is a strong indication of a doctrine positing a very intimate union between the human soul and Christ, for the sake of which Pseudo-Cae-sarius even rewrites the gospel text.

4.2. Is Christ the Image or the Archetype?

However, the recognition of Pseudo-Caesarius' writing technique on the one hand, and the identification of the Pseudo-Cyrillian fragment as the source of our text's Christology, on the other, permits us to go fur-ther. As I have already mentioned, one of Pseudo-Caesarius' encoding methods is to use duplicates, for which I cited, in the previous section, QA 126 and 217. In our case the doctrine is so important for Pseudo-Caesarius that here he uses triplicates, that is, three different texts mutu-ally interpreting each other. Moreover, other texts also contain important information for a systematic decoding.

The *first triplicate* of QA 14 can be found in QA 202, which explicitly intends to explain the story of Matt. 17:27: 'What does the Lord indicate when He orders Peter to go and throw a hook and, then, to open the

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67. See Anathema 11 of Theodore of Scythopolis and the apophthegm of Theodore of Caesarea, condemned in 553 and cited above on p. 128.

mouth of the fish ascending first and to give the *Stater* found there, in exchange of Himself and Peter, to those who are claiming the tax and the *didrachma*?[68] In the main body of the answer to this question 'Caesarius' gives, contrary to what he did in QA 14, a literal exegesis, not very revealing for our interests. However, at the beginning of the answer he still dwells on the allegorical explanation and gives precisely the information that was missing from the text of QA 14:

> 202 *Answer*: It seems to me that this text is not without ambiguity either. I think that the *Stater*, which Peter is ordered to catch in the fish through the hook, is our form (τὴν μορφὴν ἡμῶν: see Phil 2:7) that, in the abyss of the life, is covered by the passions and is lying under the water of the waves of sin. However, if [the text] does not mean this, then it means our imprisonment in hell because of death, which the Lord calls back in Himself to the Archetype when he orders the *Stater* to be given for Himself and Peter, meaning that having become a mortal according to our state, being subject to all our conditions, giving taxes for them with the exception that He remained unyielding to the unholy vice and uninclined toward what is worse and, giving the *Stater* for Himself and for Peter, he willingly suffers for the Church. For He tells Peter: *You are Peter and I will build up my Church on this Rock*.[69]

In this text 'Caesarius' gives further clues for understanding QA 14 and *vice versa*: this text would be incomprehensible without the information contained in QA 14. Yet, some important information is still missing from these two texts, which will be revealed in the third. Here, first of all, we get the definitive answer to our question asked above, namely the following: if the fish with the *Stater* in its mouth is the soul, then whose soul is it, Christ's or an ordinary believer's? Apparently, according to 'Caesarius', it can be understood in both senses: the fish may well be the soul of an ordinary man, immersed in passion and sin, or of Christ, about whom Caesarius says that 'he has remained unyielding to the unholy vice and uninclined toward what is worse' (τῇ ἀνοσίῳ κακίᾳ

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68. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 202, 1-3 (p. 177).

69. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 202, 5-13 (pp. 177-78): Οὐκ ἔξω διχονοίας καὶ τάδε μοι δοκεῖ· τὸν γὰρ στατῆρα, ὃν Πέτρος ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ ἐν τῷ ἰχθύι λαβεῖν προσετάγη τῷ ἀγκίστρῳ, τὴν μορφὴν ἡμῶν δοκῶ οἱονεί ἐν βυθῷ τῷ βίῳ καλυπτομένην τοῖς πάθεσιν καὶ ὑποβρύχιον κυμάτων ἁμαρτίας κειμένην. εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτο, τὴν ἐν ᾅδῃ κατοχὴν ἡμῶν γενομένην διὰ θανάτου, ἣν ἐν ἑαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἀνακαλεῖται ὁ κύριος ἀνθ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ Πέτρου δοθῆναι τὸν στατῆρα διακελευόμενος, ὡς γενόμενος καθ' ἡμᾶς βροτὸς τοῖς ἡμῶν πᾶσιν ὑποκείμενος καὶ φορολογούμενος, πλὴν τῇ ἀνοσίῳ κακίᾳ μείνας ἀνύπεικτος καὶ ἀκλινὴς τῷ χείρονι, ἀνθ' αὑτοῦ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Πέτρου τὸν στατῆρα παρεχόμενος ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσχει ἑκών· φησὶν γὰρ αὐτῷ· σὺ εἶ Πέτρος καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ... (at one point I have changed Riedinger's punctuation, about which see the next note).

μείνας ἀνύπεικτος καὶ ἀκλινὴς τῷ χείρονι).[70] A further clarification is obtained through another passage, which, quite unexpectedly, explains the meaning of both the Stater and Christ being 'uninclined toward what is worse'. In QA 174-92 there is a long diatribe about the creation of man 'in the image and likeness of God' (Gen. 1:26).[71] This mini-treatise even plays a central role in the whole construction of the work. In QA 174-83, Pseudo-Caesarius discusses the question of what being created 'in the image and likeness of God' means and, especially, the problem of where the divine image is in the human being. Systematically, he excludes the divine image from the body, the soul and, finally, also from the mind, which he carefully distinguishes from the soul, in order to establish that the divine image is 'in what is immortal and ruling in the soul'[72] The passage that excludes the mind from being created in the image is particularly instructive for understanding Pseudo-Caesarius' thought:

> *178 Question*: Therefore, if the leader/teacher (ἡγεμών) of the soul is the mind and if we are saved when it is present while we are perishing if it is absent, perhaps it is the mind in which is found the *in the image of God* as in the saving principle?

> *178 Answer*: Although I said that the mind is the leader/teacher of the soul but immediately I also said that it is not *in the image of God* either. For how would the image of the incorruptible be something that is corruptible and fallible, and a prisoner [the image] of the mighty one who is always remaining the same? For that which is affected or full of pains or does not have power alone over what it has chosen but is yielding itself or *falls down together with that which is worse*, would not be the image of the *uninclined and infallible* (τοῦ ἀκλινοῦς καὶ ἀχειρώτου). However, the mind submitted and yielded itself to the advice of the snake either being affected by the soul or falling together with it. This is what the high-minded Apostle says: *I am afraid lest the snake would come again, deceive some of you and corrupt your thoughts* (2 Cor. 11:3). Elsewhere he is mocking those who have been captured saying: *men corrupt in their mind, discredited concerning the faith* (2 Tim. 3:8). And the same Apostle again: *I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin* (Rom. 7:23). How will be the image of the unchangeable, unharmable and infallible God that, which let itself be conquered by or yielded to the enemy, *or has fallen together with the soul* and has slipped into transgression?

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70. To read the text so I had to change Riedinger's punctuation, who wrote: πλὴν τῇ ἀνοσίῳ κακίᾳ μείνας ἀνύπεικτος καὶ ἀκλινής, τῷ χείρονι ἀνθ' αὐτοῦ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Πέτρου τὸν στατῆρα παρεχόμενος ... Riedinger's version, meaning: 'with the exception that He remained unyielding and uninclining to the unholy vice, and giving the *Stater* for Himself and for Peter to the worse ...' would give no acceptable sense.

71. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 174-92 (pp. 151-66).

72. 'What is immortal and ruling in the soul' can be found in Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 174, 4-5 (p. 151) and in 179, 5-6 (p. 155).

From this text, if its testimony is added to what has been discussed hitherto, we may understand the following.

1. Pseudo-Caesarius closely follows here the allegorical interpretation of Origen and Didymus the Blind on the creation of Adam and Eve meaning the mind and the soul and of the Fall, which, in this interpretation, is described as the temptation of the mind by the demon through the intermediary of the soul.[73] Although at another occasion he excluded explicitly that the Paradise should be understood in the 'Origenian' sense as being in heaven and that consequently the Fall should be understood in the allegorical Origenist sense,[74] here he reintroduces the same doctrine. This is typical for Pseudo-Caesarius[75] who poses as an anti-Origenist while teaching the condemned doctrines. This paradox is one of the many reasons why I think that the author is Theodore of Caesarea who, after 542/43, when he signed Justinian's edict against Origen, was acting precisely in this way.[76] Perhaps Theodore and his companions were practicing mental reservation: in good consciousness they could reject Origen's doctrines in the form they were understood by their opponents in their crude, literal meaning, while the circle of Theodore preserved the philosophical sense of the same teachings.

2. There is involved here an interesting Aristotelian doctrine of the active intellect as being extraneous to the soul, vivifying it and causing understanding in it when it is present but making it perish when it leaves it. This conforms with Origen's interpretation of Adam and Eve being the mind and the soul.

3. 'What is immortal and ruling in the soul', which bears the image of the Creator seems to be precisely what, unlike the mind/Adam, is itself 'uninclined and infallible', so that it may be the true image of God, who himself is 'uninclined and infallible' (τοῦ ἀκλινοῦς καὶ ἀχειρώτου). This is precisely what Pseudo-Caesarius says about Christ who, according to him, 'has remained unyielding to the unholy vice and uninclined toward what is worse' (τῇ ἀνοσίῳ κακίᾳ μείνας ἀνύπεικτος καὶ ἀκλινὴς τῷ χείρονι). So, apparently here he alludes to the allegorical interpretation of the Fall, meaning that unlike the

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73. For a reconstruction of this doctrine on the basis of Origenian fragments and the indirect tradition see György Heidl, *Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine: A Chapter of the History of Origenism* (Piscataway NJ, 2009), pp. 151–63.

74. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 159–63 (pp. 140–43).

75. For this phenomenon, see Perczel, 'Finding a Place for the *Erotapokriseis* of Pseudo-Caesarius', pp. 61–69.

76. On this, see the essay mentioned in the previous note.

mind/Adam, Christ was not yielding to the snake, nor did he incline toward the enticement of the soul/Eve.

4. All this is reminiscent of the testimonies to the condemnation of Origenism at the fifth ecumenical council. See, for example, the testimony of George Hieromonk in his treatise to Epiphanius on heresies:[77]

> The rational creatures, having stayed 'in a henad in the identity of substance, power and operation', 'became satiated with the divine love and contemplation, so that each of them, in proportion to its inclination toward what is worse (ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ῥοπῆς), put on a body, either a lighter one or a coarser one, and they received names from these ...' They say that, from all the henad, only one mind stayed unshaken from the divine love and contemplation (ἀκλόνητον τῆς θείας ἀγάπης καὶ θεωρίας), whom they call Christ and the one who had become the King of all the rational beings.

The expressions are similar and so also seems to be the sense. Both Pseudo-Caesarius and the putative text or oral doctrine condemned at the fifth council witness the same philosophical doctrine on the human condition and its redemption by Christ, based on Origen's allegorical interpretation of the Fall.

5. However, Christ who has remained 'unyielding to the unholy vice and uninclined toward what is worse', who has 'become a mortal according to our state',[78] and whom we can safely identify, as a metaphysical/epistemological principle, to 'what is immortal and ruling in the soul', is properly speaking not a 'mind' but something similar to the 'flower of soul' in the contemporary Neoplatonist doctrine which, according to the Platonists, is the organ of the union with the divine.[79] It is a pre-mental state of knowledge, which conceives in perfect union. If this interpretation is correct and if, with Pseudo-Caesarius, we have to do with a treatise by Theodore of Caesarea, one of the leaders of the

77. Marcel Richard, 'Le traité de Georges Hiéromoine sur les hérésies', REB 28 (1970), pp. 239–69, here p. 258.
78. See above Ps.-Caesarius, Questions and Answers, 202.
79. See Proclus, Platonic Theology, I.3, pp. 15–17 (ed. D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink, Proclus, Théologie Platonicienne, Livre I [Paris, 1968]). See also Chr. Guérard, 'L'ὕπαρξις de l'âme et la fleur de l'intellect dans la mystagogie de Proclus', in J. Pépin and H.D. Saffrey (eds.), Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens (Paris, 1987), pp. 335–49, and Carlos Steel, ''Ύπαρξις chez Proclus', in F. Romano and D.P. Taormina (eds.), Hyparxis e hypostasis nel neoplatonismo. Atti del I Colloquio internazionale del Centro di ricerca sul neoplatonismo, Università degli studi di Catania, 1-3 ottobre 1992 (Firenze, 1994), pp. 79–100, here 97–99. On the Christian adaptation of this principle by Pseudo-Dionysius, see I. Perczel, 'Pseudo-Dionysius and the Platonic Theology', in A.Ph. Segonds and C. Steel (eds.), Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne. Actes du colloque international de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998) en l'honneur de H. D. Saffrey et L. G. Westerink+ (Leuven-Paris, 2000), pp. 491–532, here 507-10, 519-25.

sixth-century Origenists, then the mythical story about one 'unin-
clined' mind remaining in perfect union with God should also be
considered as hiding an epistemological/mystical doctrine, just like
the allegorical exegesis of Pseudo-Caesarius.

It seems to me that the above decoding, based on the supplementary
doctrine expressed in QA 178, permits us to understand the nature of the
Stater. The Stater is identical with the Soter, that is, Christ, according to
QA 14, but also with 'our form' (τὴν μορφὴν ἡμῶν), that is, our pre-lap-
sarian identity, which, 'in the abyss of the life, is covered by the passions
and is lying under the water of the waves of sin' according to QA 202,
but which is nothing else than 'what is immortal and ruling in the soul'
according to QA 174 and 179. As in the theological vocabulary of the
period 'form' (μορφή) is a synonym of nature and substance,[80] thus, the
Stater is the human nature in its original, unfallen, also pre-mental, state.
Thus, the subtle doctrine lying behind, concealed and revealed by all this
allegorical and philosophical scriptural exegesis, has not only a soterio-
logical but also an epistemological aspect, closely connected, philosoph-
ically speaking, to the Neoplatonist doctrine of the henads and of the
'flower of the soul'.

However, Pseudo-Caesarius goes farther: in QA 202, the fishing of the
soul-fish with the Stater/Soter in its mouth does not only mean the recov-
ering of 'our form' immersed 'in the abyss of life', that is, our present life,
but also 'our imprisonment in hell because of death, which the Lord calls
back in Himself to the Archetype when he orders the Stater to be given
for Himself and Peter', Peter representing here the entire Church. Here,
on the basis of the analysis of the previous texts, the code can be easily
understood: by his redeeming suffering Christ does not only save human-
kind engaged in this earthly life but also the entire Church – obviously
consisting of the allegorical Israel, that is, men seeing God, and of the
intelligible nations consisting of the angels and the demons according to
the above interpretation of QA 217 and QA 126 – suffering in hell. The
Stater here is Christ, once again the pre-mental human form united with
God, while the Archetype is God upon whose image this form had been
made.

Thus, we get the identification Stater = Christ = God's Image in man
= the immortal and sovereign part of the soul = the pre-lapsarian form
of the human nature, versus the identification Model = God the Word,
the Logos. This gives an interesting doctrine, according to which Christ

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80. See Justinian, *Confession of the Correct Faith*, pp. 86, 18–21 (ed. Schwartz).

is not identical with God the Word, nor with His assumed (fallen and psychic) humanity, but is rather the combination of the Logos and of 'our form', the immortal and sovereign part of the soul, which makes the *Stater/Soter* a mysterious entity somewhere in between God and man. Apparently, here Pseudo-Caesarius makes full use of the dyophysite doctrine of the Pseudo-Cyrillian fragment but also of the Evagrian doctrine of *Kephalaia Gnostica* IV. 18, according to which 'the Word is not the Anointed (Christ) in the proper sense, just as the one who has been anointed is not God in the proper sense, but this [that is, the Word] is Anointed because of that [Christ] and that [Christ] is God because of this [the Word]'.[81]

From this analysis there also follows that the state, in which the soul is in an intimate union with Christ, is interchangeable – its model is this union in the case of Jesus, but can be applied to any other soul as well. The ambivalence between the fish being Christ's soul or any believer's soul having in it the *Stater*, which is the image of God the Word, indicates that we are dealing here precisely with the *Isochrist* doctrine, just as in the condemnatory texts cited above, in Section 2. However, the metaphor is not yet entirely revealed. We have not yet understood the meaning of the Hook and of the bait, for which we need the third triplicate.

4.3. The Fishing of the Dragon: the Salvation of Satan?

If the fishing metaphor hides and reveals the *Isochrist* Christological doctrine of the Origenists and, especially, of Theodore of Caesarea, a third text, once again re-elaborating the fishing scene, reveals the *apocatastatic* doctrine of Pseudo-Caesarius. However, this third text does not reveal its secret unless it is read together with the two previous ones. This, one finds in QA 133. Here the question of 'Caesarius'' interlocutors is the following:[82] 'When he (Christ) came, why wasn't he crucified manifestly, trusting his own strength and, so, why does he sometimes appear poor and sometimes joyful? Why does he simulate cowardice, being God?' In his answer, 'Caesarius' invokes the classical theme of cheating the Cheater. In Paradise, Satan appeared in the disguise of the snake, here Christ, the immortal God, appears in the disguise of a mortal man.[83] 'Therefore, the cowardly enemy who had cheated by deceiving words has been cheated by divine words. Just as there was no mere snake,

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81. See above, p. 137 note 31.
82. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 133, 1–3 (p. 115).
83. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 133, 9–12 (p. 115).

nor naked devil, nor is here mere mortal, nor naked God, nor is he cowardly but, wisely, he dissolves the argument of the idiot.'[84] After a lengthy explanation, comes the metaphor of the fishing.[85]

I, the Creator and God of all things, being in myself *the Life and the Resurrection* (John 11:25), am simulating fear and humbleness, wanting to hunt down, by proposing him the flesh, the dragon whom I am cheating and who is cheating the mortals. Being a fisherman, I have cast myself as a Hook in the sea of this life, putting around as a hookworm the fishing flesh of the mortals, myself by myself becoming as they are without any change, the new Adam and, as a fisherman, at one time shaking and pulling the Hook cast in the sea, while the other time remaining calm as the man-killing fish at which I am aiming is approaching, lest becoming afraid it flees. For this reason I am saying through my servant David: *I am a worm and not a man* (Ps. 21:7). For just as the worm is getting flesh and becomes alive without any embracement, in the same way I, by becoming flesh from the Eternal Child[86] spontaneously, without any commingling and embracement of man, became a mortal while remaining God. For this reason, Jeremy, who suffered much danger among the prophets, foreseeing with prophetic eyes that the Cheater would be cheated, as if he were laughing at the latter's insolence and madness, said about me five hundred and some years before: *he is a man but who would know him?* (Jer. 17:9), meaning: he is God who, for the sake of his providence, became as we are, having wisely decided to make a fool of the one who is wise in wickedness, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the noble Job, which says: *you will catch the dragon in a hook* (Job 40:25) and, as again the same Job says: *you have come to the sea* (Job 38:16), indicating by this[87] my way of life and the indefiniteness.[88] For you have not polluted your feet by any one of them.[89] And again, the same Job: *you walked on the tracks of the sea* (Job 38:16) – roaming around the netherworld and liberating those imprisoned there – and again, the same Job says: *the gates of death will open to you through fear and the doorkeepers of hell became stupefied seeing you* (Job 38:17).

In this text, we find the explanation of the two elements in the fishing metaphor that had remained unexplained in the two previous texts, namely that of the Hook and that of the bait: the Hook is the divine Logos, being

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84. I am proposing to read here ἀλλὰ σοφῶς λύει τοῦ μωροῦ τὸ σόφισμα instead of σαφῶς read by Riedinger. The wordplay is rather obvious and a parallel passage below: 'having wisely decided to make a fool of the one who is wise in wickedness' (σοφῶς μωραίνει τὸν ἐν κακίᾳ σοφὸν προαιρούμενος) also confirms this reading. The σοφῶς variant is not in Riedinger's apparatus.

85. Ps.-Caesarius, *Questions and Answers*, 133, 28–48 (pp. 115–16).

86. That is, the ever-virgin Mary.

87. That is, by the metaphor of the sea.

88. Τὸν βίον μου καὶ τὸ ἄπλετον δηλῶν. Indefiniteness seems to be here an attribute of matter, allegorically represented by the image of the sea.

89. That is, 'you have not polluted the part of the soul that is in the body by either the usual human way of life, or matter'.

the true self of Christ and the bait, the hookworm, is the human flesh of Christ.[90] While the two previous passages, through the *Stater*, gave a dyophysite interpretation of Christology, apparently laying the emphasis on the – apparently eternal – double nature of Christ, this passage is more concretely about the Incarnation. The theme of cheating the Cheater, that is, Satan, through the bait of the flesh, so that he thinks to swallow a man but is hooked up by the hook of divinity is traditional: one finds it in Gregory of Nyssa's *On the three-day interval before the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[91] which, in fact, is the literary model of Pseudo-Caesarius' text. Yet, even there, the meaning is the same: through the fishing of the Dragon, Satan, evil is completely destroyed.[92] The first night and day – beginning with the supernatural night at the time of the crucifixion – of Christ's dwelling in the grave undoes the sin of man, the second the sin of woman, while the third the sin of the snake: Satan/Death disappearing together with all his powers and angels.[93] It is well known that Gregory believed in the *apocatastasis* and this is, in fact, what is taken over from him by Pseudo-Caesarius. The citations from Job also point in this direction. Yet, with the expansion of Gregory's fishing metaphor through the *Stater* and the fish representing soul in general, the metaphor has got a broader framework, in which the fishing of the Dragon/Satan has received a more immediately comprehensible explanation.

Thus, the three texts analysed here are yielding a coherent doctrine of universal salvation. Also, with the decoding of the elements of the metaphor, which would not have been possible on the basis of only one passage, the entire doctrine becomes comprehensible: the fish represents the soul; it has in its mouth the *Stater*, that is the original unfallen, even pre-mental, form of humanity, which is Christ: this entity corresponds

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90. This might have been the meaning of the term 'worm' also in Pseudo-Dionysius' treatment of the dissimilar symbols in *Celestial Hierarchy*, II.5 (145A; ed. G. Heil, in idem and A.M. Ritter [eds.], *Corpus Dionysiacum II* [Berlin, 1991], p. 15, 20): 'I would add that which is the most unworthy and looks the most dissimilar, namely that those who are expert in the divine lore have transmitted that ["the Principle of Divinity": Jesus] would form around Itself the form of a worm'. I owe this observation to my friend, György Geréby. In general, Pseudo-Caesarius follows, emulates and contradicts Pseudo-Dionysius, whom he definitively dislikes and whose identity he apparently knows. I have treated this issue in 'Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and the Pseudo-Dormition of the Holy Virgin', *Le Muséon* 125/1-2 (2012), pp. 55-97, here 89-91.

91. Gregory of Nyssa, *De tridui inter mortem et resurrectionem Domini nostri Iesu Christi spatio (vulgo, In Christi resurrectionem Oratio I)*, ed. E. Gebhardt, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (Leiden, 1992), vol. 9, pp. 273-306.

92. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Christi resurrectionem Oratio I*, pp. 281-82. This source is not indicated by Riedinger.

93. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Christi resurrectionem Oratio I*, pp. 285-86.

to the unfallen mind of the anti-Origenist anathemas. However, as it is something more than a mind, this entity gives a philosophical twist to the entire condemned doctrine. It needs the fishing activity of the Spirit for this image to be brought back to its Archetype, the human form to the divine Logos.

The fishing metaphor thus decoded gives the philosophical meaning of the condemned *Isochrist* doctrine: the fish is the soul, which preserves and hides in it, even if covered by the sins of life, even if enclosed in death and hell, the original, pre-lapsarian human form represented here by the *Stater/Soter*, implying the hidden immortality and rulership of the human nature. Through the bait/hookworm, which is Christ's human flesh, the fish bites upon the Hook, being the divine Logos and, thus, it will have in its 'mouth' not only the perfect human nature of Christ (the *Stater*) but also the divine nature of the Logos (the Hook). So, according to Anathema 11 of Theodore of Scythopolis, 'we will become equal to our Saviour, Christ our God, who was born from the holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary, and God the Word will become united to us as to the ensouled flesh born from Mary, according to substance and hypostasis.'

5. A RECONSIDERATION OF THE METHODOLOGY USED

In the two previous sections I presented two subtle expositions of Pseudo-Caesarius' eschatology. In Section 3, I analysed two complementary passages, which, while abolishing the theological doctrine of the eschatological salvation of the Jews as a people, have established through their allegorising method the salvation of all the rational beings in the *apocatastasis*. I have shown how Evagrius of Pontus' allegorisation of the intelligible Israel, the nations and the Church can be applied to deciphering these texts just as it was, in all probability, originally used for encoding them. In Section 4, I attempted a coherent interpretation of three passages with the metaphor of Christ fishing the fish of the soul and fishing the Dragon/Satan, whose messages, according to this hermeneutic, mutually interpret each other, so that the fishing becomes the general metaphor for universal salvation. Thus, the fish on the Hook cast by the Spirit can mean every rational being, including Satan. For understanding these passages I also used other parallel passages revealing the meaning of the expressions used in the main texts and, as an additional tool, had recourse to *Quellenforschung*, revealing that Origen and Evagrius, two out of the three main authorities condemned at the anti-Origenist meeting of the fifth ecumenical council, are among the main authorities used

by the author and that their exegetical writings, together with a text of Gregory of Nyssa, teaching the doctrine of universal salvation and the *apocatastasis*, constitute sub-texts for all his speculations. I claim that in all these passages a coherent doctrine can be read. Also, for the decoding I used the parallel passages as so many equations that contain multiple variables. The variables were the elements of the metaphors and of scriptural exegeses recurring in the parallel passages. By substituting the value received in one equation for the other, gradually each variable received a definite value and, thus, a solution for the entire system of equations was proposed. I would claim that this decoding method, using the *method of the duplicates* and the *method of the background texts*, both being applications of the *principle of symmetry* outlined in the previous essay,[94] corresponds to the encoding method applied by the author of the Pseudo-Caesarian *Questions and Answers*, whom I identify eventually as Theodore of Caesarea surnamed the Wine-sack (*Askidas*).

However, what is the certitude of such a hermeneutic? Can we prove that a text is encoded and should be read as such? Apparently, this is impossible, unless we have a clear statement on the fact that we are dealing with an encoded text with such and such a clue. Yet, such statements are rarely found and they rarely originate from people creating such texts. In this way, even a most ardent adherent to the correspondence theory of truth has no means of judging directly whether or not the decoding corresponds to known facts. In fact it can only correspond to unknown facts, which we are discovering through the decoding. Thus we seemingly arrive at a vicious circle, for how can we judge the truth value of facts whose only observation comes from the decoding itself?

Thus, can we establish any criteria for judging the acceptability of such a hermeneutics? The only way I see for judging such hypotheses is to apply the principles of coherence and of the heuristic value of the decoding. If the entire oeuvre of Pseudo-Caesarius can be coherently interpreted as practicing this encoding and can be decoded according to the same hermeneutic clues without anywhere forcing the texts and, moreover, if this decoding corresponds to what we know from other sources about the intellectual atmosphere of the times, then, without adhering to a mere coherence theory of truth, we can use the coherence of the interpretation as an indicator of its accuracy.[95] Thus, the *principle of coherence*,

94. See 'Clandestine Heresy and Politics in Sixth-Century Constantinople', §6, pp. 168–71.
95. See the theory of Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in Ernest LePore (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation, Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 307–19. Davidson cites Rorty: 'Nothing counts as

outlined in the previous essay as an exegetical method, gains a new dimension. The same principle can also be formulated in a different way: the truth value of this hermeneutics can be judged from its heuristic potentialities. If the decoding of some passages, such as the ones cited above, results in the fact that, through the application of the same 'grammatical rules', the entire discourse of a given text becomes comprehensible and yields a great quantity of coherent, otherwise to a certain extent verifiable, information, then, we can assume that the interpretation is likely to be correct. Such seems to me the case of the Pseudo-Caesarian *Questions and Answers*.

6. CONCLUSIONS: WHAT KIND OF DOCTRINE IS THIS?

If, on the one hand, the decoding method advocated here is correct and if, on the other, the identification of the author with Theodore of Caesarea stands to reason, then, most probably, we have in our hands one of the most important texts of the sixth-century 'Origenist' movement, produced by its most prominent and most controversial personality.

Yet, here we should remind ourselves of the methodological pitfall of simply identifying the teachings recognised behind Pseudo-Caesarius' allegorical biblical exegesis to the 'Origenist' doctrines mirrored in the condemnations. The fact that the Pseudo-Caesarian teachings are isomorphic with the condemnations does not mean that we would have discovered that their author simply professed the condemned teachings. Rather, the allegorical exegesis, which we have to decipher, is a veil hiding and revealing the underlying philosophico-theological doctrines, while the condemnations are a distorting mirror, which can only serve as pointers toward the hidden doctrines but tell us almost nothing on the genuine thoughts and the thought system of those condemned. These

justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence.' (Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* [Princeton, 1979], p. 178) but adds: 'About this I am, as you see, in agreement with Rorty. Where we differ, if we do, is on whether there remains a question how, given that we cannot 'get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence', we nevertheless can have knowledge of, and talk about an objective public world which is not of our own making' (Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory', p. 310). Without entering the very general philosophical question of whether we can have any knowledge of the 'outside world' beyond what coherence of our beliefs offers us, I just want to argue that the coherence of the interpretation is probably the only way one can test the decoding of texts that we believe to be encoded and that this decoding, checked through the principle of coherence, points toward the 'outside world' of historical facts.

thoughts can only be revealed through the decoding process, for which the texts of the condemnations provide much help. Thus, the systematic decoding of this work and other similar ones, only started in this essay, would reveal the actual philosophical, theological and spiritual teachings of these sixth-century monastic intellectuals, their thought processes and political agenda etc. far beyond what we can learn from the contemporary anti-Origenist testimonies alone.

It seems to me that the doctrines treated above are already indicating how different the picture that this decoding presents about the sixth-century 'Origenist' doctrines will be from what a simplistic understanding, which takes the texts of the condemnations at face value, would suggest. In fact, it is a widespread commonplace in the literature that the 'Origenist' monks of Palestine were some weird extremists who misunderstood Origen and, perhaps, also Evagrius.[96] Instead, we see here a sophisticated doctrine, based on a deep acquaintance with Origen's and Evagrius' teachings but independently elaborating upon their exegesis. Also, 'Caesarius'' doctrine is closely related to the mainstream theological line of Justinian's time, namely Neo-Chalcedonism, so-called. Particularly significant from this point of view is the interpretation of the Pseudo-Cyrillian fragment about Christ himself being the *Stater* that is found in the mouth of the soul-fish, being the first extensive interpretation of this text, which was apparently very important for the elaboration of Neo-Chalcedonian exegesis. 'Caesarius'' interpretation of this *Stater* as being, on the one hand, the image of God in the rational beings and, on the other, a pre-mental, or supra-mental state even beyond the intellect, points toward a philosophical equivalent of the doctrine of the 'one in us', or 'flower of the mind', or 'flower of the soul', which is the organ of the union to God in Neoplatonist philosophy and also has strong echoes in Pseudo-Dionysius. It occurs to me that this recognition places the pseudo-mythological doctrines of the condemned 'Origenists' in a different light, showing that these were rather 'philosophical myths' of the Platonist type, expressing epistemological speculations rather than dogmatic protological and eschatological convictions, and that to understand them as being the latter, either on the part of some 'Origenists', or on that of their detractors, was an error of perspective.

In sum, it is to be noted that, in the person of Pseudo-Caesarius/Theodore of Caesarea, we encounter a curious – although perhaps not exceptional – case of a monastic ascetic and spiritual teacher turned politician.

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96. As this is indeed a widespread commonplace, I refrain here from citing individual examples.

The allegorical exegesis and the metaphysical doctrine hidden in the text seem to serve the imperial propaganda, as we also witnessed, for example, in Justinian's legislation on the Jews and other religious minorities. Moreover, Pseudo-Caesarius/Theodore of Caesarea represented an interest group, notably the Palestinian *Isochrist* Origenists. He promoted their agenda at Justinian's court, as they strove to make their mark on the emperor's religious policy.[97]

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97. The expression is that of Cyril of Scythopolis in the *Life of Saint Sabas*, ch. 89, ed. Schwartz, p. 197.

A REVIVAL IN JEWISH APOCALYPTIC? CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE SEVENTH-EIGHTH CENTURIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PIRQE MASHIAḤ

Helen SPURLING

Jewish apocalyptic literature is often described as benefiting from a revival in Late Antiquity and particularly from the seventh century when political events, including the Sasanian and then the Arab conquests of Jerusalem, were regarded as a sign of the messianic era and the coming age. This so called 'revival' is highlighted, perhaps most famously, by *Sefer Zerubbabel* and *Sefer Eliyyahu* and much scholarly attention has been given to these legendary works.[1] However, in order to raise the profile of other important Jewish apocalypses from the seventh and eighth centuries,[2] the focus in this chapter will be on developments in

1. For some select key works, see Martha Himmelfarb, 'Sefer Zerubbabel', in David Stern and Mark Mirsky (eds.), *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 67–90, Martha Himmelfarb, 'The Mother of the Messiah in the Talmud Yerushalmi and Sefer Zerubbabel', in Peter Schäfer (ed.), *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, III (Tübingen, 2002), pp. 369–89, Martha Himmelfarb, 'Sefer Eliyyahu: Jewish eschatology and Christian Jerusalem', in Kenneth G. Holum and Hayim Lapin (eds.), *Shaping the Middle East; Jews, Christians, and Muslims in an Age of Transition, 400-800 C.E.* (Bethesda MD, 2011), pp. 223–38 and her various studies on the subject, David Biale, 'Counter-History and Jewish Polemics Against Christianity: The Sefer Toldot Yeshu and the Sefer Zerubavel', *Jewish Social Studies* n.s. 6 (1999), pp. 130–45, Wout J. van Bekkum, 'Jewish Messianic Expectations in the Age of Heraclius', in Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation* (Leuven, 2002), pp. 95–112, Joseph Dan, 'Armilus: the Jewish Antichrist and the origins and dating of the Sefer Zerubbavel', in Peter Schäfer and Mark Cohen (eds.), *Toward the Millennium; Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 73–104 and Alexei M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2011).

2. A large number of apocalyptic midrashim have been preserved by Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch* (Jerusalem, 1938²), including *Sefer Zerubbabel* (BHM 2, pp. 54–57), *Otot ha-Mashiah* (BHM 2, pp. 58–63), *Sefer Eliyyahu* (BHM 3, pp. 65–68), *Pirqe Mashiah* (BHM 3, pp. 68–78) and *Nistarot R. Shimon ben Yohai* (BHM 3, pp. 78–82) amongst others, and a selection of these have recently been translated by John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: a postrabbinic Jewish apocalypse reader* (Leiden-Boston, 2006).

Jewish apocalypticism as highlighted particularly by *Pirqe Mashiah*, an apocalyptic midrash from Palestine during this period.[3]

Pirqe Mashiah is one of a diverse array of apocalyptic texts associated with the political upheavals following the rise of Islam. The text contains a number of eschatological teachings, including descriptions of the glorification of Jerusalem, the Temple, the Messiah and the events accompanying his arrival, and Eden and Gehinnom. These traditions are supplemented with historical allusions to demonstrate that the major political changes under Arab rule from the seventh century onwards are a sign of the apocalyptic end of time. The compilation is of particular interest for its allusions to events of the seventh century, and for its perspective on relations between Jews, Christians and Muslim Arabs in this period. In this regard, it contains some cryptic references to the 'minim', provides detailed descriptions of the role and deeds of the symbolic biblical enemy Edom, and, more explicitly, outlines perceptions of the views and actions of the Arabs (ערבים) in the text. In addition, the transmission of traditions in *Pirqe Mashiah* highlights the development of eschatological ideas throughout the classical corpus of rabbinic material as found in Midrash, Talmud and Targum, and also contains motifs that can be compared with the apocalypses of the Second Temple Period. As such, *Pirqe Mashiah* raises important questions about the development of Jewish apocalypticism both in terms of the traditions that it preserves, but also how these motifs and concepts are developed in light of the contemporary political situation from the seventh century onwards. Ultimately, *Pirqe Mashiah* represents a Jewish apocalyptic response to the Arab conquests and subsequent rule, which are viewed as a sign that the end of time was near, and that this would be a time of redemption for the Jewish people.

The text is a compilation of a number of midrashic and talmudic traditions. However, although a compilation, the traditions are collected and arranged to present a clear eschatological chronology in the form of a

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3. The primary printed edition is that of Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch*, vol. 3, pp. 68–78 and on which all subsequent printed editions are based. A number of manuscripts of *Pirqe Mashiah* have been identified: 1) Die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (BSB), Cod. Hebr. 222, folios 36b–46b, which is dated to the 15th century; 2) Bibliothèque de l'Alliance israélite universelle, Paris, catalogued as AIU H 178 A, folios 137r–142v and dated to the 17th century; and 3) a fragment consisting of two folios of consecutive text in the Cairo Genizah, Taylor-Schechter Collection, Old Series, Box A45.6 (T-S A45.6), which has been edited by Simon Hopkins, *A Miscellany of Literary Pieces from the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 11–14. References to *Pirqe Mashiah* in this chapter are taken from the BSB manuscript unless otherwise stated. The author is currently preparing a new edition of the compilation.

continuous narrative. The text begins with a meeting between R. Yose and Elijah. In the discussion that follows, the significance of Torah for the Jewish people is explained, which leads on to teachings concerned to glorify Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple, God and the Messiah. Then follows a description of the events signalling the end of the current age, which includes a number of historical allusions intended to illustrate how the events of the redactor's day are a sign of the end of time. The focus is particularly on the vengeance that God will take against the enemies of Israel, which culminates with the fall of the ancient enemy Edom. Following the fall of Edom, the events of the messianic era are described, with particular emphasis on the victory of Israel. Elijah and the Messiah ben David arrive, but the Jewish people do not recognize them as their saviours. Following a number of miracles, the Jewish people accept the identity of the Messiah ben David and he kills the enemies of his people in Jerusalem. The Day of the Lord ensues, after which the Messiah conducts the resurrection of the dead. This is followed by the Day of Judgement and the opening of Eden and Gehinnom by God. The next age or the world to come is then the focus of *Pirqe Mashiah*. All Israel will be in the Garden of Eden feasting with God whilst the nations of the world are made to watch their vindication. The righteous will be rewarded and there is nothing but prosperity, both in terms of the land and children, for Israel in the next age. The compilation concludes with a series of consolatory biblical proof texts, mainly from the Prophets, intended to show that it has been prophesied in Scripture that all these things shall indeed happen for Israel.

Pirqe Mashiah is a late rabbinic apocalypse.[4] It is not pseudepigraphical and is not presented as a vision, yet it clearly takes a midrashic approach

4. Moshe Idel drew a contrast between 'popular apocalypticism and more elitist views', in 'Jewish Apocalypticism: 670-1670', in Bernard McGinn (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism: Volume Two Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture* (New York, 1998), pp. 204–37 (227). More recently, Martha Himmelfarb has argued that *Sefer Zerubbabel* reflects traditions from popular Judaism rather than the rabbinic movement, highlighted by the lack of rabbinic legal debate in *Sefer Zerubbabel*, which contains allusions to scripture with few explicit quotations. This, she claims, is in contrast to *Sefer Eliyyahu* which Himmelfarb describes as 'consciously imitating rabbinic literature' and is more influenced by rabbinic styles and theological approaches; see Martha Himmelfarb, 'Sefer Zerubbabel and popular religion', in Eric F. Mason *et al.* (eds.), *A Teacher for All Generations; Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 2012), pp. 621–34. Martha Himmelfarb, 'Revelation and Rabbinization in *Sefer Zerubbabel* and *Sefer Eliyyahu*', in Philippa Townsend and Moulie Vidas (eds.), *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen, 2011), pp. 217–36, Himmelfarb, 'Sefer Eliyyahu: Jewish eschatology and Christian Jerusalem'. pp. 223-38. In contrast, *Pirqe Mashiah* represents a late rabbinic apocalypse that is thoroughly embedded in rabbinic hermeneutics and ideological emphases. The compilation represents yet another example of

through the use of rabbinically attributed traditions, rabbinic parables, hermeneutical principles such as *qal ve-homer* and *gematria*, and scriptural proof texts that are introduced by the שנאמר construction.[5] Interestingly, the vast majority of the proof texts come from the Prophetic books and the Psalms, and the compilation reads as a detailed narrative on the Messiah and the future age. However, it does contain an eschatological timetable, and the typical shift from signs of the end of the current age to a description of the prophetic future often found in political apocalypses.[6] In particular, in *Pirqe Mashiah*, this is indicated by a series of apocalyptic events, which include the aforementioned historical allusions culminating in Arab control of the Temple Mount, at which point the Day of the Lord ensues and the transition to the future world begins.[7] Thus, *Pirqe Mashiah* suggests that redemption is imminent, connected to serious (sometimes supernatural) upheavals in the religious, political and natural world, and seeks a biblical basis for such assertions. Revelation in the broad sense is found throughout the text, from the revelation that the events of the time are a sign of the end to the revelation of the nature of the future world. In the specific terminology of revelation, the verb גלה (reveal) is used of the appearance of the Messiah,[8] regarding the revelation of the hidden things

style and approach in the broad spectrum of Jewish apocalypticism from the seventh-eighth centuries, and highlights the far-reaching interest in apocalypticism in Jewish society of this period.

5. There are well over 100 proof texts within the BSB manuscript (itself consisting of 11 folios), which is a strong indication of the midrashic style of the compilation. For an overview of midrashic hermeneutics, see I. Heinemann, *Darkhei ha-Aggadah* (Jerusalem, 1954) [in Hebrew] and more recent works such as Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh, 1996²), pp. 17–34 for lists of rabbinic hermeneutical principles, and pp. 254–68 on midrash; Gary Porton, 'Exegetical Techniques in Rabbinic Literature', *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), pp. 27–51 and Rimon Kasher, 'The Interpretation of Scripture in Rabbinic Literature', in Martin Mulder and Harry Sysling (eds.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 547–94.

6. As highlighted of apocalypses by Paul Alexander, 'Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources', in Paul Alexander, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), pp. 997–1018. See also Moshe Idel who describes apocalypticism as pointing to events that both separate and connect the different ages, Idel, 'Jewish Apocalypticism', p. 231. In addition, Bernard McGinn argues that 'General eschatology becomes apocalyptic when it announces details of the future course of history and the imminence of its divinely appointed end in a manner that manifestly goes beyond the mere attempt to interpret the Scriptures', in 'Apocalypticism in the Middle Ages: An Historiographical Sketch', *Mediaeval Studies* 37 (1975), pp. 252–86 (253).

7. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 39b.

8. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 38a: ושנה שמשיח בה ונתגלה בה בכל המלכיות 'and the year when the Messiah comes [lit. the year which the Messiah is in it] then he will be revealed in all the kingdoms'.

of the land,[9] in describing the revelation of a secret which is identified as 'the sign of the covenant' and may well be the secret of the time of redemption,[10] and God is revealed on the Mount of Olives on the Day of the Lord.[11] Thus, the apocalyptic nature of *Pirqe Mashiah* is evident.

It is difficult to determine the location in which *Pirqe Mashiah* has been produced, but based on instances of redaction in the compilation, Palestine is a likely locale. The text describes a messianic future centred on 'the land of Israel' and particularly in Jerusalem. Clearly, Jewish apocalyptic writings generally focus on Jerusalem as the place of final redemption, but the redactor also has knowledge of places in Palestine with specific reference to Jerusalem, Tiberias, the Mount of Olives, Tyre, Arabah and Sepphoris. Importantly, however, there is a description of the Sea of Tiberias on the Day of the Lord, which parallels a tradition found in BT *Sanhedrin* 95b, describing the companies that march across Israel to conquer Jerusalem.[12] In BT *Sanhedrin* 95b, however, there is no reference to Tiberias and its waters. This provides further evidence of a specific interest in this location, a well-known centre of rabbinic authority, in *Pirqe Mashiah*.[13] Indeed, the rabbis cited in the text, where identifiable, all taught at Tiberias or Sepphoris.[14] A cumulative argument therefore suggests a Palestinian origin for the compilation. The question of provenance aside, there is a concern to glorify Jerusalem throughout the

9. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 40a: הנס הרביעי מגלה להם גניות הארץ 'the fourth miracle reveals to them the hidden things of the land'.

10. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 40a: הנס השביעי יגלה להם הסוד שנ' זאת אות הברית 'the seventh miracle: he will reveal to them the secret, as it is said, *This is the sign of the covenant* (Gen. 9:12)'; cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 99a.

11. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 41b: ושם נגלה עליהם הקב"ה בכבודו 'and the Holy One, blessed be He, is revealed to them there in his glory'.

12. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 41a: ונחלקות לשלש כתות כת ראשונה שותה כל מימי טבריה שנייה שותה שמרים. שלישית יעברו ברגליה' ויאמרו איש לרעהו המקום הזה של מי הוא 'and they will be divided into three companies. The first company drinks all the waters of Tiberias. The second drinks the dregs. The third will cross over on foot, and each man will say to his neighbour: "To whom does this place belong?"'; cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 95b and the description of the forces of Sennacherib in his campaign against the Israelites, which is compared to the forces of Gog and Magog at the end of time.

13. Tiberias is well-known from the third century as a key rabbinic centre; see Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton NJ-Oxford, 2001), Catherine Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Palestine* (Tübingen, 1997), esp. pp. 157–84, Aharon Oppenheimer, *Between Rome and Babylon: Studies in Jewish Leadership and Society* (Tübingen, 2005), Ben T. Rozenfeld, *Torah Centers and Rabbinic Activity in Palestine, 70-400 CE: History and Geographic Distribution* (Leiden, 2010).

14. The rabbis that can be identified in the text taught at either Sepphoris or Tiberias, namely: R. Yose; R. Eleazar b. Jacob; R. Yohanan; R. Hiyya bar Abba; and R. Shimon b. Laqish.

text both as the earthly location of the major battles at the end of time, but also through detailed descriptions of the heavenly city's extensive proportions in the future age. As is widely transmitted in rabbinic traditions, the eschatological rebuilt Jerusalem is a symbol of the restoration of the Jewish people.[15] What is clear is that Palestine and particularly Jerusalem is the focus of the eschatological drama as the sacred space where events of the end will play out.[16]

Apocalyptic texts are often composed at a time of political turmoil, with the writer or redactors trying to explain the events of their day. However, when examining an apocalyptic work for historical information, the first approach must always be one of caution and scepticism as there are a number of well-documented difficulties in isolating and identifying descriptions of historical events in what is not primarily intended to be a historical document.[17] In *Pirqe Mashiah*, despite a clear overall eschatological chronology, the link between allusions and historical events is frequently either not explicit or chronologically coherent and is bound up with much apocalyptic terminology that cannot be tied to any historical events, such as through vague reference to the fall of cities, earthquakes and troubles. *Pirqe Mashiah* does not try to present a history of the period, but rather mentions key specific events that allow the audience to understand that the traditions refer to the time in which they are living. Undoubtedly, some allusions in the text closely resemble common apocalyptic motifs,[18] however, the clues to contemporary events are found in a number of *names and places* mentioned that are not commonly found in the apocalyptic genre. In particular, the redactor of *Pirqe Mashiah* specifically refers to the Arabs (ערבים) in Jerusalem in the context of the fall of Edom, which is the common pseudonym for Byzantium in Jewish texts of this period.[19] A campaign against Alexandria by a

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15. Cf. *Sifre Deuteronomy* 352, Targum Neofiti Genesis 28:17, Genesis Rabbah 68:12, 69:7, Pesiqta Rabbati 30:3, 39:2, BT *Pesahim* 88a, Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 35, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 28:11, 28:17, Tanhuma Buber *Wayese* 9, Midrash on Psalms 78:6, 81:2.

16. See Avraham Grossman, 'Jerusalem in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature', in Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai (eds.), *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638-1099* (New York, 1996), pp. 295–310 for the significance of Jerusalem at the end of time. Moshe Idel notes of medieval Jewish apocalypticism that it is primarily centred on Jerusalem and Rome, such that 'Jewish apocalypticism, more than its messianism, is topocentrically oriented. It involves dislocation, returning, immigrations of masses, battles over sacred space', in Idel, 'Jewish Apocalypticism', p. 214.

17. Alexander, 'Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources', pp. 997–1018.

18. For example, the 'king of fierce face' of Dan. 8:23; BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 39a: ומלך עז פנים יעמוד 'and a king of fierce face will arise'.

19. See Gerson Cohen, 'Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought', in Alexander Altmann (ed.), *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Cambridge MA, 1967),

'great king' is mentioned, which may allude to the conquest of Alexandria either by the Persians in c.616–620 CE, or the Arabs in 642 CE.[20] The compilation also explicitly refers to wars between the Persians and Arabs as a sign of the end.[21] Although appropriate caution is necessary, the historical allusions in the compilation are a first and important indication of the dating of *Pirqe Mashiah* to the seventh–eighth centuries.[22]

pp. 19–48, Wout J. van Bekkum, 'The Hidden Reference: The Role of Edom in Late Antique and Early Medieval Jewish Hymnography', in Alberdina Houtman, Albert de Jong and Magda Misset-van de Weg (eds.), *Empsychoi Logoi – Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 527–43, and Helen Spurling, 'The Biblical Symbol of Edom in Jewish Eschatological and Apocalyptic Imagery', in Angel Urban and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (eds.), *Sacred Text: Explorations in Lexicography* (Frankfurt, 2009), pp. 271–99.

20. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 39a: ומלך גדול יצא על אלכסנדריאה במחנה 'and a great king shall go forth against Alexandria with a camp'. Sources for the conquest of Alexandria by the Persians are limited; cf. C. de Boor (ed.), *Theophanis chronographia*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1883), p. 301, and I. Guidi (ed.), *The Anonymous Chronicle* (CSCO 3.4; Paris, 1903). For a discussion of the sources, see James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: historians and histories of the Middle East in the seventh century* (Oxford, 2010), esp. p. 440 note 16. On the Arab Conquest of Alexandria, see especially R.H. Charles (trans.), *Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu: translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic text* (London, 1916). See also Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, esp. pp. 469–70, notes 27–31, Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion* (Oxford, 1978²), John Marlowe, *The Golden Age of Alexandria: From its Foundation by Alexander the Great in 331 BC to its Capture by the Arabs in 642 AD* (London, 1971), H. Heinen, 'Das spätantike Ägypten (284 – 646 n. Chr.)', in Martin Krause (ed.), *Ägypten in spätantik-Christlicher Zeit: Einführung in die koptische Kultur* (Wiesbaden, 1998), pp. 35–56, P.M. Sijpesteijn, 'The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Beginning of Muslim Rule', in Roger S. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 437–55, Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, 1997), esp. pp. 152–56 and Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: how the spread of Islam changed the world we live in* (London, 2007).

21. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 38a: מלך פרס מתגרה במלכה של ערביאה 'the king of Persia will fight against the king (emendation of fem. מלכה) of Arabia'.

22. Indeed, John Reeves concurs with this view and has noted that *Pirqe Mashiah* contains sections that 'may be ultimately based on sources deriving from the seventh or eighth century', in Reeves, *Trajectories*, p. 149. This dating is supported by the fact that no rabbis from after the second generation of Amoraim are mentioned in the text. Furthermore, the traditions in the first sections of *Pirqe Mashiah* (BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 36b–40a), are paralleled in rabbinic sources of an earlier date of redaction, such as and primarily *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* but also the *Tosefta*, *Leviticus Rabbah*, *Ruth Rabbah*, the *Palestinian Talmud* and *Pesiqta Rabbati*. However, *Pirqe Mashiah* is clearly a compilation that has undergone further redaction. It is important to note that the latter part of the text focusing on the eschatological description of the future world (BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 40a–46b) contains a number of close parallels with the Babylonian Talmud. The presentation of this material suggests that it represents another level of redaction of the compilation, which incorporates Babylonian traditions. Interestingly, this redaction does not compromise the coherent eschatological schema presented in the compilation. As such, *Pirqe Mashiah* seems to present material that likely originated in the seventh century but underwent subsequent revision in the eighth century. The dating of the

One of the most interesting yet obscure sections of *Pirqe Mashiah* takes the form of a dialogue between the Arabs and the Jewish people over ownership of the Temple Mount:

וישראל אומרים למלך הערבים בית המקדש שלנו הוא קח הכסף והזהב והניח בית
המקדש ומלך הערבים אומר אין לכם במקדש הזה כלום אבל אם אתם בוחרים לכם
בראשונה קורבן כמו שהייתם עוסקים מקדם ונם אנחנו מקריבים ומי שמתקבל
קרבנו נהיה כולנו אומה אחת. וישראל מקריבין ואינם מתקבלין לפי שהשטן מקטרג
לפני הקב״ה ובני קדר מקריבין ומתקבלין שנ׳ כל צאן קדר יקבצו לך באותה שעה
הערביים אומרים לישראל בואו ותאמינו באמונתינו וישראל משיבין אותם אם
תהרנו אותנו ואנו הורגים ונהרגים אין אנו כופרים בעיקר באותה שעה חרבות
נשלפות.
(BSB Cod.Hebr. 222, 39b)

And Israel will say to the king of the Arabs: 'The house of the sanctuary is ours. Take the silver and gold, but leave the house of the sanctuary'. And the king of the Arabs will say: 'There is not anything for you in this sanctuary, but if you choose for yourselves a sacrifice like you used to do before in former days, then also we will offer a sacrifice, and whoever's sacrifice is accepted, we will all become one people'. And Israel will offer a sacrifice, but it will not be accepted because Satan will bring charges before the Holy One, blessed be He, but the sons of Kedar will offer a sacrifice, and it will be accepted, as it was said, All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered to you (Isa. 60:7). At that moment the Arabs will say to Israel: 'Come and believe in our faith', but Israel will answer them: 'If you try to kill us, then we will kill or be killed, but we will not deny the principle of (our) religion'. At that moment swords will be drawn.

This passage raises a number of interesting points, but is primarily useful for what it shows about the perspective of the redactor and the way that they have chosen to represent the Arabs. First, the Arabs are described as being in control of Jerusalem. Thus, the material has most likely been redacted after the Arab conquest of Jerusalem in 638 CE. Indeed, the passage just cited contains explicit reference to the Arabs, instead of using the expected pseudonym 'sons of Ishmael', as found in other apocalyptic traditions, both Jewish – such as *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer* 30, 32 and *Nistarot Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai* – and Christian – for example in the Armenian *History* attributed to Sebeos and the apocalyptic *Pseudo-Methodius*.[23] It is also after recording this dialogue between Jews

compilation is discussed further by the author in Helen Spurling, '*Pirqe Mashiah*: A Translation, Commentary and Introduction' (forthcoming).

23. See Sebeos, *History*, 42 and Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, X:6. For the connection between the 'sons of Ishmael' and the Muslim Arabs in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions, see Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 246–49, 272–76, 286–88.

and Arabs that the text departs from further historical allusion and becomes entirely concerned with eschatology, which further suggests that this passage may have been composed near to the time it describes.

Secondly, this passage reflects questions over ownership of the Temple Mount. It suggests that a 'sanctuary' exists, but that it belongs to the Jews and the Arabs should leave it and take plunder as a substitute. This is an ambiguous statement. It could allude to the mosque of 'Umar, or it is possible that 'Abd al-Malik's Dome of the Rock has been built.[24] However, the passage also suggests that ownership of the Temple Mount is still an open question, but this is of course an ideology that reflects the hopes and expectations of the Jewish people. This also shows that the redactor perceived that the Arabs viewed Jerusalem and particularly the Temple Mount as a holy site, or at least a site of some religious significance.[25] However, it is possible that the Jewish attachment to Jerusalem

24. *Pirqe Mashiah* could provide supporting evidence for the 'mosque of 'Umar' as described in detail in al-Tabari's *History* 2403-2411, but also recorded by non-Islamic sources. Theophanes reported that the mosque of 'Umar was built on the site of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (*The Chronicle of Theophanes*, ed. De Boor, p. 342), and the pilgrim Arculf, who visited Jerusalem about 670-680 CE, records that there was a wooden structure on the Temple Mount which could hold three thousand Muslims (*Itinera Hierosolymitana*, ed. T. Tobler and A. Molinier, vol. 1 [Geneva, 1879], p. 145). This can be read in conjunction with *Nistarot Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai*, which describes how 'the second king who will arise from Ishmael will be a friend of Israel. He will repair their breaches and fix the breaches of the Temple' but will ultimately build a place for prayer for himself upon the site of the 'foundation stone'. In addition, there is an intriguing passage in the *Armenian History* attributed to Sebeos, 43 where he describes the plot of rebellious Jews to rebuild the Temple of Solomon during early Arab rule – they get as far as constructing a building on a platform before the Ishmaelites grow envious, expel the Jews from the site and claim it as their own house of prayer. There are parallels here with the episode in *Pirqe Mashiah* with both Jews and Ishmaelites laying claim to the Temple Mount, as also noted by John Reeves, *Trajectories*, p. 157; cf. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 1-9, and Robert Hoyland, 'Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam', in R.L. Nettler (ed.), *Medieval and Modern Perspectives on Muslim-Jewish Relations* (Luxembourg, 1995), pp. 89-102. Thus, in exploring evidence for the mosque of 'Umar, it becomes clear that there are traditions from Jewish, Christian and Islamic sources that suggest Jews were involved in discussion or dispute with the Arabs over the Temple Mount from the time of 'Umar's siege and conquest in 638 CE.

25. There are a number of contrasting views on the sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine within early Islam. However, although the point at which Jerusalem became a holy site within Islam has been much debated, it is unlikely that 'Abd al-Malik would have built the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, if there were not some precedent for its religious significance. Indeed, Averil Cameron has outlined convincing evidence to suggest that 'the Muslim interest in the Temple Mount showed itself from an early stage', Averil Cameron, 'The Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine', *SCI* 13 (1994), pp. 75-93 (81). Although controversial, the evidence also suggests that, at the time of the conquest, the Arabs viewed Jerusalem as a holy city because Muhammad directed his followers to pray in the direction of Jerusalem. For an outline and discussion of these sources, see Angelika

led to an assumption that the Arabs would have a similar interest in the city, which is reinforced by the focus in Jewish apocalyptic and rabbinic sources on the rebuilt Temple as the ultimate sign of Jewish redemption. Thus, *Pirqe Mashiah* could contribute supporting evidence of early Muslim interest in control of the site of the Temple Mount, and possibly the involvement of Jews in claims of ownership, but at the very least shows that this scenario was the perception of the redactor.

Thirdly, *Pirqe Mashiah* contains the intriguing reference to becoming 'one people' (אומה אחת), which reminds of the single community or *umma* mentioned in the Qur'an, as those who could be united under one God (Q 2:128; 3:110). The understanding of the term *umma* in the Qur'an and documents such as the Constitution of Medina has been widely discussed,[26] but in *Pirqe Mashiah* the term is clearly understood in terms of conversion, as highlighted by the request of the Arabs to 'come and believe in our beliefs' (בואו ותאמינו באמונתינו). Al-Tabari provides evidence of Jewish converts to Islam. For example, there is the famous and widespread legendary tale that a Jew called Ka'b had converted to Islam, and was with 'Umar when he first travelled to Jerusalem.[27] However, letters of protection and the much discussed Pact of 'Umar show that adherents of monotheistic faiths were allowed to live and practise their faith under Islamic rule, albeit with certain restrictions, and they would pay taxes as part of their 'dhimmi' status. Although Islam was a proselytizing religion from its beginnings, as dhimmis, Jews and Christians were allowed freedom of religion and as such conversion to Islam would have been a slow and complex process. Furthermore, this would be a period when the Islamic movement was still in the process of establishing and defining itself. As such, Reuven Firestone reflects the consensus view

Neuwirth, 'From the Sacred Mosque to the Remote Temple: *Sūrat al-Isrā'* between Text and Commentary' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish and Joseph W. Goering (eds.), *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York-Oxford, 2010), pp. 376-407; cf. Q 2:142-145, 149-150.

26. See the work of Frederick Denny, '*Ummah* in the Constitution of Medina', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36 (1977), pp. 39-47, Robert Bertram Serjeant, 'The "Sunnah Jami'ah", pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the "tahrim" of Yathrib: analysis and translation of the documents comprised in the so-called "Constitution of Medina"', *BSOAS* 41.1 (1978), pp. 1-42, Uri Rubin, 'The "Constitution of Medina": some notes', *Studia Islamica* 62 (1985), pp. 5-23, Paul Lawrence Rose, 'Muhammad, the Jews and the constitution of Medina: retrieving the historical kernel', *Der Islam* 86.1 (2009), pp. 1-29, Jacob Lassner and Michael Bonner, *Islam in the Middle Ages: the Origins and Shaping of Classical Islamic Civilization* (Santa Barbara CA, 2010).

27. For discussion of this episode, see Reuven Firestone, 'Jewish Culture in the Formative Period of Islam', in David Biale (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York, 2002), pp. 267-302, esp. 291-98.

when he states: 'Certainly in the earliest period, most Jews seem to have remained faithful to their ancestral traditions'.[28] To return to *Pirqe Mashiaḥ*, there is no detail on what was understood by the process of conversion, but in emphasizing that the Jewish people would rather die than convert, *Pirqe Mashiaḥ* highlights the perception of the Jewish redactor that the issue of conversion was a prominent concern and also emphasizes the importance of staying faithful in the face of this perceived threat.[29]

Finally, in *Pirqe Mashiaḥ*, the historical reality of Arab rule faced by the redactor is presented through the enactment of a sacrificial test by the Jewish and Arab claimants to the Temple Mount. The Jewish redactor views the Arabs as gaining God's favour instead of his own people, as highlighted by the acceptance of the sacrifice of the Arabs and the rejection of the sacrifice of the Jewish people, which in turn reflects the historical reality of conquest. This is in line with the biblical idea that if the Jewish people have not followed their laws adequately, God will support another group or empire until the Jews are righteous enough to be granted ascendancy.[30] Interestingly, this is a motif widely transmitted in Christian apocalyptic writings from this period, such as *Pseudo-Methodius*, which explicitly quotes this deuteronomic idea.[31] As such, in *Pirqe Mashiaḥ*, the Arabs are presented as having the favour of God, which is clearly explained as fulfilment of biblical prophecy, as found in Isaiah 60:7. This verse describes the gifts of the nations that are brought by the exiles returning to worship at Jerusalem in the future and explicitly states of the flocks of Kedar and rams of Nebaioth: *they shall be acceptable on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house.* The use of Isaiah 60:7 in *Pirqe Mashiaḥ* identifies the sons of Kedar (בני קדר) with the Arabs, perhaps a logical association in light of Genesis 25:13 and the connection

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28. Firestone, 'Jewish Culture', p. 291.

29. See Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge MA, 1979), Ira Lapidus, 'Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An essay in quantitative history by Richard W. Bulliet', *American Historical Review* 86.1 (1981), pp. 187–88, and Daniel Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (Cambridge MA, 1950).

30. This biblical idea can be found in the deuteronomistic history and its cycle of sin, punishment, repentance and reward (see, for example, Deut. 4:44–10:22, Josh. 1:1–9, Judg. 2:1–3:6), with punishment of the Jewish people often executed by the ascendant empire. Such ideology also abounds in the biblical prophetic works, but see Jer. 25:1–14 for a classic example; cf. pseudepigraphical and rabbinic traditions that transmit variations of this ideology often within an apocalyptic or eschatological context: 4 Ezra 3:28–36, 4:22–25, 5:21–30; 2 Baruch 3:4–6, 5:1–4; Genesis Rabbah 63:7; Leviticus Rabbah 13:5, 29:2; Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 23.2; Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 35; Tanḥuma Buber *Vayyishlah* 4; Exodus Rabbah 32.7, 42.2.

31. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XI:1.

with Ishmael. The prophecy in Isaiah is fulfilled when God accepts the sacrifice of the Arabs, thus proving that not only is the success of the Arabs part of the divine plan, but that the sacrifices offered by the Arabs are ultimately gathered for Israel and the glorification of the (future) Temple.[32] The passage in *Pirqe Mashiah* also emphasizes that the Arabs' initial victory is due to the fact that the Satan could bring charges against the Jewish people, indicating that such favour was due to the actions (or indeed inaction) of the Jews, or the involvement of *ha-Satan*, rather than the special status of the Arabs. Thus, Jewish election is not threatened, but rather *Pirqe Mashiah* presents an exhortation to proper behaviour and a theological explanation for the reality of Arab rule.

Thus, in *Pirqe Mashiah*, the Jewish people are presented in dialogue with the Arabs over ownership of the Temple Mount and which people follow the 'true' religion and have the favour of God. However, the passage concludes with the inevitability of war between the peoples, as neither will accept the other's beliefs. In this way, the reference to and representation of the Arabs is placed firmly in the context of contested religious claims.[33] Indeed, the most prominent subject in *Pirqe Mashiah* is the status of Israel and a concern with the nature of the relationship between the Jewish people and God. The compilation glorifies the Jewish religious position within an eschatological framework. The Torah is given central importance, the rebuilt Jerusalem and Temple are described, the status of Israel is exalted above that of the nations, and the vindication of the Jews at the end of time through the work of God and the Messiah is outlined. The representation of the Arabs in *Pirqe Mashiah* is clearly determined by this apocalyptic outlook on the election of Israel.

This section of *Pirqe Mashiah* contributes to the diversity of seventh and eighth century Jewish apocalyptic responses to the Arab conquests. For example, in *Nistarot Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai* it is clear that the Arabs are initially viewed positively as the instruments of salvation of the Jews, explaining that the kingdom of Ishmael has arisen only for the

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32. Cf. Targum Isaiah 60:7, which explicitly relates this verse to the Arabs in its translation, BT *Avodah Zarah* 24a, which teaches that 'the flocks of Kedar' refers to self-made proselytes in the time-to-come, and *Nistarot R. Shimon ben Yohai*.

33. Interestingly, while clearly concerned with the future under Arab rule and the relative status of the Arabs and Jews, *Pirqe Mashiah* does not present an overly elaborate polemic against the Arabs. Rather, the primary focus of criticism still seems to be Byzantium, as highlighted by extensive passages against Edom, the traditional pseudonym for Rome/Byzantium. 'Rome' also features in the text in connection with Sammael, the Satan and the prince of Rome, the return of the Temple vessels from Rome prior to the final battle, and through reference to the kingdom of Italia in the war against the nations of the world on the Day of the Lord.

purpose of delivering Israel from wicked Edom (that is, Rome/
Byzantium).[34] In contrast, *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer* 30 describes the events
of the end of time with a number of allusions to the actions of the sons
of Ishmael. The text describes the fifteen things that the Ishmaelites will
do at the end of days, alluding to events of the seventh and eighth cen-
turies, but ultimately describes the sound of the groaning of the Jewish
people caused by the sons of Ishmael.[35] *Pirqe Mashiah* presents an alter-
native and important view on the impact of the Arab conquests, and the
questions raised by the changing political situation. In order to explore
this further, some key themes in the compilation will be discussed,
examining both elements of continuity and innovation within the apoc-
alyptic traditions presented. In particular, as the title of the compilation
suggests, messianism is a major concern, and the two messianic figures,
Messiah ben David and Messiah ben Joseph, receive extensive treatment
in *Pirqe Mashiah*.

Dual messianic ideas, the existence of both a Messiah ben David and
a Messiah ben Joseph, are a renowned and fully developed feature of
Jewish apocalypses from the seventh century onwards. With regard to
the Messiah ben Joseph, there has been much controversial and on-going
discussion over the origins of the legend of the warrior Messiah who will
die in battle.[36] Indeed, this motif has a long literary history in midrashic

34. *Nistarot R. Shimon ben Yohai* (BHM 3:78): אל תירא בן אדם שאין הב״ה מביא מלכות
ישמעאל אלא כדי להושיעכם מאת הרשעה 'Do not be afraid, son of man, for the Holy One,
blessed be He, is bringing the kingdom of Ishmael only in order to deliver you from that
wicked one (that is, Edom)'.

35. The allusions in *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer* and their possible historical basis are dis-
cussed, for example, in Reeves, *Trajectories*, pp. 70–75, Abba Hillel Silver, *A history of
Messianic speculation in Israel from the first through the seventeenth centuries* (New York,
1927), pp. 40–42, Gordon Newby, 'Text and Territory: Jewish-Muslim Relations 632-750
CE', in Benjamin Hary, John Hayes and Fred Astren (eds.), *Judaism and Islam: bounda-
ries, communication and interaction: essays in honor of William M. Brinner* (Leiden,
2000), pp. 83–96; cf. Carol Bakhos, *Ishmael on the Border: rabbinic portrayals of the first
Arab* (Albany, 2006), esp. pp. 85–128, and Spurling, 'The Biblical Symbol of Edom',
pp. 271–99.

36. One of the key issues of debate is to what extent the origins and development of
the Messiah ben Joseph figure are a reflection of or a response to Christian messianic
ideals of a dying and suffering Messiah, or the product of a Jewish context, such as
through an internal development of early Jewish traditions from the Second Temple
period; cf. Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from Its Beginning to the
Completion of the Mishnah* (New York, 1955), Joseph Heinemann, 'The Messiah of
Ephraim and the Premature Exodus of the Tribe of Ephraim', *Harvard Theological
Review* 68 (1975), pp. 1–15, David Berger, 'Three Typological Themes in Early Jewish
Messianism: Messiah Son of Joseph, Rabbinic Calculations, and the Figure of Armilus',
Association for Jewish Studies Review 10 (1985), pp. 141–65, Israel Knohl, 'On 'The son of
God', Armillus and Messiah son of Joseph', *Tarbiz* 68 (1998), pp. 13–38, Robert P. Gor-
don, 'The Ephraimate Messiah and the Targum(s) to Zechariah 12.10', in J. Cheryl Exum

and talmudic traditions, with varied treatment in these sources from
descriptions of one anointed for war at the end of time to reference to a
Messiah who will be slain: a figure who is descended from Joseph or
Ephraim.[37] However, it is clear that in apocalypses of the seventh and
eighth centuries, such as *Sefer Zerubbabel* and *Pirqe Mashiah*, a far more
detailed picture of the Messiah ben Joseph emerges, including the per-
sonal naming of the Messiah ben Joseph and his involvement in a range
of activities beyond leading Israel in battle. In *Sefer Zerubbabel*,
Nehemiah ben Hushiel, the Messiah ben Joseph, is said to be concealed
in Tiberias, but appears to gather Israel together, reinstitutes sacrificial
worship in Jerusalem and conducts a census, recording Israel in genea-
logical lists according to their families. He fights against Shiroi the King
of Persia, but is eventually killed by the Satanic figure Armilus. A dual
messianism is also in view in *Pirqe Mashiah*. Although the title 'Messiah
ben Joseph' is not explicitly used in the compilation, a warrior Messiah
called Nehemiah features in the text, who, judging from his activities and
characteristics, is the Messiah ben Joseph of rabbinic and apocalyptic
tradition.[38] In *Pirqe Mashiah*, it is recorded that during the wars of the
messianic era, Israel heads to Rome in order to bring back the Temple
vessels and King Nehemiah, the Messiah, goes with them.[39] They reach
Jerusalem, but there is a confrontation with the Arabs at the Temple
Mount followed by a battle, which results in the death of Nehemiah at
the hands of the Arabs. Nehemiah is subsequently resurrected by the
Messiah ben David. This brief outline highlights how the Messiah ben

and Hugh Williamson (eds.), *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in
Honour of David J.A. Clines* (London, 2003), pp. 184–95, David Mitchell, 'Rabbi Dosa and
the rabbis differ: Messiah ben Joseph in the Babylonian Talmud', *Review of Rabbinic
Judaism* 8 (2005), pp. 77–90, David Mitchell, 'Messiah ben Joseph: a sacrifice of atone-
ment for Israel', *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 10.1 (2007), pp. 77–94, Holger Zellentin,
'Rabbinizing Jesus, Christianizing the son of David: the Bavli's approach to the second-
ary Messiah traditions', in Rivka Ulmer (ed.), *Discussing Cultural Influences: Text, Con-
text, and Non-Text in Rabbinic Judaism* (Lanham, 2007), pp. 99–127.

37. M *Sotah* 7:2 and 8:1 refer to a person called 'the Anointed for Battle' based on
Deut. 20:2–7, and M *Makkot* 2:6 tells of a figure anointed for the purpose of leading the
army in war. On the Messiah ben Joseph, see, for example, Genesis Rabbah 75.5, 99.2,
95, Song of Songs Rabbah 2.13, 4.5, (perhaps most famously) BT *Sukkah* 52a-b, Targum
on Song of Songs 4.5 and 7.4, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 40:11, Midrash on
Psalms 87.6, and Numbers Rabbah 14.1.

38. See BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 39b–40a.

39. Ra'anan Boustan suggests of the Temple vessels that 'the physical movement of
these artefacts traces the historical trajectory of divine favor', see Ra'anan S. Boustan,
'The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geog-
raphy in a Christianizing Empire', in Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh (eds.), *Antiq-
uity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World* (Tübingen,
2008), pp. 327–72 (363); cf. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology*, pp. 125–71.

Joseph traditions became more developed in later Jewish apocalyptic literature, as the legend was adapted to reflect historical circumstances and expanded in accordance with the ideas reflected in a particular compilation. Thus, in *Sefer Zerubbabel*, Nehemiah is attacked by Shiroi king of Persia.[40] In *Pirqe Mashiah*, however, the Messiah ben Joseph fights against the Arabs as the contemporary political adversary, rather than an anonymous apocalyptic figure or Gog and Magog, as found in other Jewish traditions.[41] In this way, the enemies of the Messiah ben Joseph can be a clear marker of the contemporary political concerns of the apocalyptic redactors.

The Messiah ben David also has a vital role in *Pirqe Mashiah*. Many aspects of the role of the Messiah ben David build on earlier midrashic and Second Temple concepts of messianism. In *Pirqe Mashiah*, the Messiah ben David is said to come with the clouds of heaven with seraphim at his side. Thus, he is identified with the son of man of Dan. 7:13, emphasizing his supernatural activities.[42] The Messiah is also described as the son of David and undertaking the traditional warrior role of defeating the enemies of Israel at the end of time. He achieves this by telling Israel to 'stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord' at which point he kills the enemies of Israel with the breath of his mouth, based on Isa. 11:4, thus acting again in fulfilment of biblical prophecy.[43] Following the Day of the Lord, God crowns the Messiah, sets 'a helmet of

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40. As Günter Stemberger notes, Shiroi king of Persia is most probably to be identified with the son of Chosroes II, who ascended the throne as Kavad II. Kavad II was the Persian leader who agreed a peace treaty with Heraclius in c. 628 CE, which may provide the context for the production of *Sefer Zerubbabel* given the inevitable disappointment within the Jewish community at the reclaiming of Jerusalem by Heraclius. See Günter Stemberger, 'Jerusalem in the Early Seventh Century: Hopes and Aspirations of Christians and Jews', in Lee Levine (ed.), *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York, 1999), pp. 260–72.

41. For example, on Gog and Magog as the enemy, see Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 40:11. Edom is also a popular enemy for the Messiah ben Joseph, which may reflect varying stages in the understanding of Edom as Rome or Byzantium; *Otot ha-Mashiah* describes in some detail how the Messiah ben Joseph will be victorious against the ruler of Edom; cf. Genesis Rabbah 99.2. *Otot ha-Mashiah* and *Nistarot R. Shimon ben Yohai* also focus on Armilus, the Satanic figure introduced in *Sefer Zerubbabel*, as a key enemy of the Messiah ben Joseph. See Berger, 'Three Typological Themes in Early Jewish Messianism', pp. 141–65 and Dan, 'Armilus', pp. 73–104.

42. Cf. 1 Enoch 46:1–5, 62:5–14, 4 Ezra 13, Targum 1 Chronicles 3:24, BT *Sanhedrin* 98a, Tanhuma Buber *Toledot* 20, Tanhuma *Toledot* 14, Midrash on Psalms 21.5, and Numbers Rabbah 13.14.

43. Cf. 1 Enoch 62:2, 1Q28b 5.25, 4Q161 in commentary on Isa. 11:1–2, 4 Ezra 13:10, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Ruth Rabbah 5.6, Song of Songs Rabbah 6.10.1, Pesiqta Rabbati 37.1, Tanhuma *Toledot* 14, *Terumah* 7, Tanhuma Buber *Toledot* 20, *Terumah* 6, Midrash on Psalms 2.3 and 21.3.

salvation on his head' and gives the Messiah splendour, glory and garments of honour. Then God makes the Messiah stand upon a high mountain to bear good tidings of salvation to Israel and conduct the resurrection of the dead.[44] As such, the Messiah ben David has an important role in the transition from this world to the next, but, despite his prominence in the text, the Messiah ben David is clearly subordinated to the authority and action of God, and divine intervention is the primary means by which Israel will be saved at the end of time. In particular, the Day of the Lord is conducted by God who takes vengeance on the nations of the world gathered for the war, and it is God who acts on the Day of Judgement to decide the ultimate fate of the righteous and wicked.

However, a striking feature of Jewish apocalypticism of the seventh and eighth centuries is the development of elaborate descriptions concerned with how to identify the Messiah ben David when he is revealed at the end of time. Issues around the identification of the Messiah are outlined in different ways in texts such as *Sefer Zerubbabel*, *Otot ha-Mashiah* and *Pirqe Mashiah*. For example, in *Sefer Zerubbabel*, the identity of the Messiah ben David is suspect because of his lowly and despicable appearance, but affirmed when he is given the rod of Moses and he resurrects Nehemiah, the Messiah ben Joseph who was slain.[45] *Otot ha-Mashiah* takes a different approach. In this text, the Satanic figure of Armilus claims that he is the Messiah and he is accepted by the Edomites and the other nations of the world. Nehemiah the Messiah ben Joseph is commanded to bring the Torah and declare that Armilus is God, but he reads out the commandment '*you shall have no other Gods before me*' (Exod. 20:3). Armilus claims that this is not to be found in the Torah and so Nehemiah and his warriors fight against him as a false messiah.[46] In *Pirqe Mashiah*, Elijah and the King Messiah appear to Israel in the desert. Elijah exhorts the people to arise, but they do not believe that the Messiah has indeed arrived. Seven miracles are conducted by the Messiah in order to prove his identity, which includes the resurrection of Nehemiah, and Israel are convinced. However, following the Day of the Lord, the Jewish people question his identity again and ask the Messiah ben David if he is the one predicted in biblical prophecy, which he confirms. To prove that this is his true identity, at the request of Israel he conducts the resurrection of the dead.

44. Cf. Isa. 26:19, Dan. 12:2, PT *Ta'anit* 1:1, BT *Hagigah* 12b, Midrash on Psalms 25.1, and esp. Pesiqta Rabbati 34.2, 36.1–2, 37.1–2, and Lamentations Rabbah proem 1.
45. *Sefer Zerubbabel* (BHM 2, pp. 55–56).
46. *Otot ha-Mashiah* (BHM 2, pp. 60–61).

The prevalence of questions about the identification of the Messiah in these texts suggests a concern over messianic claims, or other assertions of religious authority. In *Pirqe Mashiah*, the redactor uses scriptural proof in order to claim that the expected Messiah ben David is about to arrive and that his actions are the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. In discussing the coming of the Messiah, the redactor has implicitly argued against the validity of any previous claims to Messiahship, and in addition describes a number of tests that will prove the identity of the Messiah. The potentially apologetic nature of these teachings in *Pirqe Mashiah* is supported by specific reference to dispute with a gentile or a heretic (גוי או מין), and how to answer an opponent's arguments on questions of the status of Israel and Jerusalem in the future.[47] Thus, arguments are provided not only to ascertain the correct identity of the Messiah ben David but also to affirm the elect status of the Jewish people and their reward in the next age. The identity of the opponents in this text remains a matter of debate – the vagueness of the terminology precludes definite assertions,[48] but could potentially be either Christian or indeed Muslim opponents given the context and concern with identity and status – but it is clear that *Pirqe Mashiah* is aimed at an internal Jewish audience assuring them of their place in the world to come, and provides them with arguments, based on scripture, in the eventuality of debate with those who would claim otherwise.[49]

However, the miracles performed by the Messiah ben David as a test of his identity in *Pirqe Mashiah* also serve another function. The eschatological scheme in *Pirqe Mashiah* portrays the future redemption as a Second Exodus, with many of the events of the messianic era paralleled in the events of the wilderness wanderings culminating at the revelation at Sinai. Thus, the Exodus is viewed as a prototype for the redemption at

47. See references to dispute with a *min* (מין) or *goy* (גוי) at BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 36b, 37a and 46a.

48. See Martin Goodman, 'The Function of Minim in Early Rabbinic Judaism', in Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger and Peter Schäfer (eds.), *Geschichte - Tradition - Reflexion*, vol. 1 (Tübingen, 1996), pp. 501–10; William Horbury, 'The Benediction of the *Minim* and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy', *JTS* 33 (1982), pp. 19–61; Lawrence Schiffman, *Who was a Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism* (Hoboken NJ, 1985), pp. 51–68; Yaakov Teppler, *Birkat haMinim* (Tübingen, 2007); Günter Stemberger, 'Birkat ha-minim and the separation of Christians and Jews', in Benjamin Isaac and Yuval Shahar (eds.), *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome: Jews in Antiquity* (Tübingen, 2012), pp. 75–88.

49. For more detailed discussion on the testing and identification of eschatological figures in diverse apocalyptic texts of the seventh and eighth centuries, see Helen Spurling, 'Discourse of Doubt: the testing of apocalyptic figures in Jewish and Christian traditions of Late Antiquity', *Jewish Culture and History* 16.2 (2015), pp. 5–22.

the end of time.[50] The compilation's opening sections explain that Israel will be saved at the end of time because of her righteousness. This righteousness is indicated by the fact that Israel 'received the Torah on Mount Sinai', which is a sign of God's love for his people.[51] Thus, the context of the salvific event of the Exodus and subsequent covenant between Israel and God is made clear. Indeed, prior to the end of time, the only two events that *Pirqe Mashiah* cites as evidence of divine intervention in history are the creation of the world itself, and the giving of Torah.[52] After the apocalyptic signs of the end, the eschatological narrative shifts to focus on those who have survived these trials who are now in the 'wilderness of Moab' and 'the land of the sons of Ammon'.[53] Miracles are performed for these survivors, which are reminiscent of the Exodus story. Just as with the first Exodus, the 'survivors' are in the wilderness where they are searching for food and God brings forth a spring for them.[54]

This approach of mirroring the redemption at the Exodus with that at the end of time is not a new innovation in *Pirqe Mashiah*, as it is found in other Jewish apocalyptic texts of this period such as *Sefer Zerubbabel* and *Nistarot R. Shimon ben Yohai*, and also earlier midrashim linking Moses and the Messiah, most famously in Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 5.7–9 but also Ruth Rabbah 2.14 and 5.6 and Pesiqta Rabbati 15.10.[55] However, the miracles performed by the Messiah ben David in the wilderness, as the place of the announcement of redemption, are described in expansive detail in *Pirqe Mashiah*.[56] Furthermore, the particular arrangement of miracles in this compilation reinforces the concept of the redemption as

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50. See Idel, 'Jewish apocalypticism', p. 208, Berger, 'Three Typological Themes in Early Jewish Messianism', pp. 141–65.

51. This introduction is found in Jellinek, BHM 3, p. 68, but not the BSB manuscript.

52. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 38b–39a.

53. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 39b.

54. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 40a; cf. Exod. 15:22–27, Exod. 17:1–7, and Numbers 20:1–13 for the provision of water for the Israelites in the wilderness.

55. The time period in the wilderness is specified as 45 days during which they consume the roots of brooms; cf. Job 30:4, Ascension Isaiah 4:13, Ruth Rabbah 2.14 and 5.6, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 5.8, Pesiqta Rabbati 15.10, and Numbers Rabbah 11.2. *Nistarot R. Shimon ben Yohai*, *Otot R. Shimon ben Yohai*, *Aggadat ha-Mashiah* and *Sefer Zerubbabel* closely parallel the tradition in *Pirqe Mashiah*, referring to a period of distress at the end of time in which Israel spends forty or forty-five days in the desert where they eat the roots of brooms. *Pirqe Mashiah* explicitly views the forty-five days as a time without a redeemer between the death of Nehemiah and the appearance of the Messiah ben David. The period of forty-five days is calculated based on Dan. 12:11, which describes a period of 1290 days until the end shall come, and Dan. 12:12, which mentions 1335 days. The difference of 45 days is therefore considered to be the period during which the Messiah will leave Israel alone in the wilderness, just as Moses disappeared for a similar period of time.

56. For a similar arrangement of miracles, see *Pereq R. Yoshiyyahu* (BHM 6:115).

a Second Exodus event. Elijah and the Messiah appear in the wilderness, and, following the disbelief of the survivors of Israel, Elijah says 'Perhaps you are looking for a sign, as in the case of Moses?',[57] thus echoing the Israelites' need for proof that God had not deserted them in the wilderness, which was provided by Moses through signs. The Messiah ben David is thus a 'new Moses' and some of the miracles that he performs in the eschatological age recall the desert experience. The first miracle brings Moses himself and his generation from the desert,[58] and the second miracle sees the resurrection of Korah and all his assembly.[59] The third miracle is the resurrection of the Messiah ben Joseph, but the fourth miracle reveals the hidden jar of manna and anointing oil with which Moses anointed the altar and vessels of the Tabernacle.[60] The fifth miracle brings the staff of Moses, through which the original signs were performed.[61] The miraculous signs end with the grinding of the mountains of Israel and the revelation of the 'secret', most probably the secret of the time of redemption.[62]

This series of allusions to the first Exodus event is further reinforced in Pirqe Mashiah in the description of the future age. Following the Day

57. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 40a.

58. Traditions on the resurrection of Moses are also found in Targum Neofiti Exodus 12:42 and Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 24.9. Psalm 50:5 is cited as evidence for the resurrection of Moses in Pirqe Mashiah. Within the Hebrew Bible, 'my faithful ones' refers to those who have made a covenant with God, but, in Pirqe Mashiah, is understood to refer to the generation of the wilderness who were with Moses; see Exodus Rabbah 19.5, Tanhuma Buber Qedoshim 5; cf. M Sanhedrin 10:3, which teaches that the generation of the wilderness will not have a share in the world to come.

59. See Num. 16:1–35; cf. Ma'aseh de R. Joshua b. Levi (BHM 2, pp. 48–49) in which Korah and his assembly ask Elijah when the general resurrection of the dead will occur in which they expect to take part. Psalm 71:20 is the proof text for this miracle, which asks for a renewal of life and deliverance from the depths of the earth; cf. Pesiqta Rabbati 33.6.

60. The fourth miracle is the revelation of the hidden jar of manna (cf. Exod. 16:33) and anointing oil with which Moses anointed the altar and vessels of the Tabernacle (cf. Lev. 8). Hidden things of the land are described in Mekhilta Vayassa 6:81–83, T Sotah 13:1, Song of Songs Rabbah 2.4, BT Horayot 12a, Tanhuma Buber Noah 7, and Eliyyahu Rabbah 23.

61. For example, Exod. 4:1–4. This staff later became the staff of Aaron, which was placed before the ark as described in Num. 17:1–11; see Christine Meilicke, 'Moses' staff and the return of the dead', Jewish Studies Quarterly 6.4 (1999), pp. 345–72; Christine Meilicke, 'The staff of Moses: Jewish and Christian interpretations', Judaism Today 12 (1999), pp. 24–30; and Reeves, Trajectories, pp. 187–99 for the appearance of the staff of Moses in the eschatological age.

62. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 40a: הנס השביעי יגלה להם הסוד שני זאת אות הברית 'the seventh miracle: he will reveal to them the secret, as it is said, This is the sign of the covenant (Genesis 9:12)'. The proof text for the miracle is Genesis 9:12,17, which implies that the secret revealed is a sign of the covenant, thus its revelation underlines the everlasting relationship between God and all living creatures, and the fulfilment of this covenant.

of Judgement, God is presented as the teacher of Torah in the Temple, which is his *bet ha-midrash*. God and David sit on thrones, and the women who have had their sons taught Torah form a group around Zerubbabel, who is the interpreter, to hear his explanation of God's teaching. This highlights that following the second redemptive Exodus event, there will be another revelation as at Sinai. Importantly, however, *Pirqe Mashiah* does not refer to any new precepts delivered by God, rather it is a proper understanding of the Torah, whether the Law, Scripture or Mishnah (תורה מקרא משנה) that is revealed in God's teaching.[63] Indeed, the importance of the existing Torah is paramount throughout the compilation, and is found particularly in connection with ideas of election and judgement. *Pirqe Mashiah* emphasizes the righteousness of Israel, who accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai whilst the nations did not.[64] This acceptance brought Israel merit, and it is through this merit that she will be delivered from Gehinnom at the end of time. Thus, *Pirqe Mashiah* highlights that the Torah is the means of Israel's salvation from the first revelation at Sinai to redemption in the future age.

Inextricably linked to study of the Torah in *Pirqe Mashiah* is the prominent subject of the status of Israel. The redactor devotes a great deal of space to describing the righteousness of Israel, which is bound up with the theme of election and ideas about Jerusalem and the Temple. There are numerous passages in *Pirqe Mashiah* on Israel as the elect of God. Israel is described in detail as the beloved one of God,[65] and the superior status of Israel as the 'bride of God' is outlined.[66] Alongside the Torah, an important sign of the elect status of the Jewish people was the condition of Jerusalem and the Temple. The reconstruction of the Temple was projected onto an event of the messianic future, and this fundamental symbol of election is also outlined in *Pirqe Mashiah*.[67] In addition to passages on the election of Israel, there are a number of sections that outline the final victory of Israel, with the associated rejection of the nations, and the exalted position of Israel in paradise as manifested through an eschatological banquet, canopies, booths and wreathes for the righteous, increase in progeny and

63. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 44a-b; for further discussion, see Helen Spurling, 'The image of God in late antique apocalyptic literature: the Holy One as teacher in Pirqe Mashiah', *Jewish Culture and History* 12.3 (2012), pp. 385–96.

64. See Exod. 19:8, 24:3, 24:7. The acceptance of Torah by Israel, but its rejection by the nations of the world is described, for example, in Mekhilta *Bahodesh* 5, Sifre Deuteronomy 343, Pesiqta Rabbati 21:2/3, Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 41, and Tanhuma Buber *Berakhah* 3.

65. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 36b.

66. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 38b-39a.

67. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 36b-37a and 42b-43b.

abundant provisions, the splendour of the Garden of Eden and the presence of God.[68] It is because of their righteousness that Israel will receive all these rewards in the next age.

The precise recipients of this reward in the future world, and the identification of those eligible for salvation, is an interesting feature of the compilation because of the emphatic moral dualism in relation to redemption. The focus is on a collective national preservation, with Israel initially divided into the righteous and the wicked. Ultimately, however, it is the whole nation of Israel that is rewarded at the end of time, whilst the nations of the world are excluded and designated for Gehinnom.[69] The theme of repentance is integral to the understanding of the righteousness of the whole nation of Israel. *Pirqe Mashiah* teaches that repentance is possible even up to the moment of reaching the Throne of Glory on Judgement Day, and God will forgive those who repent even at the last moment. This is proven based on Hos. 14:2, which is an exhortation specifically addressed to Israel and suggests that it is only Israel who are able to repent, a privilege from which the nations of the world are implicitly excluded.[70] The wicked among Israel do receive their punishment in Gehinnom, but, even after Judgement Day, their positive response to God's teaching of Torah in the next age ensures that their punishment is revoked and God brings them into Eden alongside the righteous of Israel. Again, repentance is key, as the wicked among Israel proclaim their recognition that they have been condemned justly by God.[71]

Thus, even in the future world the wicked from among Israel can be forgiven and rewarded for proper acknowledgement of God's teaching, and, as such, the need for continual instruction in the future age is made clear. It is God's teaching of Torah and the positive responses to it by Israel (both righteous and wicked) that ensures all of Israel are brought into Eden where God hosts a great feast. This feast ends with blessings by David over the four cups of the *Pesah Seder*.[72] Thus, the acceptance of

68. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 44b-46b.

69. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 43b-44b.

70. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 43b-44a; cf. Targum Hosea 14:2, Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 43 and Tanhuma Buber *Tazria* 11. Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 24.1-13, Pesiqta Rabbati 44.1-10, and 50.1-6 contain elaborate treatises on the power of repentance based on Hos. 14:2; see esp. Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 24.12-13, Pesiqta Rabbati 44.7, and 44.9.

71. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 44a-44b; cf. *Alphabet of R. Akiva* (BHM 3, pp. 27-28), BT *Eruvin* 19a, Mekhilta *Beshallah* 7:145, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 56.1, and Exodus Rabbah 15.29.

72. BSB Cod. Hebr. 222, 45a; the four cups of the *Pesah Seder* correspond to the four expressions in Exod. 6:6-7 describing how God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Each cup is drunk at a particular point of the meal - after the Kiddush, after reading the Haggadah, after the Birkat ha-Mazon and after the Hallel (Ps. 113-118).

Torah allows for the possibility of repentance, which in turn allows for a renewal of the covenant made at the first Exodus event, sealed at the eschatological banquet attended by all Israel. In *Pirqe Mashiah*, the tradition of the eschatological banquet mirrors the *Pesah Seder*, again linking God's major act of redemption on behalf of his people at the Exodus with the final act of redemption at the end of time.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are a number of key aims in *Pirqe Mashiah*. First, the compilation intends to show that the events of the Arab conquests and fall of Byzantium are a sign of the apocalyptic end of time. *Pirqe Mashiah* contributes a Jewish perspective on these events, highlighting a number of concerns held by the redactor from ownership of the Temple Mount to conversion to the need to provide a theological explanation for the success of the Arabs. The redactor views the changing political circumstances as a sign of the end, God's intervention not only within history but to end history, which will lead to a new world and a time of reward and vindication for all Israel, and Israel alone.

Secondly, *Pirqe Mashiah* brings together numerous rabbinic traditions emphasizing the special relationship between Israel and God and the elect status of His chosen people. In this way, the text addresses the status of the Jewish people at a time of historical uncertainty regarding election. *Pirqe Mashiah* provides reassurance or consolation in a time of political turmoil, and looks for a restructuring of the current reality and existing order in order to fulfil expectations with regard to Israel's relationship with God, emphasizing the righteousness of Israel in this age and their reward in the next.

Thirdly, the themes that address the elect status of Israel could reflect a purpose beyond only consolation: *Pirqe Mashiah* could be considered an apocalyptic apologetic. It is a means of self-definition and affirmation addressed to an internal audience so they can make their own defence if

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A parallel to this tradition is found in Genesis Rabbah 88.5 (cf. Midrash on Psalms 11.5 and 75.4), which describes the four cups in the messianic future, based on the same biblical verses as in *Pirqe Mashiah*. Although *Pirqe Mashiah* mentions four cups, only three proof texts are cited. This is also found in Genesis Rabbah, but with the explanation that Ps. 116:13 should be read as 'cup of salvation(s)', and thus is two cups. Interestingly, the Cairo Genizah fragment lists five cups based on the same proof texts of Ps. 16:5, 23:5, and 116:13; cf. the dispute in BT *Pesahim* 118a as to the number of cups at the *Pesah Seder*.

and when necessary. The compilation has been constructed in such a way as to provide an argument for the close relationship between God and Israel, which is manifest through the Torah and the sending of the Messiah. The rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple at the end of time will be the tangible sign that God is with his people. The apologetic function of *Pirqe Mashiah* is highlighted through explicit reference to dispute with a gentile or heretic who may express disbelief at this situation. Although the identity of these opponents is an open question, it is clear that *Pirqe Mashiah* is aimed at an internal Jewish audience assuring them of their place in the world to come, but also providing a defence in the eventuality of debate with those who would claim otherwise.

Fourthly, this context of competing religious claims can be seen with regard to the messianism in the text. The key opponents of the Messiah ben Joseph and the Messiah ben David reflect the historical context of the compilation with concern about both the Arabs and the fall of 'Edom'. While clearly building on earlier traditions, the activities of the Messiah ben David are developed to highlight the need for confirmation of messianic authority in light of competing religious claims. As part of this, the redactor of *Pirqe Mashiah* uses scriptural proof in order to claim that the expected Messiah ben David is about to arrive and that his actions are the fulfilment of biblical prophecy, and builds on this through the elaboration of tests that will prove the identity of the Messiah. This effectively argues against the validity of any other claims to Messiahship or eschatological authority. As part of this approach, the authority and identity of the Messiah ben David is further clarified because he will act as a new Moses, linking God's major act of redemption on behalf of his people at the Exodus with the final act of redemption at the end of time.

Fifthly, the importance of rabbinic teaching, and the study of Torah, is paramount, as highlighted by rabbinically attributed traditions, rabbinic hermeneutics and frequent use of scriptural proof texts. The portrayal of the future world highlights the rabbinic nature of the world to come, which in itself validates the contemporary system and authority of the rabbis. Although a new world is described, the strongest elements of continuity with the present age can be seen in the rabbinic emphasis on the importance of continued Torah study, illustrated by the Temple re-formed as a *bet ha-midrash* with God providing a proper understanding of Torah, Mikra and Mishnah. Indeed, the interpretation of Torah is what ultimately saves the wicked from Israel even after Judgement Day. Thus, a clearly rabbinic view of the future world is found in *Pirqe Mashiah*, which highlights that the compilation represents a late rabbinic

form of apocalypticism that not only offers reassurance but endorses rabbinic authority.

A final note: as highlighted at the start of this chapter, the events of the seventh and eighth centuries led to a well-known increase in the production of Jewish or late rabbinic apocalyptic compilations, as exemplified by *Pirqe Mashiah* but also *Sefer Zerubbabel, Sefer Eliyyahu, Nistarot Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai* and others. This so called 'revival' was due to the political turmoil caused first by the Sasanian and then Arab conquests, which led to the production of specific apocalyptic textual collections and tractates. These sources are detailed and developed, and also include a number of new ideas not found in earlier eschatological material. *Pirqe Mashiah* contributes to the diversity of these seventh and eighth century Jewish apocalyptic works, and offers another perspective on this time of conquest and changing rule. However, it is clear that there are substantial elements of continuity with earlier messianic and eschatological haggadic traditions, including with the apocalypses of the Second Temple period. It is against the continued use of eschatological concepts and traditions that Jewish apocalypses of the seventh and eighth century flourish. As such Jewish apocalypticism experienced not so much a revival as a revitalisation.[73]

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73. See Helen Spurling, '*Pirqe Mashiah*: A Translation, Commentary and Introduction' (forthcoming).

APOCALYPTIC IDEAS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ARMENIA

Robert W. THOMSON

Apocalypticism, the revelation of what is hidden, refers to ideas and writings that deal with the end of the present order of things; while Eschatology is more especially the study of the last things, not exactly a science, but speculation on the end of life, judgment, and heaven and hell. Here I shall confine my remarks to Armenian views on the subject, concentrating on such ideas in the early writers, leading up to the transformation of the Near East after the emergence of Islam. Not all Armenian writers dealt with these matters; and it is difficult to assess how typical the surviving texts are of the views of the majority. Certain ideas are frequently expressed, while others did not gain wide credence. Let us begin at the beginning.

Armenian writing begins in a Christian context. There had been Jewish communities in Armenia before the time of Christ, but nothing is known of their cultural life – as opposed to their economic significance – or of their impact on the larger population. So I start around the year 400 CE, when after the invention of a script Armenians began to translate mostly Christian texts, and to develop their own original literature. Now according to the gospel of Matthew, before his betrayal Jesus delivered a lengthy sermon on the Mount of Olives in response to his disciples' question: 'What shall be the sign of your coming and of the end of the world?' Jesus foretold wars, famines, earthquakes, and the rise of iniquity, but assured the disciples that those who will endure to the end shall be saved. Luke refers to the various terrible signs that will precede the coming of the Son of Man; while John concentrates on the coming of the Holy Spirit.[1] The important phrase from our present point of view, however, is Mark 13:10: 'And the gospel must first be published among all nations', expanded in Matt. 24:14: 'And this gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end shall come.'

The preaching of the gospel in Armenia is not recorded in the New Testament, though the Book of Acts refers to the proclamation of the

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1. Matt. 24, Luke 21, John 16.

faith in the tongues of the Parthians and Medes, and of those who dwell in Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia.[2] Not until much later, long after the conversion of the Armenian king Trdat [Tiridates] in the days of Constantine, and not until after the Armenians had invented their alphabet and began to reflect on the transformation of their country, did they place the Christianisation of Armenia in that wider context of the coming of the end.

Two texts are of particular interest in this regard. The first, which is one of the earliest original compositions in the Armenian language, is the biography of the inventor of the script, Maštoc', written in the 440s by his disciple Koriwn. In this encomium Koriwn emphasizes that through the invention of the new script not only do Moses and Paul now speak in the Armenian language, but that Christ's command to teach all nations and preach the gospel in all the world has been fulfilled.[3] For Koriwn it is not the conversion of king Trdat a century previously, but the invention of the Armenian script that marks the final point in the process that will bring about the end. In other words, the spread of Christianity in Armenia and the Caucasus – for Koriwn is not only interested in Armenia, but in Georgia and Caucasian Albania as well – can be viewed as a continuation of biblical history.[4]

The special connection of the Armenian people with the Old Israel, and the consciousness of living in the last age, are striking features of another author, who wrote later in the fifth century than Koriwn, but who turns his attention further back, to the origins of Christianity in Armenia. I refer to Agathangelos, the *good messenger*, the name taken by someone who compiled the authoritative account of the conversion of king Trdat and the work of Saint Gregory the Illuminator. This is not the place to trace the different recensions of this enigmatic work and the multiple translations into Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and other tongues.[5] Suffice it to say, that it is not known whether a preliminary written version

2. Acts 2:9.

3. Koriwn, *Vark' Maštoc'i*, ed. Manuk Abełean (Erevan, 1941; repr. Delmar NY, 1985), §11. Translation: Gabriele Winkler, *Koriwns Biographie des Mesrop Maštoc'* (OCA 245; Rome, 1994).

4. See further Abraham Terian, *Patriotism and Piety in Armenian Christianity* (Treasures of the Armenian Christian Tradition 2; Crestwood NY, 2005), pp. 13–18.

5. Survey of the many versions in Gabriele Winkler, 'Our Present Knowledge of the History of Agat'angelos and its Oriental Versions', *Revue des études arméniennes* 14 (1980), pp. 125–41. Translations of the Armenian, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic in Robert W. Thomson, *The Lives of Saint Gregory* (Ann Arbor MI, 2010). Critical Armenian text: *Agat'angelay Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. G. Ter-Mkrtč'ean and St. Kanayeanc' (Tiflis, 1909, repr. Delmar NY, 1980).

of the traditions surrounding Gregory, king Trdat, and the women martyred by the Armenian king, existed prior to the extant Armenian version, which is generally dated to the late fifth century. But an Armenian text different from the surviving one did once exist, for translations were made from it into Greek. Into the Armenian version of the *History* of Agathangelos a long section known as the *Teaching of Saint Gregory* was incorporated early in the sixth century.[6]

According to Agathangelos, Saint Gregory was subjected to a series of twelve tortures to dissuade him from his Christianity; but his sufferings did not prevent him from haranguing the Armenian king and refuting the latter's pagan ideas. In addition to a general presentation of the main points of Christianity, Gregory refers to the day of election in the seventh age to come, when Christ will give rest and rewards to all his labourers.[7] Then king Trdat planned a different tack-to flatter Gregory and promise him life and honours in return for his submission-to which our author assures us that Gregory would not have agreed. Eventually, king Trdat had Gregory thrown into the bottommost pit of the fortress of Artashat, from which no one had ever emerged alive.

Thirteen years later, after king Trdat had been turned into the form of a wild boar as divine punishment for putting refugee nuns to death, Gregory was discovered alive and well in the pit. On emerging, he delivered a sixty-day catechism to the Armenian court before baptising the king and nobles. This catechism is the long section known as the *Teaching of Saint Gregory.*[8] And here Gregory emphasizes in greater detail the coming of the millennium at the end. Among the signs will be the appearance of false prophets and the Antichrist. Then the Cross will shine out and fill the world with its light, denoting Christ's second coming to judge all races.[9] The Armenians now have to choose between salvation and damnation, the choice being presented as the choice between the cup of death and the cup of life.[10] If they choose the former, there is no salvation from hell. Gregory explains: In the first age was the beginning, when the world was created but corrupted by sin. In the sixth age was the renewal effected by the coming of Christ. And in that same

6. This has been inserted into the *History* as §§259-715 of the 900 paragraphs into which the whole work was divided by the editors of the critical Armenian edition; see previous note. Translation: Robert W. Thomson, *The Teaching of Saint Gregory* (rev. ed., Treasures of the Armenian Christian Tradition 1; New Rochelle NY, 2001).

7. Agathangelos, *History*, §72.

8. See n. 6 above.

9. *Teaching of Saint Gregory*, §471.

10. *Teaching of Saint Gregory*, §§508-16.

thousand years will be the end, when Christ will come again; and in this seventh age he will give rest to the weary, in that long year that has no limit.[11]

The idea of the seven ages already had a long history in the Christian church,[12] but Agathangelos gave it a particular resonance in Armenia. Although later writers do not emphasize as strongly as did Agathangelos the urgency of making an immediate choice between salvation and damnation, many writers were conscious that they were living in the sixth age.[13] But before we follow that theme, one further episode in the *History* of Agathangelos deserves attention: I refer to Gregory's vision of the future, which had an equally long impact on Armenian writing as did the notion of the last age.

After his lengthy sermon to the assembled Armenian court Gregory describes a vision that had been revealed to him. Agathangelos calls it a 'vision', in Armenian, *tesil*, which is derived from the verb 'to see'.[14] It was not a 'dream', an *eraz*, like some later such revelations. In Armenian this distinction was already significant, for Eznik, another of the pupils of Maštoc' and the author of the first original philosophical treatise, devotes a section to the theme of dreams.[15] One kind of dream, *eraz*, can occupy the mind when it is relaxed and asleep; this is based on what the mind had thought about during the daytime. But there is another kind that reflects something the mind had not previously considered at all, and this kind can be divided into two varieties. In the one, through the grace of God, a person sees, *tesanē*, something surely, although as in a mirror; these are like the visions of reality that Joseph and Daniel had in the Old Testament, which Eznik calls *tesilk' irac'*, 'visions of things'. The other variety of this kind of dream is caused by the Devil; it induces fear, or sexual desire, or in some other way dissuades a man from seeking God's help.

Gregory was supposedly wide awake when he was vouched his vision, a *tesil*. It is divided into two parts. It begins with the descent from heaven of a man in the form of light, who bids Gregory pay attention while he expounds the vision; and the second part explains the meaning of what was shown. In this vision Gregory saw a base of gold, as large as a hill in

11. *Teaching of Saint Gregory*, §§667–70.

12. A. Luneau, *L'histoire du salut: la doctrine des âges du monde* (Paris, 1964).

13. Robert W. Thomson, 'Number symbolism and patristic exegesis in some early Armenian writers', *Handes Amsorya* 90 (1976), cols. 117–38, esp. cols. 125–26; repr. in Robert W. Thomson, *Studies in Armenian Literature and Christianity* (Variorum CS 451; Aldershot, 1994).

14. Agathangelos, *History*, §§731–56.

15. Eznik, *De Deo*, ed. Louis Mariès and Charles Mercier (*PO* XXVIII 3, 4; Paris, 1959), §§251–56.

the centre of the royal capital, on which stood a column surmounted by a cross of light. There were also three other bases with columns in the various places where the martyrs had been killed by king Trdat. These columns were interconnected by vaults. Then Gregory saw numberless herds of black goats who passed through water and became white sheep. But some of them crossed back and became wolves that attacked the sheep; these were eventually borne away in a torrent of fire.

The heavenly man then explained the meaning of these wonders. The opening of heaven indicates that the martyrs have ascended and made a road to heaven for these Northern regions – a common Armenian term for Armenia. The light which filled the land is the preaching of the gospel. The main column marks the site of the temple of God, the throne of the high-priesthood, while the other three mark the places for the martyria of the holy saints. And the overarching canopy represents the celestial city. The passing of the goats through water indicates the baptism of the Armenians; but some turn back and become wolves, that is, they apostatize, and eventually are handed over to unquenchable fire.

I have passed over many details, but two points are particularly significant. In the first place the vision justifies the sites for the cathedral and neighbouring churches, which by the time this text was composed were a prominent feature of the capital, Vałaršapat (close to the modern Erevan). Secondly, it foretells the apostasy of numerous Armenians who will abandon the holy covenant. This refers to the events of 450–451, when an Armenian rebellion against the Sasanian shah was supported by the church, but a significant faction of the nobility did not join in.[16] As for the man of light who descended from heaven, Agathangelos calls him the providence of God, but later commentators identified him with Christ. This explains the name given to the site of the patriarchate after the twelfth century, Ejmiacin. For Ejmiacin simply means: 'The Only-begotten descended'.

This elaborate *History*, attributed to the unknown editor Agathangelos, is the foundational document of the Armenian church. It assembles

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16. This episode is described by two historians, Ełišē (the biblical Elisha) in whose extremely influential work the Armenians are likened to the Maccabees, and Łazar P'arpec'i. The latter was a well-known person writing at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. But nothing is known about Ełišē, and his *History* is likely to be later; see the 'Introduction' to Robert W. Thomson, *Elishē. History of Vardan and the Armenian War* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 5; Cambridge MA, 1982). Armenian critical texts: *Ełišēi vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc' Paterazmin*, ed. Ervand Ter-Minasyan (Erevan, 1957); *Łazaray Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. G. Ter-Mkrtč'ean and S. Malxasean (Tiflis, 1904; repr. Delmar NY, 1985), translation: Robert W. Thomson, *The History of Łazar P'arpec'i* (Columbia University Program in Armenian Studies. Suren D. Feshjian Academic Publications 4; Atlanta GA, 1991).

and gives a sort of coherence to a number of traditions that may not have been originally linked together. But once it circulated in its present form, all other Armenian versions of Agathangelos disappeared; now they are only known through various early translations. Much still remains obscure about this text, but it provides us with an introduction to two basic apocalyptical themes: one, that we are living in the last age before the end; and two, that divine revelations, properly interpreted, reveal the impending future.

However, although we are living in the last age, the sense of urgency at the heart of the message in Agathangelos soon disappeared. In the exhortations at the moments of crisis reported in the *Histories* of Eliśē and Lazar (the crisis of apostasy in the 450s that had been foretold by Saint Gregory[17]) there are no references to the coming end. In his *History* Eliśē does indicate that the Christian gospel has now been preached across the whole world, and that Christ promised to come a second time, but he fails to mention the sixth age or the imminent judgement of the world. On the other hand, further works are attributed to the same author, which tell a different story, namely the *Homilies on the Passion of Christ* and a *Commentary on Genesis*.[18] In the *Homilies* the author expands Christ's words to Peter [Matt. 26:40]: 'In six days I made heaven and earth', to add: 'Now it is six thousand years that the world has been subject to corruption'.[19] Eliśē explains that these are six days of one thousand years each, and that the Apostles have now warned the world regarding the seventh age. In the *Commentary on Genesis* the author notes that the first day of the week, the beginning of creation, is also that of the Resurrection; corruptible beings were created on the sixth day, and on the last unending day the incorruptible world begins.[20] But there is no sense of an impending crisis. Nor do the homilies attributed to Gregory the Illuminator,[21] or various other collections of the sixth and seventh centuries, have any reference to the ages of the world.

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17. See previous note.

18. I do not believe that these are by the same hand, but that controversy is not relevant here.

19. Robert W. Thomson, *A Homily on the Passion of Christ attributed to Elishe* (Eastern Christian Texts in Translation 5; Leuven, 2000), pp. 43, 134; see the Introduction for a discussion of the author's ideas on numerology. Armenian text: *Srboy Hōrn Meroy Eliśēi Vardapeti Matenagrut'iwnk'* (Venice, 1859), pp. 254, 324.

20. Eliśē, *Meknut'iwn Araracoc'*, ed. Hakob K'yoseyan, translated by Michael Papazian (Erevan, 2004), p. 23.

21. *Srboy Hōrn Meroy Grigor Lusaworč'i Yačaxapatum Čařk'* (Venice, 1954); translation by Simon Weber in *Ausgewählte Schriften der armenischen Kirchenväter* (Munich, 1927), vol. I, pp. 237-318.

Nonetheless, Armenians remained intrigued by number symbolism, both the allegorical interpretations of biblical numbers and the abstract mathematical meaning of numbers themselves, such speculations as they might find in the translations of Philo, for example. The theme of the sixth age therefore frequently appears, even though it seems almost an after-thought in other comments on the properties of the number six. The noted scholar John of Odzun, Catholicos from 718–729, who was responsible for the first collected edition of Armenian canon-law, was concerned with numbers in his legislation on liturgical matters. Discussing the hours for prayer, he compares the times associated with Adam with those of Christ. Thus it was at the sixth hour that God said to Adam: 'Thou shalt surely die', just as it was at the sixth hour of the sixth day of the sixth age that Christ was crucified. This he says is the reason for the prayer of the sixth hour – just as there are reasons for the prayer of the third and the ninth hours. And in his *Synodical Oration* he notes that six is a perfect number, though not in connection with the ages of the world.[22] Also in the early eighth century, Grigoris Aršaruni notes in his *Commentary on the Lectionary* that the Old Testament records the happenings of the six millennia influenced by the activity of the Devil.[23]

Likewise, John of Odzun's slightly later contemporary, Step'anos bishop of Siunik', devotes some attention to six in his *Commentary on the Four Evangelists*. Reflecting on the six jars mentioned in the account of the wedding at Cana, he notes first that six is a perfect number, a combination of one, two and three. Therefore the description of God making the world in six days indicates the perfection of creation.[24] But he makes no reference to six ages or the imminent end. Six continued to fascinate the Armenian mind, leading to rather extreme results. A simple six times table included in the arithmetical writings of Anania of Shirak, a seventh century author with unusually scientific interests for his time, was by the twelfth century expanded into a magical text, the recitation of which could eventually lead to madness.[25]

22. *Teařn Yovhannu Imastasiri Awjnec'woy Matenagrut'iwnk'* (Venice, 1834; Armenian text and facing Latin translation), pp. 54, 216–18.

23. *Grigorisi Aršarunwoy Meknut'iwn Ént'erc'uacoc'* (Venice, 1964), pp. 184–85; translation: Léon M. Froidevaux, *Grigoris Aršaruni. Commentaire du Lectionnaire* (Bibliotheca Armeniaca, Textus et Studia 1; Venice, 1975), pp. 106–108.

24. Step'anos Siwnec'i, *Meknut'iwn č'oric' Awetaranč'ac'*, ed. Mesrop Grigorean (Athens, 1988), pp. 126–27.

25. James R. Russell, 'Vec' hazareak mateanê Mayoc' mêj', *Hask* 6 (1994/1995), pp. 67–78; repr. in his *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9; Cambridge MA, 2004).

The Armenians were also familiar with the parallel theory of seven ages in this world to be followed by an eighth age of rest. The symbolism of eight appears in a number of writings, homiletic, liturgical, and exegetical. But the theory of eight ages is less common. The only text which presents it with some urgency is the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Nonnus of Nisibis, composed in the early ninth century. In fact, this is a translation from Arabic, based on earlier Syriac sources. But it was very influential in Armenia in later years. In a lengthy passage dealing with the doubting of Thomas, Nonnus explains the appearance of Christ to the apostles on the eighth day after the resurrection as a symbol of the first day of the eighth age. On that day Christ will say to those who doubted: 'Now you have seen and believed, but you are not profited because the time for faith has passed. Now is the time of judgment and retribution.'[26] But this is a rare touch of urgency in such writings.

Let us return to the fifth century and a different vision with long-lasting implications. Gregory's vision was not the first prognosis of impending events to be committed to writing in Armenia. The earliest historian, the anonymous compiler of the *Epic Histories* or *Buzandaran*, ascribes to his hero the patriarch Nerses a dire warning delivered to king Arshak. The *Buzandaran* describes the struggle between church and monarchy in the generations after the deaths of Saint Gregory and the converted Trdat. It is an invaluable source for its picture of Iranian traditions in social and political life, and its description of the impact of Syrian Christianity in Armenia that complements the emphasis on Greek influence found in Agathangelos.[27]

In fourth-century Armenia the patriarchate was normally reserved for descendants of Gregory, and Nerses was his great-great-grandson. His staunchly anti-Arian position exacerbated his differences with king Arshak II (350–68) over the latter's impious conduct, as Arshak correlated his policies with the Arianizing tendencies of the court in Constantinople. In Book IV, chapter thirteen, the author of the *Buzandaran* has Nerses deliver a lengthy reprimand to the king for disregarding God's commandments, ending with the following comments: 'Listen to me in

26. *Nanayi Asorwoy Vardapeti Meknut'iwn Yovhannu Awetaranin*, ed. K'erobē Č'rak'ean (T'angaran Haykakan Hin ew Nor Dprut'eanc' 7; Venice, 1920), p. 426, commenting on John 20:29. See now R.W. Thomson, *Nonnus of Nisibis, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John* (Atlanta, 2014).

27. See the detailed study and translation by Nina G. Garsoïan, *The Epic Histories attributed to P'awstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk')* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 8; Cambridge MA, 1989). Armenian text: *P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. K'erobē Patkanean (St. Petersburg, 1883; repr. Delmar NY, 1984).

order to redeem yourself from the wrath of God, and so that the unfortunate realm of Armenia may not perish on account of you. For I have seen a vision [*tesil*] that perdition and destruction are advancing on this doomed realm of Armenia.' But the king scoffed at the patriarch, who then replied with a pastiche of scriptural allusions, describing the impending desolation and ruin of the country.

The *Buzandaran* was probably composed after an initial version of Agathangelos had already appeared, that is in the 470s, and it is generally assumed that this vision is a reference to the division of Armenia between the Roman and Sasanian empires in 387. Nerses' vision, however, continued to live on well beyond the fifth century. Although it is not quoted in the period that concerns us today, in the tenth century it reappears in a separate *Life of Saint Nerses*, a text that was in turn subjected to further updating. One version of the revised text was known to the historian Matthew of Edessa, whose *History* goes down to 1136. Matthew informs us that in his vision Nerses predicted the arrival of the Crusaders. This was the same vision, says Matthew, that Daniel had seen in Babylon of a monstrous beast.[28]

This *Life of Nerses* underwent a series of revisions, which have not yet been properly studied, but one such text indicates that the patriarch predicted not only the end of the Arsacid line in Armenia, which indeed occurred in 428, but also that 150 years after that the Persians would capture Jerusalem and take the Cross captive. The arithmetic is not very accurate, but more importantly Nerses supposedly indicated that when the Cross will be returned to the Greeks, they will no longer rule over Jerusalem. For the Ishmaelites will replace them, only to be replaced in their turn by the valiant race of the Romans, who are called Franks, who will capture Jerusalem. As for Armenia, numerous afflictions will befall the country, including the oppression of the Archers, that is, the Mongols. By the twelfth century there is a great deal of apocalyptic speculation in Armenia concerning westerners, to be joined in the thirteenth century by Mongols. Much of this ties up with old traditions concerning the emperor Constantine found in Agathangelos.[29] Although such speculations take us far from our allotted time-frame, I shall come back to them at the end.

Let us now return to the more or less historical Nerses; he had a son, Sahak, who in turn became the patriarch of Armenia towards the end of

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28. Robert W. Thomson, 'The Crusaders through Armenian Eyes', in *The Crusades from the Perspective of the Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington DC, 2001), pp. 71–82, esp. p. 74.

29. Thomson, 'The Crusaders'.

the fourth century (387?). The historian Lazar P'arpec'i, writing at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries, describes his pontificate, his support for Maštoc' in the invention of an Armenian script, and his role in promoting translations from Syriac and Greek. According to Lazar, when Artašes son of Vram-Shapuh, the last scion of the Arsacid line, began his reign, he proved so debauched that the nobles came to Sahak and demanded that he support their efforts to have him deposed by the shah. Sahak refused to change a Christian for a heathen ruler, although Lazar indicates that 'that holy man saw in his eye by the power of the holy Spirit the complete destruction of Armenia.' He realised that the anathemas of Nerses had come upon them, namely, that they would fall under the yoke of servitude to heathens. In due course the Arsacid family was dispossessed of the kingdom in the sixth year of Artašes, 'according to the saying of the blessed man of God, the great patriarch Nerses.'[30]

Some time later, when the nobles again approached Sahak complaining this time about the newly imposed patriarch, he informed them of a vision he had had many years previously in the cathedral at Valaršapat. This site was the focus of Saint Gregory's vision, as noted earlier. As in Gregory's case, the heavens were opened and a bright light filled the world, but the other details are quite different, involving an altar standing on a *bema*, an olive tree with four branches, one less in size than the others, a throne on which were a globe of gold, and a piece of parchment with writing. When this vision disappeared a man in the form of light descended from heaven – again, as in Gregory's vision – and explained the significance of the vision. Corresponding to the three and a half branches, from henceforth until the end of the world there will run three decades of years and half a decade, until the appearance of the abomination of desolation, of which the prophet Daniel spoke. That is, three hundred and fifty years. The throne indicates the surging storm of Armenia's fortunes, and its covering of brown cloth represents the mourning which the country will suffer, because the vision looks to the end. There will be severe agitations in the world, famines and earthquakes that indicate the coming of the Son of Destruction. He will come and sit in the holy place according to scripture, declaring himself to be God. But then he will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus, and soon after the appearance of the Abomination of Desolation the monarchy will be renewed from the Arsacid line, and the priesthood from the progeny of the worthy patriarch Gregory. According to Lazar, no one ever spoke about the revelation, and shortly thereafter Sahak died.[31]

30. Lazar (see n. 16 above), *History*, pp. 21-25.
31. Lazar, *History*, pp. 29-37.

This episode is unlikely to have formed part of the original *History* of Lazar, written around the year 500 to honour his patron Vahan Mamikonean. There is a Greek version of it, though not of the *History*, and in Armenian it also circulated separately.[32] It may at first seem worrying that the preface to the canons of Shahapivan, a council that met in 444, only six years after the death of Sahak in 438, should refer to the visions of Gregory and Sahak. But that part of the preamble to the canons, which refers to events post-451, has been shown to date to the mid-seventh century at the earliest.[33] Furthermore, Lazar's entire *History* was subject to revision before the year 1200, though only fragments of the original version survive.[34] There have been various attempts to identify the events that occurred in the later eighth century that would satisfy the criteria of 350 years after Sahak's prognostication, but they have not solved the question of the restoration of the Arsacid line to the monarchy and of the Gregorid line to the patriarchate. That idea was very influential in later Armenian interpretations of the arrival of the Turks, of the Crusaders, or of the Mongols, but not in writers of the seventh or eighth centuries. In other words, the hope of a restoration of a golden age, namely the time of the original conversion of Armenia to Christianity, replaced the idea of an imminent Second Coming.

The allusion in Sahak's vision to the Son of Destruction in the Book of Daniel is not replicated in the *History* as such. The historian does of course know the book of Daniel: he twice refers to the three youths in the fiery furnace as an example of fortitude, and he recalls the fate of Nebuchadnezzar. Before him, Agathangelos had used the same models, especially the picture of Nebuchadnezzar, for it was on Nebuchadnezzar that he patterned the condition of king Trdat when possessed by demons.[35] The historian Ełišē refers several times to the book of Daniel, though he does not mention the prophet by name; likewise the later Movsēs Xorenac'i borrows imagery from the Book of Daniel without citing the source. In fact, the translation into Armenian of the Book of Daniel belongs to the earliest stratum of Old Testament renderings, as the original version derives from Syriac, but was soon revised against the

32. Gérard Garitte, 'La vision de S. Sahak en grec', *Le Muséon* 71 (1958), pp. 225–78.
33. Aram Mardirossian, *Le livre des canons arméniens (Kanonagirk' Hayoc')* de *Yovhannes Awjnec'i* (CSCO 606, Subsidia 116; Leuven, 2004), p. 533.
34. Charles Dowsett, 'The Newly Discovered Fragment of Lazar of P'arp's *History*', *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), pp. 97–122.
35. Nina G. Garsoïan, 'The Iranian Substratum of the "Agat'angelos" Cycle', in Nina G. Garsoïan, Thomas F. Mathews and Robert W. Thomson (eds.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington DC, 1982), pp. 151–74; repr. in her *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians* (Variorum: London, 1985).

Greek.[36] However, none of these historians uses prophecies in Daniel to explain events of his own time.

The first Armenian to explicitly use Daniel in that way is the seventh century historian known as Sebeos, who cites the prophecies of Daniel to explain the coming of the Muslims.[37] His first references to the Arabs and to Muhammed are straightforward. He describes the Arabs as from the stock of Abraham born from his handmaiden, hence they are the sons of Ismael;[38] but only once does Sebeos use the terms Hagarenes, *hagarac'ik'*.[39] He describes Muhammed as a merchant, who appeared as a preacher and taught the sons of Ismael to recognize the God of Abraham; he gave them legislation, and urged them to fulfill God's promise to Abraham, namely to seize the land which God had given him. And no one will be able to resist them in battle, said Muhammed according to Sebeos, because God is with them.[40]

Sebeos describes the Arab conquests to east and west, noting that some of his information came from men who had been taken captive in Iranian territory and had been eyewitnesses of the Arab success.[41] To explain their victory over the Persians, however, Sebeos invokes the blessed Daniel, who had earlier prophesied such a disaster. He proceeds to cite chapter seven of the book of Daniel, where the prophet had a vision of four great beasts, interpreted as four kings, who would rule in succession until the kingdom of the saints of the Most High. In the following chapter Daniel had a somewhat different vision, in which he refers to the west, the north and the south. Gabriel interpreted the vision for

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36. S. Peter Cowe, *The Armenian Version of Daniel* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 9; Atlanta GA, 1992), pp. 229–300.

37. *Patmut'iwn Sebēosi*, ed. Gevorg Abgaryan (Erevan, 1979); translation and commentary: Robert W. Thomson and James Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos* (Translated Texts for Historians 31; Liverpool, 1999). For Daniel's prophecies see just below. This *History* is discussed in detail by James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 70–102; he uses the title 'The History of Khosrov', as the principal subject is the reign of the shah Khosrov II (590–628). This work is not to be confused with the 'History of Heraclius', attributed to a certain Sebeos (Eusebius), of which fragments are extant; it is therefore often described as 'Ps.-Sebeos'. See Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, vol. I, pp. xxxiii–xxxviii. A brief summary may be found in Tim Greenwood, 'The History of Sebeos', in David Thomas and Barbara Roggema (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. I (600-900) (Leiden–Boston, 2009), pp. 139–44.

38. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 134. The pages of the Armenian text are indicated in the English translation.

39. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 140.

40. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 135.

41. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 139.

him, and mentions Persians, Medes and Greeks, the fourth kingdom remaining unnamed, though it too would fall. Sebeos explains the four beasts of Daniel, chapter seven, as follows: the first beast in human form is the kingdom of the west, that is, that of the Greeks. The second, in the form of a bear is the Sasanian kingdom to the east. The third, like a leopard, is the kingdom of the north, of Gog and Magog; Sebeos does not here identify a specific kingdom or people. The fourth beast, arising from the south, is the kingdom of Ismael.[42]

Our historian then turns his narrative to contemporary relations with the Greek empire, interspersed with references to Ishmaelite attacks into Armenia. It is noteworthy that he attributes the emperor Constans's policy of repression of the Armenian church to the activity of Satan, 'that rebellious dragon.'[43] Muawiyya he later describes as 'the servant of Anti-Christ,'[44] but he never invokes the Devil in his explanation of Islam. At the end, as Sebeos reflects on the writing of his *History*, he comments: 'I shall confirm my account through the prophetic statement spoken at the Lord's command ... In these later times down to eternity it will be fulfilled according to the Lord's word: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass.' He cites various Old Testament passages, ending again with Daniel's description of the fourth beast. And he con-cludes: 'The day of their destruction is close; the Lord has arrived upon them in readiness. And that too will be fulfilled in its own time.'[45]

Sebeos was writing before the Pseudo-Methodius *Apocalypse* was com-posed in the last decade of the seventh century.[46] His identity is unknown, but he was very familiar with the interaction of the Armenian and Greek churches and with documents in the patriarchal archives. He was steeped in biblical learning, which provided the framework for his conviction that he was living in the last times. The climax of the original work is thus a revelation of the Last Days, though Sebeos does not have anything specific to say about the Second Coming. He is really more concerned with the Muslims than with the end of the world. He does not use Daniel as a framework for his whole *History*,[47] only for the unexpected irruption of the Muslims. In fact, Sebeos soon became reconciled to the continuation

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42. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, pp. 141–42.
43. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 147.
44. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 164.
45. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, pp. 176–77.
46. See further below.
47. Howard-Johnston notes that his 'account of the recent past was shaped by reality rather than by any preconceived idea or fixed interpretation of his own ... He does not relate Daniel's vision to the materials he has assembled.' See his *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, pp. 79, 93.

of the Islamic order, for the actual ending of his *History* is a two-page addition to what he had originally written, composed after Muawiyya had gained sole power. The final phrase is written in the present tense: 'He rules over the possessions of the sons of Ismael, and makes peace with all.'[48]

This apocalyptic approach to the rise of the new Arab empire and the religion of Islam was not echoed in the majority of Armenian writers on the subject. Other historians are generally quite matter of fact about the arrival of the Muslims, and see no providential activity behind these events. The chronicler of 686 is quite prosaic, and offers no explanation of the Muslim advance. In his entry for the reign of Constantine III (641) he simply states: 'In his days the Tačiks [i.e., the Arabs of Mesopotamia] ruled over Syria, and subjected the churches of the holy city of Jerusalem to taxation.'[49] In the second year of his son Constans II the chronicler notes that Dvin was seized by the Tačiks, and the number of captives amounted to 33,000. In the reign of Constantine IV the author adds that following a war among the Tačiks, Armenia, Georgia and Aluank' ceased paying tribute after thirty years of subjection.[50] Here there is no suggestion of any divine plan at work. Lewond, writing at the turn of the eight and ninth centuries, begins his *History* with the Muslim invasions of Palestine, Syria, Persia, and Armenia. He compares the invasions to the catastrophes that befell the Jews, and often alludes to the Psalms for parallels; but he offers no interpretations.[51]

Later interpreters of the emergence of the Muslims, such as T'ovma Arcruni, the Catholicos Yovhannes Drasxanakertc'i, Grigor Magistros, Samuel of Ani (who notes that Muhammad himself made a pact with Armenia), Mxit'ar of Ani, Vardan, Pseudo-Šapuh, all offer much information about Muhammad. Their accounts have parallels in Syriac and Greek texts, but also many fantastic tales and opprobrious comments. But none

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48. Sebeos, *Armenian History*, p. 176. For the ordering of the final pages in the manuscript see n. 923 of the English translation, pp. 151–52 of vol. I.

49. *Ananun Žamanakagrut'iwn. Xmbagir yōrineal y'ē daru*, ed. Barsel Sargisean (Venice, 1904), p. 77. There is no translation of the full text, but see the summary in Tim Greenwood, "'New Light from the East': Chronography and Ecclesiastical History through a Late Seventh-Century Armenian Source', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008), pp. 197–254.

50. *Ananun Žamanakagrut'iwn*, pp. 77, 79.

51. *Patmut'iwn Lewondeay meci vardapeti Hayoc'*, ed. K. Ezeanc' (St. Petersburg, 1887); translation: Zaven Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond* (Philadelphia, 1982). On the disputed date of this work see Jean-Pierre Mahé, 'Le problème de l'authenticité et de la valeur de la Chronique de Lewond', *L'Arménie et Byzance: Histoire et culture* (Byzantina Sorbonensia 12; Paris, 1996), pp. 119–26, and Tim Greenwood, 'A Reassessment of the *History* of Lewond', *Le Muséon* 125 (2012), pp. 99–167.

suggests the working of providence in accordance with the prophet Daniel, or other tokens of heavenly design. The closest is Mxit'ar, who calls Muhammed 'the harbinger of Anti-Christ', but not Anti-Christ himself.[52] In quite a different genre, in his biblical commentary on the Book of Proverbs the late ninth century Hamam uses Daniel's vision to explain v. 29 of chapter thirty: 'There are three things that move simply, and the fourth walks.' According to Hamam this refers to the four kingdoms that rule over the four corners of the world. The first kingdom is that of the young of a lion, which refers to the kingdom of Abraham and his offspring; the second, that of the cock, is the kingdom of the Babylonians; the third, that of the goat, refers to the kingdom of the Romans, that is, the Byzantine empire; while the fourth is the kingdom of Christ, which resembles Daniel's fourth beast, awesome and amazing, that crushed all the others. But there is no apocalyptic tone in Hamam's remarks.[53]

There is, however, one text written in Armenian where we have a parallel to Sebeos. Its sources were not necessarily written by an Armenian, for it is a collection of material from Caucasian Albania, Aluank', whose people had their own script and whose language is unrelated to Armenian or Georgian.[54] I refer to the *History of the Land of Aluank', Patmut'iwn Aluanic' Asxarhi*, a compilation of the early tenth century, attributed to Movsēs Dasxuranc'i.[55] This brings together earlier sources, and the reference to the irruption of the Muslims outside their original homeland is quite matter of fact: 'The race of Hagar grew powerful ... and swiftly marched against the king of the Persians.'[56] This introduces the heroic exploits of prince Juansher at the battle of al-Qadisiyya. On the other hand, the brief chapter that introduces events following the victory of Heraclius over the Persians and the recovery of the Holy Cross offers quite a different attitude to the events that are about to be recorded. Its author, not the later Movses Dasxuranc'i but one of his earlier sources, refers to Christ's warning in the gospel of Matthew: 'You shall hear of wars and the rumours of

52. Robert W. Thomson, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam in Armenian Literary Tradition', in Dickran Kouymjian (ed.), *Armenian Studies in Memoriam Haïg Berbérian* (Lisbon, 1986), pp. 829–58; repr. in his *Studies*.

53. Robert W. Thomson, *Hamam. Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (Armenian text and translation. Hebrew University Armenian Studies 5; Leuven, 2005), pp. 165–66.

54. For the recent discovery of texts written in the Aluan language and script see Jost Gippert *et al.* (eds.), *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mt. Sinai*, 2 vols. (Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi. Series Ibero-Caucasica 2; Turnhout, 2008).

55. This Movsēs is also known as Kalankatuac'i. Critical text: *Moses Kalankatuac'i. Patmut'iwn Aluanic' Asxarhi*, ed. Varag Arak'elyan (Erevan, 1983); translation: Charles Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranci* (London Oriental Series 8; London, 1961).

56. Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, *History of the Land of Aluank'*, II 18.

wars, and famines and pestilences, and earthquakes and signs. Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour [when the Son of Man will come].'[57] Here we have an indication that Sebeos was not the sole Armenian who thought that he was living in the last times of that era.

But such apocalyptic ideas soon disappear from Armenian texts. The following century was one of 'nation-building', when the Armenians, under the strong leadership of the Catholicos John of Odzun, created a lasting individuality in matters of liturgy, canon-law, theology, and eventually historiography in the work of Movsēs Xorenac'i.[58] I mentioned John of Odzun above in connection with the symbolism of the six ages, though he himself refers to such ideas only fleetingly. More importantly, in his influential discourses on his theological opponents, the Paulicians and the Phantasiasts [those who denied the full reality of Christ's human nature], there is no suspicion of any apocalyptic theme.[59] His concern is with the here and now, with the imposition of the orthodox faith and the authority of the patriarch. Here are no speculations about the interpretation of Daniel's prophecies regarding calamitous events, or about the impending end of the world. So far as Armenians were concerned, the Antichrist kept a low profile for several centuries. Admittedly, the adaptation of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates Scholasticus, made in 695/6, does include a reference to Anti-christ, but that is in connection with Mani. The Armenian who rewrote this *History* did not attempt to bring it up to the seventh century.[60]

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57. Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, *History of the Land of Aluank'*, II 9; see Matt. 24:6–7 and 25:13. This begins the section, II 9–45, known as 'The History to the Year 682' which is discussed in detail by Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, pp. 103–108. This section is from a near contemporary source of the late seventh century. Howard Johnston notes that 'it was produced in circumstances analogous to the *History of Khosrov* [his title for the work attributed to Sebeos] who suspected that the last days were at hand,' ibid., p. 113. Greenwood indicates that Book III of Movsēs Dasxuranc'i is more hostile to Islam, perhaps dating to the mid-ninth century; see T. Greenwood, 'Movsēs Daskhurants' / Movsēs Kaghankatuats'I', in Thomas and Roggema (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations*. Vol. I, pp. 261–67.

58. For this period see in general Nina G. Garsoïan, *Interregnum. Introduction to a Study on the Formation of Armenian identity (ca 600-750)* (CSCO 640, Subsidia 127; Leuven, 2012), and Nina G. Garsoïan and Jean-Pierre Mahé, *Des Parthes au Califat. Quatre leçons sur la formation de l'identité arménienne (T&MByz*, Monographies 10; Paris, 1997). For the controversial Movsēs Xorenac'i see Nina G. Garsoïan, 'L'Histoire attribuée à Movsēs Xorenac'i: Que reste-t-il à en dire?', *Revue des etudes arméniennes* 29 (2003-2004), pp. 29–48; repr. in her *Studies on the Formation of Christian Armenia* (Variorum CS959; Farnham, 2010).

59. See his *Matenagrut'iwnk'* (n. 22 above).

60. Robert W. Thomson, *The Armenian Adaptation of the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus* (Hebrew University Armenian Studies 3; Leuven, 2001), p. 58, an addition to the Greek text of Socrates, I 22 (p. 69 of the Armenian text in *Sokratay sk'olastikosi Ekelec'akan Patmut'iwn*, ed. M. Tēr-Movsēsean [Ējmiacin, 1897]).

I now return to the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, which offers quite a different interpretation of events surrounding the rise of Islam. Although Armenia is mentioned in the apocalypse, appearing twice in lists of countries, no significance is attached to that country and no Armenian version of the whole text is known to exist. Although its major theme of salvation coming from the Roman emperor is very important for the Armenians in later centuries, that idea does not appear in Armenian writers with regard to the Muslim expansion of the seventh century. Not until the Turkish invasions of the eleventh century, after the arrival of Crusaders from the West, does the idea of salvation from the Roman emperor appear in Armenian texts.[61] It is true that the thirteenth century historian Step'anos of Siunik' claims that his eighth century predecessor as metropolitan of that province, another Step'anos, translated Pseudo-Methodius. He even quotes a passage several pages long. This consists of extracts from the known work, ending with the second coming, the ascension of the righteous to heaven and the eternal damnation of the impious.[62] The translation activity of Step'anos, notably his rendering into Armenian of the Pseudo-Dionysius corpus, is well attested,[63] but no corroborating evidence of this claim for his involvement with the *Apocalypse* is known. Step'anos Orbelean's collection of extracts is more likely to belong to the later period of Armenian interest in such documents, when the *Treatise on Anti-Christ*, attributed to Epiphanius, was composed, the *Vision of St Nerses* was expanded, and other such writings appeared in Armenian.[64]

These later wishful speculations, when some Armenians were hoping for salvation from Turkish and Mongol depredations, are far removed

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61. Two texts are of particular importance: one attributed to Epiphanius (text and translation in Giuseppe Frasson, *Pseudo Epiphanii, Sermo de Antichristo* [Bibliotheca Armeniaca, Textus et Studia 2; Venice, 1976]), and the other supposedly the copy of the pact between Constantine and king Trdat on the occasion of the latter's visit to the emperor as reported in Agat'angelos, commonly known as the *Letter of Love and Concord*. On the background to the *Letter* see Peter Halfter, 'Constantinus Novus. Zum geschichtlichen Hintergrund des apokryphen Freundschaftspaktes zwischen Konstantin und Trdat, Grigor dem Erleuchter and Papst Silvester', *Le Muséon* 119 (2006), pp. 399–428; and for the text, Zaroui Pogossian, *The Letter of Love and Concord: a revised diplomatic edition* (Leiden, 2010).

62. Step'anos Orbelean, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan* (Paris, 1860; repr. Tiflis, 1910); translation: Marie Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie par Stéphannos Orbélian* (St. Petersburg, 1864). The passage in question comprises ch. 32.

63. See the Introduction to Robert W. Thomson, *The Armenian Version of the Works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite* (CSCO 488, Scr. Armeniaci 17; Leuven 1987).

64. In addition to Thomson, 'The Crusaders', see also Avedis K. Sanjian, 'Two contemporary Armenian elegies on the Fall of Constantinople, 1453', *Viator* 1 (1970), pp. 223–61, esp. pp. 232–34.

from the earliest expectation of Christ's Second Coming, or even the less urgent belief in a seventh age. The medieval Armenian apocalyptic vision has Armenia firmly in the centre of things, rather than a more general anticipation of a new heaven and a new earth.

BYZANTINE GREEK APOCALYPSES AND THE WEST: A CASE STUDY

Pablo UBIERNA

In his 1972 dissertation on Byzantine imperial eschatology Gerhard Podskalsky[1] credited Julius Wellhausen with having called his attention to the place of the Book of Daniel in the history of the Humanities. I want to acknowledge now Gerhard Podskalsky because his own work, along with those of Paul Alexander and Agostino Pertusi, lies at the heart of our contemporary understanding of Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition.[2] More than thirty years ago McGinn established the core texts for understanding late antique, medieval and early modern 'Visions of the End'.[3] Thus, I will focus my attention on two of those texts: The Greek Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Ephrem's Sermo de Fine Mundi and their reception in the West.

The end of the seventh century and the eighth were periods when the main body of Christian polemics was focused more against Jews (or Judaizers heretics) than against Muslims.[4] From the Jewish side, the anti-Christian polemic is mostly centred on the midrashim and the apocalyptic literature.[5] This is one of the major problems of seventh-century religious history, given that the existence of those texts could represent

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1. Gerhard Podskalsky, Byzantinische Reicheschatologie. Die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem Tausendjährigen Friedenreiche (Apok. 20): eine motivengeschichtliche Untersuchung (Munich, 1972).

2. Paul Alexander, The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1985); Agostino Pertusi, Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo. Significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in oriente e in occidente (Rome, 1988).

3. Bernard McGinn, Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages (New York, 1979).

4. Vincent Déroche, 'Polémique anti-judaïque et émergence de l'Islam (7ᵉ-8ᵉ siècles)', REB 57 (1999), pp. 275-311, where the author points out the importance of a kind of literature such as the Kephalaia epaporetika, a collection of questions to be used by Christians in their polemics against Jews; and Gerrit Reinink, 'The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam', Oriens Christianus 7 (1993), pp. 169-70. We should mention the importance of the new edition of the Doctrina Jacobi by Vincent Déroche. Cf. Gilbert Dagron and Vincent Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIᵉ Siècle', T&MByz 11 (1991), pp. 47-229.

5. Averil Cameron, 'Byzantine and Jews: Some Recent Work on Early Byzantium', BMGS 20 (1996), pp. 249-74.

actual historical debates,[6] an option favoured by scholars like Gilbert Dagron and Vincent Déroche.[7] In this context, historical Apocalypses like the *Syriac Pseudo-Methodius* (and also its Greek translation) could be understood, at least in part, as texts favouring anti-Jewish polemics, attacking the vision of contemporary history and the end of Rome as a pre-condition for the arrival of the Messiah depicted in works such as *Zorobbabel*. Regardless of the fate of the Empire, texts like the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* with its interest mainly in Eschatology and the Second Coming were an evident target for those polemicizing against Jews or Judaizers.

Even though the polemics of Jews against Christians were very difficult to find because the former would have lacked the theological imperative to prove the 'error' of Christians, we could imagine that the proximity of the end of the Empire and the consequent coming of the Messiah would be understood, as just such an imperative. Moreover, it has been suggested by both Averil Cameron and Nicholas de Lange, that Jews were not in the kind of social position to commit themselves to open debates against Christian leaders.[8] The discussions concerning the End of the Empire during the years of Persian occupation and the first decades of Islamic Rule, may have reached the streets of Byzantine towns in Syria and Palestine[9] (though some debates between Jews and Christians such as those described in texts such as *De Doctrina Jacobi* or the *Throphies*

6. Cameron, 'Byzantine and Jews', p. 263.

7. Vincent Déroche, 'La polémique anti-judaïque', p. 284 and Gilbert Dagron, 'Judaïser', *Té&MByz* 11 (1991), p. 370. Even the theology of an author centred in Dogmatics, like Maximus Confessor, is full of an apocalyptic dimension, specially when it touches on the compulsory conversion of Jews under Heraclius. Cf. Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 30–31. Besides the fact that the place of Jews was different under Arab Rule, Anastasius Sinaite still kept polemics against them. Cf. *Anastasii Sinaïtae Viae Dux*, ed. K.H. Uthemann (CCSG 8; Turnhout, 1981), pp. 257–58; even if the text mentioned there is not the same as the *Disputatio* attributed to him.

8. Averil Cameron, 'Byzantines and Jews', p. 264 and Nicholas De Lange, 'Jews and Christians in the Byzantine Empire', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Christianity and Judaism* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 27–29. Cf. also Nicholas De Lange, 'A fragment of Byzantine anti-Christian Polemic', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41 (1990), pp. 92–100 and id. 'Jewish and Christian Messianic Hopes in pre-Islamic Byzantium', in Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget (eds.), *Redemption and Resistance. The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (London–New York, 2007), pp. 274–84 and Shaun O'Sullivan, 'Anti-Jewish Polemic and Early Islam', in David Thomas (ed.), *The Bible in Arab Christianity* (Leiden–Boston, 2007), pp. 49–68.

9. Other seventh-century texts of Anti-Jewish Polemic were the *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo*, the *Dialogue of Gregentius*, the *Apology against the Jews* of Leontius of Neapolis and the Syriac *Disputation of Sergius the Stylite*, the *Disputatio Anastasii adversus Judaeos* and the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* which are still now at the centre of a major debate concerning their attribution.

of Damascus,[10] at least for the decades running from 630 to 660, seem to deny this).

Besides, Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson have recently considered that

> Byzantine theocracy was based on the principle that the Christian empire was the earthly manifestation and anticipation of the kingdom of Christ, which superseded all other terrestrial realms; in other words, it was the messianic kingdom announced by the Old Testament prophets and awaited by the Jews along with the true Anointed of God. Thus, it is not surprising that the three most forceful medieval expressions of the theocratic argument that the Christian Empire is not the fourth, iron kingdom of Daniel's prophecy, but the eternal 'fifth monarchy', all occur in the context of refutations of the Jews.[11]

For these authors 'the need to refute Jewish messianic expectations based on the Bible helps to explain why Byzantine apocalyptic texts foresee such a negative role for the Jews in the Last Things, as the supporters of Antichrist (that is, their 'false Messiah') and as the obdurate Christ-killers who refuse to recognize the Supreme Judge until it is too late.'[12] Magdalino and Nelson failed to mention seventh and eighth century apocalyptic texts that should be included in any discussion related to Jewish-Christian disputations.

But the importance of historical apocalypses in a probable dispute against Jews lies elsewhere, that is, in the new and decisive fact of placing the *Syriac Legend of Alexander* in a new context, at the core of an Apocalypse (as the genre that conveyed Jewish opinions against the Empire) and showing that, thanks to the *Legend of the Last Emperor*, the Empire would survive. That Empire would survive even against those visions in favour of the Second Coming such as, for example, the one presented by the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*. This argument concerning the Fate of the Empire based on different interpretations of the biblical Daniel already involved Jews and Christians at the end of the *Doctrina Jacobi* (drafted 634/635). It is not only about placing Islam (or the Persian

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10. *Trophies of Damascus*, G. Bardy (ed.), *PO* XV (Paris, 1920), pp. 171–292.

11. Cf. Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson, 'Introduction' in Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson (eds.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, 2010), p. 28. Nevertheless, Magdalino and Nelson did not mention Pseudo Methodius in this context. They mentioned: a) St. Constantine-Cyril's dispute with the Jews before the Kazhar Khagan recorded in his slavonic *Vita*; b) an anti-Jewish Tract attributed to Anastasios of Sinai (*PG* 89, 1204–25, 1210–12); 3) a *Commentary on the Book Daniel* by Basil, metropolitan of Neopatras written in the late tenth century.

12. In this context they mentioned both the *Daniel-Diegese* and the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo Leo of Constantinople.

occupation) within a historical framework but also about not denying that both the Sasanian conquest and the Arab accomplishments (acknowledging the building of the Dome of the Rock,[13] for example) were evidence of the End of Times.[14]

MEDITERRANEAN DIFFUSION OF GREEK APOCALYPSES

The Greek redaction of *Pseudo-Methodius* includes, aside from other novelties, Constantinople in an eschatological framework, the making of the Capital, and the seven-hilled city described in apocalyptic tones. This major aspect is of long-lasting importance in Byzantine images about the End of Times and has been treated before in a very competent way by authors including, Paul Alexander (who provided us with a first comparison of the Syriac text and the Greek translation), Wolfram Brandes,[15]

13. The building of the Dome of the Rock is the *terminus post quem* for the drafting of the *Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* according to its editor, Gerrit Reinink; but we should also say that the editor of the Greek Versions (supposed to be translations from the Syriac), Anastasios Lolos, dates the first redaction of the text to the decade of 650. The new edition of the Greek versions by Wilhem Aerts and Kortekaas for the Corpus Christianorum follows Reinink. Cf. Willem Johan Aerts and Georgius Arnoldus Antonius Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, 2 vols. (CSCO 569–570, Subsidia 97–98; Leuven, 1998); Anastasios Lolos, *Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Methodios* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976); id., *Die dritte und vierte Redaktion des Ps.-Methodios* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1978). Cf. also Pablo Ubierna, 'The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (Greek)', in David Thomas and Barbara Roggema (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History. Volume 1 (600-900)* (Leiden–Boston, 2009), pp. 245–48.

14. It was an age when Christians were barely aware of the assimilative power of Islam. The generation of Patriarch Sophronius and his friend John Moschus did not even consider that possibility. Cf. Robert Wilken, *The Land called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven–London, 1992), p. 239. On Sophronius, cf. Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem: Vie monastique et confession dogmatique* (Théologie Historique 20; Paris, 1972). Vincent Déroche, speaking about the *Life of George Choziba* and the war against the Persians, thinks: 'Le VIIe siècle byzantin semble parfois persuadé d'avoir récupéré à son profit et au sens littéral les promesses de l'Ancien Testament liées aux lieux, à la Palestine ainsi pour Georges Choziba, ces promesses rendaient inconcevable l'idée que les Perses puissent vraiment s'emparer de la Palestine et surtout de Jérusalem ... . Une telle interprétation ne pouvait qu'aviver les frictions avec les communautés juives'. Vincent Déroche, 'L'Apologie contre les Juifs de Léontios de Néapolis', *T&Mbyz* 12 (1994), p. 91, n. 85. For the importance of Palestine, as a region, in this context, cf. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 235–46. This importance, regarding the theology of the Last Things, is still very important for a thinker like Maximus Confessor. Cf. Sebastian Brock, 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor', *AB* 91 (1973), pp. 299–346.

15. Cf. Wolfram Brandes, 'Die Belagerung Konstantinopels 717/718 als apokalyptisches Ereignis. Zu einer Interpolation im griechischen Text der Pseudo-Methodios-Apokalypse', in Klaus Belke *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 2007), p. 71.

Albrecht Berger,[16] Marie-Hélène Congourdeau,[17] Andreas Külzer[18] and revisited more recently by a promising young scholar in our field, Andras Kraft.[19]

I would like to focus on a rather neglected aspect of the fate of the Syriac text of *Pseudo-Methodius* in the West. Even if the transmission of Greek texts to the West was not as important as it will be in the future, it is nonetheless crucial to underline that, during the eighth century, some of the most important texts of Eastern Apocalyptic Literature, the *Sermo de fine mundo* of Pseudo-Ephrem and the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius, along with some mystical texts,[20] circulated in the West[21] including Aquitaine and the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, the Eastern

16. Cf. Albrecht Berger, 'Das apokalyptische Konstantinopel. Topographisches in apokalyptischen Schriften der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen* (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 2008), pp. 136–37 and Wolfram Brandes, 'Kaiserprophetien und Hochverrat. Apokalyptische Schriften und Kaiservaticinien als Medium antikaiserlicher Propaganda', in ibid., pp. 193–95.

17. Marie-Hélene Congourdeau, 'Byzance et la fin du monde. Courants de pensée apocalyptiques sous les Paléologues', in Benjamin Lellouch and Stéphane Yerasimo (eds.), *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople* (Varia Turcica XXXIII; Paris, 1999), pp. 55–97. Cf. also Kaya Şahin, 'Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour', *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010), pp. 317–54; Stephane Yerasimos, *Legendes d'empire: La fondation de Constantinople et de Sainte-Sophie dans les traditions turques* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990) who provides a detailed study on the exchange of apocalyptic tropes between the Islamic and Byzantine traditions, the migration of these tropes into the Ottoman realm, and the emergence of a distinctly Ottoman Apocalyptic Narrative centred on Constantinople. Cf. also Paul Magdalino, 'Prophecies on the Fall of Constantinople', in Angeliki Laiou (ed.), *Urbs capta. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* (Paris, 2005), pp. 41–53 and id. 'The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda', in Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (eds.), *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol* (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 3–34. For the Slavic World, see Tsvetelin Stepanov, 'Memory and Oblivion in the Christian East, 990s–1200: Three Apocalyptic Cases', in Albena Milanova, Vesselina Vachkova and Tsevetelin Stepanov (eds.), *Memory and Oblivion in Byzantium* (Sofia, 2011), pp. 148–63.

18. Andreas Külzer, 'Konstantinopel in der Apokalyptischen Literatur der Byzantiner', in *JÖB* 50 (2000), pp. 51–76.

19. Andras Kraft, 'Constantinople in Byzantine Apocalyptic Thought', *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 18 (2012), pp. 25–36.

20. Only some twenty years after Ephrem's death (373), Jerome confirms the existence of several Greek translations by the Syriac author, even if their authentication is hard to prove. But it is undeniable that a large part of Greek liturgical poetry is based on Syriac *memrê*. Another seventh-century Syriac author translated into Greek was the well-known spiritual writer, Isaac of Nineveh. Cf. Sebastian Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', *Journal of the Syriac Academy* III (1977), pp. 1–17 (422–406).

21. It was an Age of widespread eschatological expectations. Cf. Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des wisigoths aux arabes 418-781* (Paris, 1979) and Richard Landes, 'Millenarismus Absconditus: L'historiographie augustinienne et le millénarisme du Haut Moyen Âge jusqu'en l'an mil', *Le moyen âge* 98 (1992), pp. 355–77.

Christian Apologetic literature against Islam also found its way to Spain. As has been pointed out several times, the text of *Pseudo-Methodius* was widely known in the Western tradition.[22]

The context of the original Greek translation from Syriac is clear (even if the place where it was translated is not known). The text was translated into Latin at the beginning of the eighth century, during the first few decades of the Muslim conquest of North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula (and the incursion of Muslim cavalry into Gaul before the battle of Poitiers). There are four different recensions of the Latin translation (and we have more than two hundred copies, without taking into consideration those translations into vernacular languages).[23] Throughout this period the diffusion of the text in the southern regions, specifically Italy and southern France, was exceptional. The codex Vatican Barberini lat. 671, dated to the eighth or early ninth century was previously in the hands of the Cistercians of San Salvatore a Settimo, close to Florence; the codex Parisinus Latinus (BNF) 4871 of the eleventh century was copied at Moissac and another copy, written at the Abbey of Cava dei Tirreni, close to Salerno has remained there. The circulation of *Pseudo-Methodius* in Italy was not relevant until the end of the thirteenth century and in relation to the Crusades.

Concerning the chronological distribution of the copies, we can observe an early and consistent success. We have eleven texts prior to the year 1000; the most ancient copy, produced at Corbie can be dated around the year 750 (Paris lat. 13348). Three other texts can be dated back to the ninth and tenth centuries while the thirteenth century alone there were a similar number of testimonies. The diffusion of the texts increased during the last two centuries of the Middle-Ages by more than 130 copies, that is, doubling the number of copies produced before. This is in keeping with the global evolution of manuscript books in the West but in contrast to the fate of another apocalyptic text, the *Tiburtine Sibyl*, which received almost no attention after the thirteenth century. This success shows that at very different periods, medieval copists and readers had varying reasons to be interested in the *Revelationes*.[24]

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22. Cf. Sylvain Piron, 'Anciennes sibylles et nouveaux oracles. Remarques sur la diffusion des textes prophétiques en Occident, VIIe-XIVe siècles', in Stéphane Gioanni and Benoît Grévin (eds.), *Les collections textuelles de l'antiquité tardive dans les collections médiévales. Textes et représentations, VIe-XIVe siècles* (Rome, 2008), pp. 261–301, and Marbury B. Oegle, 'Petrus Comestor, Methodius and the Saracens', *Speculum* 21 (1946). pp. 318–24.

23. Cf. Johannes Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 54–104.

24. Cf. Piron, 'Anciens sibylles', p. 279.

As has been noted by Sylvain Piron and Robert Lerner (for the *Tibur-tine Sybil*), 'apocalyptic writing tends to spread rapidly on light supports, and they are frequently copied on the vacant pages of pre-existent codices'.[25] That is precisely the case with the Roda Codex in Spain where we can find in f. 177r-v an extract from the *Pseudo-Methodius*. Moreover, as Piron said, 'the number of cases where *Pseudo-Methodius* could be found at the end of the codex, it's important (nineteen cases, one-quart of the total)'. This is still the case for the Roda Codex, which ends with a text showing strong correspondence with the *Pseudo-Methodius*, the *Tultu Sceptru de libro Domini Methobii* (fol. 185v). The text of the *Pseudo-Methodius* was not only important, in the *longue durée* of Medieval West, as a story concerning the Emperor of the last days and the Antichrist but also for the inclusion of a history of creation within its first chapters. In this sense the text was included in a large exegetical framework, going back to Late Antiquity, on the Book of Genesis, mostly representing different heterodoxal groups (being part of an apocryphal *catena*).[26]

To this biblical context we should add the links that *Pseudo-Methodius* had with geographical knowledge (mostly in those copies from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which were related to the Crusades) to the Holy Land and, in particular, to Jerusalem, including the *Letter of Prester John* because of the references to Ethiopia (that is, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia being known as Aksum in those days).[27] As has been

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25. Piron, 'Anciens Sibylles', p. 272 and Robert Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy. The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1983).

26. Cf. Johannes Bartholdy Glentøj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4th-6th centuries)* (CSCO 567, Subsidia 95; Louvain, 1997) and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *Eve's Children: the Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Leiden-Boston, 2003).

27. See Lutz Greisiger, 'Ein nubischer Erlöser-König: Kūš in syrischen Apokalypsen des 7. Jahrhunderts', in Sophia G. Vasholomidze and Lutz Greisiger (eds.), *Der Christliche Orient und seine Umwelt. Gesammelte Studien zu Ehren Jürgen Tubachs anläßlich seines 60. Geburtstags* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 189-213. For the historical problems concerning the identity of Kush in Late Antiquity - but in a previous age -, cf. László Török, *Between Two Worlds. The frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC-500 AD* (Probleme der Ägyptologie 29; Leiden-Boston, 2009), pp. 427-531. For the Seventh Century the main Problem resides in the identification of Kush with Nobatia. Cf. Derek A. Welsby, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia. Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile* (London, 2002) and Giovanni Ruffini, *Medieval Nubia. A Social and Economic History* (New York, 2012). The issue requires further research since even if it is clear that the author of the Pseudo-Methodius might have known about the existence of a Christian Kingdom in Northern Sudan in his days, while mentioning Kush he could have been just referring to the Bible. Connecting these historical biblical references with contemporary kingdoms in the works of prophetic seers is always perilous.

noted before, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius was a text, 'placed at the same time in the margins of medieval time and space'.[28]

In two eighth century manuscripts, the *Pseudo-Methodius* is preceded by a text attributed to Ephrem (Paris, lat. 13348; Vatican, Barb. lat. 671). A similar configuration can be found in an eleventh century manuscript from Reichenau (Karlsruhe, Aug. 19652) and another from the thirteenth century (Paris, BSG 80) both depending on Paris lat. 13348. This *Scarpsum de dictis s. Efrem prope fine mundi*, to quote the *incipit* of the most ancient testimony, is only known by its Latin translation.[29] The text is found in one case in a dossier of authentic texts of Ephrem (Barb. lat. 671),[30] an apocryphal text consisting of varying sources, and a close study has permitted first Caspari and then Verhelst to show that the translation is based on a Greek text written by an author mastering not only Greek but also Syriac, in a milieu that could be compared to the one where the translation of the Syriac *Pseudo-Methodius* into Greek was made.[31] Besides some parallelism between the two Latin texts it is very difficult to ascertain whether they were both translated at the same time.

The most ancient manuscript of the Latin text (of PM), from Luxeuil, seems to have been written shortly before 727.[32] Another very old manuscript (Paris, BN lat. 13348) also from the eighth century, is from St. Pierre de Corbie.[33] Only the text of the *Pseudo-Methodius* has a

28. Sylvain Piron, 'Anciens Sibylles', p. 278.

29. Daniel Verhelst, 'Scarpsum de dictis sancti Efrem prope dine mundi', in R. Lievens, E. van Mingroot and W. Verbeke (eds.), *Pascua Mediaevalia. Studies voor Prof. Dr. J.M. De Smet* (Louvain, 1983), pp. 518–28; Gerrit Reinink, 'Pseudo-Ephraems 'Rede über das Ende' und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebenten Jahrhunderts', *Aram* 5 (1993), pp. 437–63, and id. 'Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Ephremian "Sermo de Fine Mundi"', in R.I.A. Nip *et al.* (eds.), *Media latinitas. A Collection of essays to mark the occasion of the retirement of L.J. Engels* (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 317–21, and G. Kortekaas, 'The Biblical Quotations in the Pseudo-Ephremian *Sermo de fine Mundi*', in the same volume, pp. 237–44.

30. David Ganz, 'Knowledge of Ephraim's Writings in the Merovingian and Carolingian Ages', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 2 (1999), pp. 37–46.

31. Gerrit Reinink, 'Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Ephremian', pp. 317–21.

32. Codex Bernensis, Burgerbibliothek 611. Cf. Marc Laureys and Daniel Verhelst. 'Pseudo-Methodius, Revelationes: Textgeschichte und kritische Edition', in Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst and Andries Velkenhuysen (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), p. 114.

33. Laureys and Verhelst resume here the description given by Léopold Delisle, *Inventaire des manuscrits latins conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale sous les numéros 8823 – 18613* (Hildesheim–New York, 1974), p. 98. Cf. Paul Lehmann, *Aufgaben und Anregungen der lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters* (1918), repr. in id., *Erforschung des Mittelalters*, vol. I (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 1–45. Two manuscripts are not listed: Salisbury 165 and Bodley 163. Cf. Katharine Scarfe Beckett, *Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 145.

preface by the translator, who introduces himself as 'Peter, monk'. Ernst Sackur thought that he could have been a fugitive oriental monk mastering Syriac and/or Greek and seeking sanctuary in Merovingian Gaul, something that has been later refuted. Nonetheless, we have to consider the possibility of his being a Latin monk with a certain knowledge of Greek.[34]

At this point the Iberian Peninsula was one of the only places where such a translation could have been considered (the other being Rome where there were still several hundred Oriental monks, most of them at Saint Sabas on the Aventine).[35] It is a translation that could have reached a monastery in southern Gaul (or even an imperial foundation in the north of Gaul like Corbie), along with Visigoth monks, after the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and the Septimania. At least, this could have been the case for Petrus Monachus, the translator, who must have acquired somewhere a certain knowledge of contemporary Greek.[36] Even if the Merovingian character of his translation leaves no doubt about his identity for the editors, it is not clear at which monastery he could have been working.[37] The Hungarian orientalist Michael Kmosko in his epoch-making article of 1931 considered that the author could have been a monk of St. Honorée de Lerins, an assertion that was recently refuted.[38] Willem Aerts and Georgius Kortekaas, the editors of both the Latin and Greek versions considered a 'certain, and subtle, presence' of French or Italian in some Latin words (p. 29). Without entering into detail it is important to note that those 'forms' could be interpreted as

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34. The place of redaction of the Greek version is a problematic issue. The author presents an important knowledge of the geography of the western regions of the Mediterranean. Cf. Walter Kaegi, 'Gightis and Olbia in the Pseudo-Methodius Apocalypse and their significance', BF 29 (2000), pp. 21–43. The importance of this article in order to have a better understanding of the Greek translation has been recently underlined by John Haldon. Cf. John Haldon, "'Citizens of Ancient Lineage...'? The Role and Significance of Syrians in the Byzantine Élite in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in Wout J. van Bekkum, Jan W. Drijvers, and Alex C. Klugkist (eds.), Syriac Polemics. Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink (Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica 170; Leuven, 2007), p. 100. This problem is not present in the recent English translation by Benjamin Garstad in id., Apocalypse. Pseudo-Methodius; An Alexandrian World Chronicle (Dumbarton Oaks, 2012).

35. Cf. Jean-Mari Santerre, Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne (milieu du VI*. siècle-fin XIe. s.) (Brussels, 1983).

36. Cf. Aerts and Kortekaas, Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius, p. 29.

37. Both Praefaciuncula and text present the same lexical traits. Cf. Aerts and Kortekaas, Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius, p. 28.

38. Michael Kmosko, 'Das Rätsel des Pseudomethodius', Byz. 6 (1931), pp. 273–96; Otto Prinz, 'Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodios', Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters 41 (1985), pp. 1–23.

just 'romance' forms. The Iberian Peninsula should have been taken into consideration as a possible place of origin for a Latin translation from the Greek that could have found its way, along with Visigoth refugees, into southern Gaul.

In this context, we should consider a problem that has received almost no attention yet: the presence in the Iberian Peninsula of a different and independent tradition of the Latin version of the *Pseudo-Methodius*. It was the Spanish Scholar Luis Vazquez de Parga who, more than forty years ago, first pointed out the importance of the presence of the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius in the famous Roda Codex, a tenth-century codex produced to support the ideological claims of the Kings of Navarre and their links with Alfonso III of Asturias. Mommsen was the first to edit a rare text on Alexander from a couple of hitherto unpublished Spanish manuscripts. The text was finally identified as a version of the *Pseudo-Methodius* by Friedrich Pfister of Marburg in 1915. After the rediscovery of the Roda Codex in 1928 this base for that identification was increased by our text in folio 177r-v.

What is most interesting is that the version in the Roda Codex is different from the four most ancient versions (in both the editions of Sackur – the only one known by Vazquez de Parga – and Aerts and Kortekaas).[39] Vazquez de Parga rightly thought that this could be explained in terms of an independent Latin translation circulating amongst the Mozarabic Christians.[40] Professor Juan Gil provided Vazquez de Parga with a first Latin edition of the text of the Roda Codex. Another interesting point is that the Roda version of the *Pseudo-Methodius* begins with chapter five, the long and complex geographical description of the Mediterranean West.

The presence of oriental Christians in the Iberian Peninsula was one of the most important features of both Visigoth and Mozarabic culture. Those Christians, from very different origins,[41] enriched the cultural,

39. It appears that in both cases the Latin text is a translation from the Greek.

40. That we are dealing here with a Latin translation produced in the Iberian Peninsula seems clear from the presence of several specificities of the Iberian romance languages – clearly different from the alleged 'Merovingian traits' of previous Latin versions. Cf. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, 8.4 (Roda): *Visiones illorum qui sunt filii Iafet. Vidit enim eos facientes abominationes; bescebant enim inmunditiam terre, mures et canes et gatos* ...

41. The presence of a Monophysite community of Syrian merchants could have been one of the reasons for the presence of a (in exile?) Syrian bishop *ex haerese acephalorum* at the Second Council of Seville in 619 where he had a theological debate with Isidore. Cf. Margarita Vallejo Girvés, *Bizancio y la España Tardoantigua, ss. V-VIII. Un capítulo de historia mediterránea* (Alcalá de Henares, 1993), pp. 449–50, and more recently ead., *Bizancio y España. Una relación desconocida* (Madrid, 2012). On the Seville controversy

artistic⁴² and liturgical⁴³ life of the Peninsula. Furthermore the presence of oriental Christian texts amongst Christians in al-Andalus is still open to debate.⁴⁴ I will now present some new evidence from the Iberian version of the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius present in the Roda Codex. This text differs, in several points, from both the previous Latin translation and the Greek version, but it remains very close to the Syriac text.⁴⁵ These features can only be explained by direct access to the original Syriac:

Ps.-Methodius, 8.10:

Syriac: ܘܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܟܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܢ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܘ̈ܒܢܬܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ

Roda: *Et* qui comedent filios hominum *et isti qui dicuntur* Cananei.

Latin I: *Anuphagii qui dicuntur Cynocephali.*

of 619, cf. Leslie S.B. MacCoull, 'Isidore and the Akephaloi', *GRBS* 39 (1998), pp. 169–78. Cf. also Eduardo Manzano Moreno, 'Byzantium and al-Andalus in the ninth century', in Leslie Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 215–27. The Copt Nashtâs Ibn Guraygh worked in al-Andalus with the Christian doctor Halid Ibn Rùmân. Cf. Dominique Urvoy, 'La pensée religieuse des mozarabes face à l'Islam', *Traditio* 39 (1983), pp. 419–32. Among the Melkites we could mention the monk George from Mar Saba mentioned by Eulogius in his *Memoriale Sanctorum*, one of the Martyrs of Cordoba of 852. For Eulogius' Text, cf. Juan Gil, *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, vol. II (Madrid, 1973), p. 710. Cf. also Milka Levy-Rubin and Benjamin Z. Kedar, 'A Spanish Source on Mid-Ninth-Century Mar Saba and a Neglected Sabaite Martyr', in Joseph Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (OLA 98; Leuven, 2001), pp. 63–72. The presence of 'Nestorian' Christians is a different issue since there were some strong theological links between the Visigoth church and the Antiochene tradition. Cf. Pablo Ubierna, 'Reflexiones sobre el adopcionismo, la cristiandad oriental y la escatología imperial carolingia', *Temas Medievales* 10 (2000–2001), pp. 95–116, and Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, '¿Circularon textos cristianos orientales en al-Andalus? Nuevos datos a partir de una muestra véterotestamentaria andalusí', in Cyrille Aillet, Mayte Penelas, and Philippe Roisse (eds.), *¿Existe una identidad mozárabe? Historia, lengua y cultura de los cristianos de al-Andalus (siglos IX-XII)* (Madrid, 2008), pp. 167–210.

42. J.N. Hillgarth, 'The East, Visigothic Spain and the Irish' *StPatr.* 4 (1961), pp. 442–56 and Helmut Schlunk, 'Relaciones entre la Península Ibérica y Byzancio', *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 18 (1945), pp. 177–204.

43. Anton Baumstark, 'Orientalisches in altspanischer Liturgie', *OC* 10 (1935), pp. 3–37.

44. The discussion has been summarized several times. For new approaches (with bibliography) based on both historiographical and biblical texts cf. Pablo Ubierna, 'Les Chrétientés orientales dans la Chronique *Pseudo-Isidoriana*. Nouveaux apports sur les *Suriani*', in *Temas Medievales* 14 (2006), pp. 207–24 and Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, 'Mêmrâ del Pseudo Metodio y Yônţôn, el cuarto hijo de Noé. Notas a propósito de un posible origen de la leyenda oriental llegada a Hispania en el s. VII', *MEAH-Sección Árabe-Islam* 50 (2001), pp. 213–230 and id., '¿Circularon textos cristianos orientales en al-Andalus?, pp. 167–210.

45. Gerrit Reinink (ed. and trans.), *Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (CSCO 540–541, Scr. Syri 220–221; Louvain, 1993).

Greek I: ἀνθρωποφάγοι οἱ λεγόμενοι κυνοκέφαλοι.

Where we read *Cananei* (from *canis*), it seems to be a rather peculiar but accurate rendering of the Syriac ܒܪ̈ܝ ܟܠܒ. At the same time, the translator seems to be unaware of any tradition related to the Cyno- cephali or the ἀνθρωποφάγοι. He renders the Syriac ܟ̇ܠܒܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ by an almost word-for-word translation.

Besides, it seems clear the translator of the Latin I version rendered *Anuphagii* incorrectly through misreading the abbreviation of ἀνθρωποφάγοι.[46]

Ps.-Methodius, 5.1:
Syriac: ܫܡܝܫܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ
Roda: *Melai rex Orientis.*
Greek I: Σαμψισανὼ ἐκ τῆς ἑῴας.
Latin I: *Sampsisahib de Eoam.*

It seems clear that in the Latin I version, *Eoam* is an inaccurate read- ing of ἑῴας. The Latin version in the Roda Codex not only reads correctly *Orient* but replaces *rex* which is present in the Syriac text but absent in the Greek translation.

Some additions in the Greek version that have been kept by the trans- lator of the Latin I version are absent from both the Syriac text and the Roda version:

Ps.-Methodius, 8.4:
Syriac: ܒܢ̈ܝ ܝܦܬ
Roda: *filii Iafet.*
Greek I: τῶν υἱῶν Ἰάφεθ ἀπόγονοι
Latin I: *ex filiis Iaphet nepotes.*

These correspondences with the Latin version of the *Pseudo-Methodius* included in the Roda Codex with the Syriac (in most cases under the form of calques) are most surprising (mostly because the Latin version in Roda is a rather short text) and could be explained by direct contact with the Syriac text (without any knowledge, as we have seen, of the Greek translation). More than forty years ago, Vázquez de Parga consid- ered that the text of the *Pseudo-Methodius* should have circulated

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46. This last aspect has been already noted by Juan Gil (who did not know Istrin's edition of the Greek text) in his edition of the Latin text from the Roda Codex.

amongst Mozarabic Christians. I hope I have added some new evidence to support the opinion of Vázquez de Parga.

The same codex contains, at the end, another text related to the *pseudo-Methodius*, the *Tultu Sceptrum de libro domini Metobii*.[47] This text is a strange tale about the 'vocation' or 'calling' of the Prophet Muhammad, who was originally a Christian monk by the name of Ozim. Thus, the text is related to a well-known medieval genre, 'The Lives of the Prophet' and should be considered as being part of the anti-Islamic literature produced in the Iberian Peninsula, like the apologetic works of Abbot Speraindeo, a teacher of the generation of Alvarus and Eulogius of Cordoba. There is only a weak connection with the *Pseudo-Methodius* in the mention of Erribon (Yatrib) but the title shows the importance given by the copyist to such a link. The goal of the *Pseudo-Methodius*' excerpt (fol. 177r-v) in the Roda Codex is to link the Goths (present in the first section of the Codex fol. 1r-176v: the *Historiae* of Paulus Orosius and the Collection of Gothic-related texts) with the Kings of Asturias on the one hand and the Chronicle of Alfonso the Third (fol. 178r-185r), on the other, continuing the genealogical information up to Ordoño I (850–66). These texts are followed by the famous Prophetic Chronicle of Alfonso the Third which was completed by his grandson Ramiro II (931–51). This set of texts is followed by the Genealogies of Roda, a later compilation which tries to link all the previous texts with the Kingdom of Navarre.

The place of the *Pseudo-Methodius* in this text might explain the beginning of the use of the title 'imperator' by Alfonsus in a very specific way, making him not only an 'Emperor', but the 'Last Emperor'. Alfonso's son Ordoño II used the title applied to his father and one of his successors, Ramiro II directly claims the title of *basileus magnus* (Sahagun 974) *Ranimirus Flavius* (as a link with the Gothic monarchy) *princeps magnus* basileus *uctus et regno fultus ... Geloira deo dicata et* basilea *regis amita*.[48] The author of the *Prophetic Chronicle* tried to find in Alfonso III a much closer figure as the Last Emperor and he referred to the legend of Pseudo-Ezechiel for the identification of the biblical Gog with the Goths. In order to do this he needed a geographical link to relate the

47. Gil, *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum*, vol. II, pp. 709–10. Cf. César de la Peña Izquierdo, 'Contribución al estudio sobre la "nota" titulada "Tultu sceptrum de libro domini metobii"', in *Actas del I Congreso Nacional de Cultura Mozárabe: (historia, arte, literatura, liturgia y música): Córdoba, 27 al 30 de abril de 1995* (Córdoba, 1996), pp. 151–63.

48. Luis Vázquez de Parga, 'Algunas notas sobre el Pseudo Metodio y España', *Habis* 2 (1971), pp. 143-64.

West with the legend, hence his use of this geographical chapter of t Pseudo-Methodius for which the original translator decided to provide much better translation. This hitherto neglected presence of a possibl Latin translation of *Pseudo-Methodius'* text from Syriac at the core of a manuscript, that sought to present Alphonsus III as the Last Emperor who would defeat Islam, must be acknowledged and deserves our atten-tion.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL KERYGMA OF THE EARLY QUR'AN[1]

Nicolai SINAI

INTRODUCTION

Among the different topics treated in the Qur'an, eschatology – that is, statements pertaining to the end of the world, the Resurrection (al-qiyāma), the 'Day of Judgement' (yawm al-dīn), and otherworldly rewards and punishments – is particularly fundamental. Not only is the idea of an ultimate reckoning invoked throughout the entire Qur'an, but many of the briefest surahs (for instance, Q 77–92, 95–96, 99–104, 107, and 111) are almost exclusively dominated by eschatological motifs, with only a very limited amount of confirmatory narrative, no polemical exchanges, and no quasi-legal content. It is furthermore striking that such eschatologically focused texts generally exhibit very brief verses. If, as I argue elsewhere, the mean verse length (MVL) of Qur'anic surahs tended to increase over time,[2] the surahs in question must belong to the earliest layer of the Qur'anic recitations – a view that accords well with the fact that many of them exhibit a comparatively low degree of structural complexity, consisting only of a sequence of several paragraph-like verse groups. Eschatology, then, can plausibly be held to constitute the first major subject of the Qur'anic proclamations, a sort of stem cell for the genesis of the Qur'an as a whole. This view, while bound to be doubtful to those who would question the feasibility of a relative chronology of the Qur'anic recitations,[3] is not novel: that the original impetus behind Muhammad's first proclamations was eschatology rather than an explicit

2. See Nicolai Sinai, 'Inner-Qur'anic Chronology', forthcoming in: *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, edited by Muhammad Abdel Haleem and Mustafa Shah (Oxford).

3. See Gabriel S. Reynolds, 'Le problème de la chronologie du Coran', *Arabica* 58 (2011), pp. 477–502 ; for a response see Sinai, 'Inner-Qur'anic Chronology'.

avowal of monotheism was recognized as early as 1894 by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and restated in 1922 by Wilhelm Rudolph.[4]

A seminal contribution to the study of Qur'anic eschatology is arguably Tor Andrae's German monograph *The Origins of Islam and Christianity* (1926), which establishes a close proximity between the Qur'an and Syriac Christianity, in particular the writings of Ephrem (d. 373).[5] Andrae's work fits in well with the increasing emphasis that present-day scholars have come to place on the importance of Syriac literature as a backdrop to the Qur'an,[6] in particular on the genre of metrical homilies (*mimrē*).[7] The present chapter will in many respects retrace Andrae's footsteps, although in contrast to Andrae my focus is above all going to be on those surahs that are likely to be early, rather than on the entire corpus. My chief interest is thus to arrive at a better understanding specifically of the Qur'an's 'primary message', its original 'kerygma',[8] in the hope of thereby making better sense of how the Qur'anic phenomenon got under way.

4. Christiaan S. Hurgronje, 'Une Nouvelle Biographie de Mohammed', reprinted in id., *Verspreide Geschriften*, vol. 1 (Bonn and Leipzig, 1923), pp. 339–40; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans von Judentum und Christentum* (Stuttgart, 1922), pp. 28–29. An earlier publication of mine endorses Harris Birkeland's theory that the short monothematic surahs 93, 94, 105, 106, and 108, which are almost devoid of explicit eschatological references (the exception being Q 93:4), precede the remainder of the Qur'anic recitations, and postulates a subsequent 'eschatological turn'; see Nicolai Sinai, 'Qur'ānic Self-Referentiality as a Strategy of Self-Authorization', in Stefan Wild (ed.), *Self-Referentiality in the Qur'ān* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 107–108. For a partial revision of this opinion see Nicolai Sinai, 'The Qur'an as Process', in Angelika Neuwirth *et al.* (eds.), *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 425–29 (where I conjecture only the priority of surahs 105 and 106).

5. Tor Andrae, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum* (Uppsala, 1926). The work has been translated into French under the title *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme* (Paris, 1955). (In what follows, all translations of quotations from Andrae's book are mine and were made on the basis of the German original.)

6. Already Alphonse Mingana, 'Syriac Influence on the Style of the Ḳur'ān', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 11 (1927), pp. 77–98, observes the pervasive presence in the Qur'an of names and religious terms that are etymologically derived from Syriac. More recently, several independent case studies of Qur'anic narratives have impressively confirmed the importance of Syriac sources: Sidney Griffith, 'Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān: The Companions of the Cave in Sūrat al-Kahf and in Syriac Christian Tradition', in Gabriel Said Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Abingdon, 2008), pp. 109–37; Kevin van Bladel, 'The Alexander Legend in the Qur'ān 18:83–102', in Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, pp. 175–203; Joseph Witztum, 'Joseph Among the Ishmaelites: Q 12 in Light of Syriac Sources', in Gabriel Said Reynolds (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context 2*, Abingdon 2011, pp. 425–48. See also the general remarks in Sidney Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 26–27.

7. Gabriel S. Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext* (London, 2010), pp. 230–53 (but see the concluding section below for some reservations); Griffith, *Bible*, pp. 42–43.

8. I borrow both expressions from William M. Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 60–61.

The Qur'anic text base upon which I rely in this endeavour merits some clarification. As adumbrated above and justified elsewhere,[9] I make the assumption that, in the absence of opposing considerations, a surah whose MVL is significantly lower than that of another one is likely to be earlier than the latter.[10] Re-arranging the Qur'an's 114 surahs by increasing MVL should therefore give us at least an approximate sense of their relative chronological order, even though such a rearrangement by MVL must by no means be mistaken for a strict relative chronology. My attempt to delineate the Qur'an's primary message will mainly draw on those surahs displaying a MVL below 50 transcription letters, with an emphasis on surahs whose MVL is below 35.[11] For a rearrangement of Qur'anic surahs by increasing MVL and for details on how these values were computed, the reader is asked to refer to Appendix 1.[12] The set of surahs thus delimited – namely, by the criterion of exhibiting a MVL below 50 – includes all the eschatologically dominated surahs mentioned above, and it excludes many (albeit not all) surahs exhibiting a significant portion of narrative and/or polemics, which are plausibly dated later. However, I do not hesitate to occasionally quote passages from surahs exhibiting a MVL narrowly above 50 (e.g., surahs 50 and 76) when these appear to complement the general picture emerging from my primary text base.

Why is it worthwhile to revisit Andrae's book on Qur'anic eschatology? Firstly, almost ninety years after its publication, its findings and conclusions merit critical scrutiny and partial restating in the light of the current state of Qur'anic scholarship, which has outgrown the tendency of Andrae and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars to envisage Muhammad merely as the passive recipient of external influences. In particular, the early Qur'an's complex relationship to the Syriac

9. Once again see Sinai, 'Inner-Qur'anic Chronology'.

10. Note that this is a probabilistic assertion: I am not committing myself to the claim that any minute discrepancy in MVL is chronologically significant, only to the weaker claim that statistically significant divergences in MVL create a prima facie probability that the surah with the lower MVL is chronologically earlier.

11. In order to convey a sense of proportion, it might be useful to note that the Qur'an contains twenty-eight surahs, normally dated to the late Meccan and Medinan periods, exhibiting a MVL transcending a hundred transcription letters (see Sinai, 'Inner-Qur'anic Chronology'). Individual verses can of course be much longer (see, for instance, Q 2:282 with a length of 843 transcription letters).

12. See in more detail Sinai, 'Inner-Qur'anic Chronology'. Some of the surahs used in this study include verses or verse groups that are relatively uncontroversially identifiable as later interpolations, either because their verse length is markedly higher than that of their literary context or because they employ terminology that is otherwise characteristic of surahs with much higher MVL. Appendix 1 also includes a list of these putative insertions.

mimrē corpus, which combines striking convergences with a number of equally striking differences, has in my view not yet been satisfactorily described. Secondly, Andrae has an unfortunate habit of quoting Greek translations and adaptations of Ephrem's writings rather than the original Syriac material (and where he does quote the latter, he relies on the now outdated eighteenth-century Roman edition of Ephrem). Throughout this chapter I shall therefore provide relatively ample references to the metrical homilies and hymns (*madrāšē*) attributed to Ephrem in editions that possess contemporary currency, as well as to eight eschatological homilies by Jacob of Serugh (d. 521) that Andrae did not consult.[13] It must be noted that the authenticity of many of the homilies ascribed to Ephrem is doubtful, although a pre-Qur'anic dating would still appear to be the most reasonable default position: that is, in the absence of significant evidence to the contrary, it seems likely that even the pseudonymous works convey a valuable impression of the motifs and concepts that were current in the pre-Qur'anic Syriac homiletic tradition.[14] In any case, my general presentation of the relationship between early Qur'anic eschatology and the Syriac tradition would have sufficient support even if one were to rely only on Ephrem's hymns and on the eschatological homilies of Jacob of Serugh.

Q 102 AS AN ENTRY POINT

A convenient entry point for our inquiry is supplied by surah 102, which concisely illustrates the early Qur'anic kerygma's most basic

13. Abbrevations for frequently cited Syriac sources: CN: Edmund Beck (ed. and trans.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena*, 4 vols. (*CSCO* 218–219, 240–214; Louvain, 1961–63); ES I–IV: Edmund Beck (ed. and trans.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones I–IV*, 8 vols. (*CSCO* 130–131, 134–135, 138–139, 148–149; Louvain, 1970–73); HF: Edmund Beck (ed. and trans.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, 2 vols. (*CSCO* 154–155; Louvain, 1970–73); HP: Ephrem, *Hymns on Paradise*, in Edmund Beck (ed. and trans.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum* (*CSCO* 174–175; Louvain, 1957); HS: Paul Bedjan (ed.), *Homiliae selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*, 5 vols. (Paris–Leipzig, 1905–10). Note that *mimrē* are quoted by hemistichs, here abbreviated as 'll.' = 'lines', whereas *madrāšē* are simply quoted by stanzas.

14. For a detailed assessment see Beck's remarks at the beginning of the translation volumes of ES I–IV (the soundness of which I do not claim to be competent to judge). In two cases, Beck suspects that a particular homily could have remained in flux until, or even date from, the Islamic period: in the case of ES III, no. 4, he assumes a gradual process of literary growth and even detects a possible echo of Islam in it; and ES III, no. 5 he considers to be a pseudonymous apocalypse that dates entirely from the second half of the seventh century.

propositions and also provides a first occasion to probe its intersection with Biblical and Syriac-Christian literature.

1 ¹ Rivalry to have more (al-takāṯur) has distracted you
² until you visit the tombs.
2 ³ No! You will come to know!
⁴ Again: no! You will come to know!
⁵ No! If only you knew with certain knowledge!
3 ⁶ You will indeed see the Fire (al-ǧaḥīm)!
⁷ Again, you will indeed see it with the eye of certainty!
⁸ Again, on that day you will indeed be asked about (your earthly) bliss![15]

The piece is composed of three verse groups, indicated above by bold numerals.[16] First comes a categorical reproach (vv. 1–2), marked off from the remainder of the text by a change in rhyme between vv. 2 and 3.[17] The accusation levelled at the audience is that of vying to have 'more' (k-ṯ-r) until they are dead and buried.[18] While takāṯur morphologically

15. My English renderings of Qur'anic passages are based on (but not faithful quotations of) the translation by Alan Jones, published in 2007 by the Gibb Memorial Trust.

16. My division of the text assumes (against Angelika Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren* [Berlin, 2007²], p. 232) that vv. 5 and 6 are not linked to each other as counterfactual conditional and main clause. In defence of my construal of the passage, I would adduce the following considerations: (i) the obvious parallelism between vv. 3–4 and vv. 6–7, which suggests that v. 6, like v. 3, marks the beginning of a new subsection; (ii) the fact that *la-tarawunna* in v. 6 is likely to refer to the same thing as in v. 7, namely, to a first-hand encounter with the fire of hell in the hereafter, rather than to a vivid anticipation of it (seeing it in the mind's eye, as it were) in the here and now. Thus construed, v. 6 cannot be conditionally linked to v. 5, for surely the text is not saying that knowing the threat of hell to be true is a precondition for damnation (which would entail that one could escape damnation through ignorance).

17. For a comprehensive treatment of Qur'anic rhyme see Neuwirth, *Studien*, pp. 65–115.

18. I am inclined to construe the occurrence of the verb 'to visit' (zāra) in Q 102:2 as a casual way of underscoring that death is not the ultimate end: everyone who is buried will inevitably be resurrected and will accordingly have only paid a temporary 'visit' to the grave. Intertextual support for my understanding of the verse is found in one of the homilies attributed to Ephrem (considered to be inauthentic by Beck), which paraphrases death in a manner very similar to Q 102:2: 'He who sojourns in the womb / will enter the grave and sojourn there' (ES I, no. 4, ll. 19–20). Note that Ephrem's double use of the verb šrā may also be perceived as emphasizing, like the Qur'anic zāra, the temporariness of one's residence in the grave. By contrast, Islamic exegesis (tafsīr) preserves the view that Q 102:2 is to be understood as referring to a literal visiting of graves. For instance, the early exegete Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (*Tafsīr* [ed. 'Abdallāh M. Shiḥāta, Beirut 1423/2002], ad Q 102:1–2) tells the story of how two clans of the Quraysh entered into an argument in which each of them boasted (iftaḥarū) of being more numerous or having more illustrious ancestors than the other. This then led them to visit the graves of their ancestors in order to establish proper numbers. I am extremely sceptical of such a literal understanding of zāra for the following reasons: (i) it suspiciously displays the tendency of a significant part of the early tafsīr tradition to interpret the Qur'anic text by embedding it within colourful background narratives;

conveys the connotation of reciprocal effort ('trying to have more than one another'), its derivation from the root *k-ṯ-r* also evokes the vice of *pleonexia*, of insatiably wanting to 'have more', against which Jesus warns his hearers in Luke 12:15 and also in Mark 7:22 (cf. also Rom. 1:29, 1 Cor. 6:10, and the admonishment against 'wanting to be rich', *boulesthai ploutein*, in 1 Tim. 6:9).[19] The verse does not, however, need to be construed as a targeted allusion to the New Testament, for similar chastisements of material covetousness are easily come by in the Syriac homiletic tradition: already Andrae refers to Ephrem's condemnation of the fact that 'he who receives asks for more (*šā'el yattirā*)',[20] and similar language is used by Jacob of Serugh: 'And behold, we are stirred up, agitated, and haughty / and assiduous to acquire more (*yattirātā*) every day.'[21] While Ephrem's and Jacob's use of *yattir* may indeed echo the Peshitta's

(ii) Muqātil's narrative is quite clearly not a report enshrining genuine historical information, but simply an extrapolation from and implicitly based on other Qur'anic verses, for example, the statement cited in Q 34:35 ('And they have said: "We have more wealth and children. We shall not be punished"' - note the overlap between the Qur'anic *naḥnu akṯaru amwālan wa-awlādan* and Muqātil's use of the phrase *naḥnu akṯaru sayyidan / 'adadan*) and Q 57:20, where *takāṯurun fī l-amwāli wa-l-awlād* is juxtaposed with *tafāḫurun baynakum* (the latter having the same root as the verb *iftaḫara* at the beginning of Muqātil's anecdote); (iii) Muqātil's reading is certainly not the only interpretation of 102:2 found in the *tafsīr* tradition; for instance, al-Ṭabari cites a number of traditions that simply paraphrase the verse as *ḥattā ṣārū min ahli l-qubūri* or *ḥattā mātū ḍalālan*. For a reasoned plea in defence of linking the verse to a literal visiting of graves see however Angelika Neuwirth, *Der Koran: Handkommentar und Übersetzung*, vol. 1: *Frühmekkanische Suren: Poetische Prophetie* (Berlin, 2011), pp. 127-28. But note that the fact, highlighted by Neuwirth, that 102:2 employs *maqābir* rather than the customary *qubūr* (cf. Q 82:4, 100:9) could simply be due to the need to find a word that rhymes with *takāṯur* in v. 1.

19. On the significance of the sixth form see William Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, third edition, revised by W. Robertson Smith and M.J. de Goeje (Cambridge 1896), vol. 1, pp. 38-40. A link between *takāṯur* and *pleonexia* is casually suggested, albeit without Biblical references, in David Künstlinger, 'Einiges über die Namen und die Freuden des kurānischen Paradieses', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 6 (1931), p. 619. For some weighty reservations against this hypothetical link between *takāṯur* and *pleonexia* see Neuwirth, *Frühmekkanische Suren*, pp. 126-29. Yet *pace* Neuwirth, I cannot help but remain struck by Künstlinger's suggestion. It is certainly correct that *pleonexia*, unlike the Arabic term *takāṯur*, lacks the connotation of competition with others, yet this in no way rules out that the Qur'an's original audience would have detected the same intertextual resonance in the word as Künstlinger. Of course, Neuwirth is right that my understanding of *takāṯur* precludes a literal understanding of v. 2 (see previous note).

20. Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 130, referring to CN 74:20. Cf. also CN 74:22: 'Avariciously (*ya'nā*) he brings together and multiplies treasures ... ' Note that *ya'nutā* is the word by which the Peshitta renders *pleonexia* at Luke 12:15 (see George A. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshiṭtā and Harklean Versions*, 4 vols. [Leiden 1996]).

21. HS, no. 31, ll. 216-217.

rendering of Luke 12:15,[22] there is no reason to assume that a similarly direct link obtains between Luke and the Qur'an (see below). Incidentally, the fact that the Ephremic hymn quoted by Andrae repeatedly contrasts man's exploits and ambitions with the inevitability of his death constitutes a further resemblance to Q 102:1–2.[23]

The initial couplet of surah 102 is followed by two groups of three verses each. The first one of them, Section 2, is opened by an unspecific threat (v. 3) that is immediately repeated (v. 4), whereupon its object is qualified as something that is amenable to being known 'with certain knowledge' (v. 5). What the addressees are actually threatened with is only specified at the beginning of Section 3, in v. 6, which explicitly invokes 'the Fire' (al-ğaḥīm). V. 7 is once again a partial repetition of the preceding verse and leads up to the surah's ultimate vanishing point, the concluding assertion that the addressees will inevitably be questioned about their earthly 'bliss' (v. 8).[24] Sections 2 and 3 thus exhibit a rhetorical development from enigma to resolution that endows the entire surah with a palpably climactic organization.[25]

The fundamental message of surah 102 is at once condemnatory (vv. 1–2) and minatory (vv. 3–8). Indeed, if the rhyme change between vv. 2 and 3 is viewed as the text's main hinge, its structure tantalizingly recalls the sequence of reproach (Scheltwort) and threat (Drohwort) that has been recognized as a basic literary pattern of prophetic pronouncements in the Hebrew Bible.[26] Surah 102 may thus be viewed as

22. Luke has Jesus justify his warning against *pleonexia* with the words 'for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (en tô perisseuein ... ek tôn hyparchontôn autô)', which the Peshitta renders as *yattirutā d-neksē* (other Syriac translations have *yutrānā / yutrānē d-neksē*, which is derived from the same root; see Kiraz, *Comparative Edition*).
23. This also confirms my rendering of Q 102:2, against the alternative view discussed in n. 18 above.
24. Although other Qur'anic surahs use the same expression (al-na'īm) to designate paradise, in Q 102:8 it must obviously mean the enjoyment of earthly pleasures during one's life. For a roughly equivalent occurrence of 'pleasure' (nyāḥā) and 'luxury' (purpā'ā) see ES I, no. 3, l. 271.
25. A similar procession from enigma to resolution can be detected in other early Qur'anic proclamations, cf. the use of deliberately ambiguous oath passages, the eschatological purport of which is clarified later in the text (cf. Q 100), and of didactic questions (mā adrāka ...), as in surah 104.
26. See Werner H. Schmidt, *Old Testament Introduction*, trans. M.J. O'Connell and D.J. Reimer (New York-Louisville, 1999²), pp. 184–86 (giving Amos 4:1–2 as an example). Of course, most Biblical prophets threaten their audience with innerworldly punishments rather than with a divine judgement preceded by a universal resurrection. The same succession of a condemnation of present misbehaviour and an announcement of future consequences also appears elsewhere in the early Qur'an, for example, in Q 104:1–4 and Q 83:1–6.

encapsulating what I take to be the two principal dimensions of the
early Qur'anic kerygma:

(i) a certain moral vision that involves both a radical critique of the
Qur'an's addressees (cf. surah 102's use of the second person plural) or
of 'man' (al-insān) in general,[27] as well as the endorsement of specific
social and religious virtues;

(ii) the eschatological dimension proper, which ranges from terse threats
and warnings asserting a posthumous reckoning to graphic depictions
of the ultimate disintegration of the cosmos and of paradise and hell.

It is one of the main merits of Andrae's work not to have treated the
latter dimension in isolation from the former one, and to have recog-
nized how profoundly the Qur'an's conception of righteous behaviour is
shaped by anticipation of the Judgement.[28] Following Andrae's lead,
I shall first devote significant attention to the early Qur'an's moral vision
before turning to explicit statements about the Day of Judgement and the
hereafter.

THE MORAL VISION OF THE EARLY QUR'AN

The early Qur'an's moral critique of its audience has an obvious social
aspect: many of the offences that are so fervently targeted by the early
Qur'anic proclamations centre upon avarice (Q 102:1) and a fundamen-
tally misguided attitude to material wealth. Vehement criticism is
directed against the excessive 'love' (Q 89:20, 100:8) of possessions and
their 'hoarding' (ğama'a) and 'counting' (Q 104:2, 70:18; see also the
condemnations of miserliness in 92:8 and 53:34), as well as the illusion
that material wealth could guarantee immortality (Q 104:3), when in
reality it will be of no avail at all in the hereafter (Q 92:11). Further
offences related to the acquisition and retention of property are the use
of false measures (Q 83:1–3; cf. 55:7–9 as well as the later passage 26:181–
183) and failure to provide for, or downright exploitation of, orphans and
the poor (Q 69:34, 74:44, 89:17–19, 90:14–16, 107:2–3). In addition,
Q 104:1–3 associate the love of wealth with slander and calumny.[29]

There are also accusations of a specifically religious nature, most
prominently the charge of denying (kaddaba) the reality of the Judgement

27. For some early third-person statements about 'man' see Q 70:19–21, 75:5–6.14–15,
90:4, 95:4–5, 96:6–7, 100:6–8, 103:2.

28. See the remarks in Andrae, Ursprung, p. 84.

29. This (traditional) interpretation of Q 104:2 is supported by the use of the root
h-m-z in Q 68:11 and 23:97, and of l-m-z in 9:58.79 and 49:11.

(dīn) (Q 82:9, 83:11, 95:7, 107:1) or of the hereafter (Q 92:9 mentions denial of al-ḥusnā, presumably the 'fairest' reward that awaits man in paradise).[30] Several passages describe this attitude of denial as an act of 'turning one's back' (tawallā, see Q 75:32, 92:16, 96:13; cf. 70:17 and 74:23, which use adbara), thus depicting it as the wilful rejection of an evident truth. Man is also indicted for ingratitude to his divine creator and judge (Q 80:17–22, 82:6, 100:6). Three verses (80:5, 92:8–9, 96:7) censure man's proclivity to 'consider himself sufficient' (istaḡnā), that is, his refusal to cultivate a proper attitude of fear (taqwā) towards his divine creator and judge.[31] On the behavioural level, we find condemnations of failing to perform the prayer (74:43, 75:31, 77:48) as well as of insincere and ostentatious praying (107:4–6).

These social and religious vices are presented as intimately and inextricably intertwined. For instance, surah 107 identifies 'the one who denies the Judgement' (alladī yukaddibu bi-l-dīn, v. 1) with 'him who repulses the orphan / and does not urge the feeding of the poor' (vv. 2–3): disbelief in the Judgement, the equation implies, is bound to result in insufficient moral effort.[32] Further examples for the interlinking of social and religious vices may be added: Q 107:4–7 associates insincere praying with the 'withholding of assistance (mā'ūn)', presumably from the same categories of socially disadvantaged persons mentioned elsewhere[33]; Q 92:8–9 connects miserliness and the illusion of human self-sufficiency with the denial of a reward in the hereafter; Q 83:12 states that the Day of Judgement is only denied by 'sinful transgressors'; and a self-incriminating speech of the damned quoted in Q 74:43–47 identifies their misdeeds with failure to pray and feed the poor, idle talk, and denial of the Day of Judgement.[34] Social and religious failings consequently come in a

30. See also the various woes, threats, and other references to 'the deniers' (al-mukaddibūn) in Q 77 and 83:10–12, as well as Q 52:11, 56:51.92, 68:8, and 73:11.

31. All three occurrences of the verb istaḡnā contrast with references to 'fearing' / 'seeking to protect oneself' (Q 96:12: taqwā, Q 92:5: man a'ṭā wa-ttaqā) or 'being afraid' (Q 80:9: yaḥšā), the object of which must be God as the eschatological judge or perhaps, as in Q 73:17, the Day of Judgement itself.

32. A somewhat weaker connection is asserted in Q 83:1–6: if the addressees were convinced that they are going to be resurrected (and judged), they would not commit the sin of false measuring.

33. Cf. Q 107:7 with 68:12 and 70:21; on the meaning of mā'ūn see Theodor Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft (Strassburg 1910), p. 28 and Nikolaus Rhodokanakis, 'Zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft', Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 25 (1911), pp. 67–68.

34. See also Q 68:8–15, which implicitly identifies 'those who deny' with those who are, inter alia, guilty of slander, 'withholding possessions', sin and transgression.

package: the possibility that there could be morally virtuous agnostics is not envisaged.

The early Qur'an, then, depicts the prototypical sinner as someone who, due to his wilful denial of an ultimate reckoning, is puffed up with a false sense of self-sufficiency; his natural desire for possessions (see Q 100:8) being unbridled by any concern about the hereafter, he is driven to ride roughshod over the weakest members of society, especially orphans and the poor. Apparently, the only force that is capable of restraining humans from following their innate selfishness is fear or, literally, anxious 'wariness' (taqwā) of God as the eschatological judge. The term taqwā and its cognates first come into view in verses that are likely to be very early (Q 91:8, 92:5.17, 96:12), and at some point – probably beginning with Q 77:41, 78:31, and 69:48 – spawn references to 'the God-fearers' (al-muttaqūn) as a collective body,[35] who form a positive counterpoint to 'the deniers' (al-mukaddibūn).[36] That literal dread is an important component of taqwā is clearly indicated by the early Qur'an's use of various synonyms for fearing and being afraid, such as ḥašiya (Q 67:12, 79:19.26.45, 80:9 and 87:10; see also 50:33), ḫāfa (Q 55:46, 74:53, and 79:40; see also 50:45 and 51:37) and ašfaqa (Q 70:27; see also 52:26), as well as the fact that the foremost objective of the early Qur'an's announcements and descriptions of the Judgement and the hereafter is quite obviously not to inform but to inspire terror (see below). Hence, denial of the Judgement is opposed not simply to an attitude of cognitively deeming the Judgement to be true (which would lack sufficient psychological potency in order to prevail over man's natural selfishness) but to an existential state of anxious wariness that encompasses both cognitive and emotional aspects.[37] Arguably, this notion of taqwā constitutes the very core of the early Qur'an's moral vision: as Andrae observes, 'the impetus that fuels all good deeds is supposed to be fear of the terrible day'.[38]

The intertwining of religious and social vices observed above is therefore ultimately due to the fact that, from the Qur'anic perspective, it is

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35. See also Q 51:15, 52:17, 54:54, and 68:34, and cf. the statement in 53:32 that God is 'well aware of him who fears'. While al-muttaqūn corresponds to such terms as hoi phoboumenoi ton theon (e.g., Acts 13:16.26) or sebomenoi (e.g., Acts 17:4), often taken to designate gentiles who were sympathizers of Judaism without undergoing circumcision and converting, I can see little justification to assume that the Qur'anic term refers to a similar historical phenomenon.

36. See the verses listed in n. 30 above.

37. The preceding remarks can be seen as an attempt to unpack Andrae's more concise observation: 'The pious are required not only to believe in the Day of Judgement but to fear it' (Ursprung, p. 85, where some of the same proof texts are cited as above).

38. Andrae, Ursprung, p. 90.

only the existential dread to which anticipation of the Judgement gives rise that enables man to overcome his innate love of possessions and fulfil the requirements of social solidarity. The paramount manifestation of such eschatologically induced solidarity is charitable giving. Thus, Q 92:5 speaks of 'the one who gives and is God-fearing / and believes in what is fairest [that is, paradise]', and another verse in the same surah recommends 'giving' as a means of 'purifying oneself' (Q 92:18),[39] most likely of an undue attachment to transient things. Two further passages laud those 'in whose wealth there is a fixed share / for the beggar and the deprived' (Q 70:24–25, cf. also 51:19).[40] A more elaborate list of various kinds of charitable giving is presented in Q 90:13–16, which mentions 'the freeing of a slave / or the feeding on a day of hunger / of an orphan near of kin / or someone poor and destitute'. In particular the duty of feeding the poor is frequently highlighted (Q 69:34, 74:44, 89:18, 107:3; see also 68:24).

Apart from almsgiving, the second most prominent type of virtuous behaviour foregrounded by the early Qur'an is prayer (ṣalāh). As a matter of fact, 'performing the prayer and giving alms' remain crucial markers of the identity of the Qur'anic community in verses that are much later than my primary text base, such as Q 2:43 or 5:55. Returning to the early Qur'anic proclamations, the importance attached to prayer is indicated, for instance, by the fact that in the catalogue of virtues Q 70:22–35, persistence in prayer (vv. 22–23 and 34) forms a bracket around the other pious qualities named there; and in Q 87:14–15, 'invoking the name of the Lord' is associated with self-purification (probably through almsgiving, cf. Q 92:18).[41] That the proclamation of the early Qur'anic surahs was accompanied by intense liturgical practice on the part of the messenger and, possibly, a small group of followers would also appear to be reflected by these texts' frequent second-person singular biddings to pray to, praise, invoke, or recite in 'the name of your Lord' etc. (Q 56:74.96,

39. For further references to self-purification in addition to Q 92:18 see Q 79:18, 80:3, 87:14 and 91:9.

40. Note that in the early Qur'an, almsgiving is not yet referred to by the term zakāh, the earliest occurrences of which as a designation of almsgiving may be Q 21:73, 23:4, and 27:3. It is significant that in Q 18:81 and 19:13 zakāh does not mean almsgiving but rather 'purity' in general (cf. Syriac dakyutā, 'purification, purity'; see Andrae, Ursprung, p. 200). It seems likely that this use of zakāh preserves an older acceptation of the word, which the Qur'an then narrows down by increasingly using zakāh to refer specifically to alms (= Syriac zdiqutā). The background to this semantic development, in the course of which a word with the original meaning of 'purity' developed into a designation for almsgiving, would seem to be the notion that charitable giving had a purificatory power, as documented by Q 92:18.

41. For early Qur'anic references to self-purification see n. 39 above.

69:52, 73:8, 74:3, 87:1, 96:1.3.19, 108:2; cf. also 52:48.49). Interestingly, the woe upon 'those who are heedless of their prayer' in Q 107:4–7 presupposes that some sort of *ṣalāh* ritual was already in existence when this passage was promulgated.[42] Since Q 107 is likely to be a very early surah, this *ṣalāh* ritual should probably be considered to have a pre-Qur'anic origin.[43] Its precise character is difficult to discern, but given the early Qur'an's frequent references to prostration (*saǧada*, see 84:21 and 96:19), bowing (*raka'a*, 77:48), and the 'glorification' of God (*sabbaḥa*, see 50:39–40, 56:74.96, 69:52, 87:1), it may be that all of these acts were established components of the *ṣalāh*. This conjecture would tie in nicely with the fact that the complaint voiced in Q 84:21 ('When the recitation is recited to them, they do not prostrate themselves') would appear to suggest that the Qur'anic messenger used to recite his revelations in the context of a public setting, for which the pre-Qur'anic *ṣalāh* rites would be a good candidate. Q 108:2 ('Pray to your Lord and sacrifice!') might indicate that the *ṣalāh* ritual was not an exclusively liturgical affair but also involved sacrificial rites, but the verse could also be referring to two separate types of rites.

A distinctive feature of the early Qur'anic prayer regimen is the holding of vigils. These certainly involved 'glorification' (*sabbaḥa*) and 'prostration' (*saǧada*). According to Q 50:39–40, God is to be 'glorified' before dawn, before sunset, and during the night.[44] Nocturnal glorification is also mentioned in Q 52:48–49 and 76:25–26, with the latter passage also containing a reference to prostration ('and prostrate yourself to Him at night, and glorify him through the long night'). Vigils are also imposed on the messenger in Q 73:1–2 ('You [singular] who are wrapped up in a robe, / stay up during the night, except for a little!'), where they are associated with recitation, presumably of Qur'anic texts, and the receipt of new revelations (w. 4b–5). It is significant that the stringency of 73:1–2 may later have been mitigated through addition of vv. 3–4a, which reduce the original command to stay awake almost the entire night to 'half of it, or a little less / or a little more'. The final verse of the surah, v. 20,

42. See Angelika Neuwirth, 'Vom Rezitationstext über die Liturgie zum Kanon: Zu Entstehung und Wiederauflösung der Surenkomposition im Verlauf der Entwicklung eines islamischen Kultus', in Stefan Wild (ed.), *The Qur'an as Text* (Leiden 1996), p. 86.

43. As pointed out in Neuwirth, 'Rezitationstext', this fits extra-Qur'anic reports compiled by Uri Rubin, according to which the pre-Islamic Meccans would perform prayers to Allāh in the vicinity of the Ka'ba, especially the *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā*; see Uri Rubin, 'Morning and Evening Prayers in Early Islam', *JSAI* 10 (1987), pp. 40–64. The much later verse Q 8:35, too, implies a pagan *ṣalāh* ritual held at the Ka'ba.

44. See also Josef J. Rivlin, *Gesetz im Koran* (Jerusalem, 1934), pp. 95–96, who emphasizes the distinction between the *ṣalāh* and vigils.

which extends to more than half the length of the first nineteen verses and whose status as a later addition is thus hardly open to question, further alleviates the opening injunction by instructing the messenger and his followers to 'recite whatever you find it reasonable to recite (*mā tayassara mina l-qur'ān)'*. It should be noted that v. 20 explicitly states that vigils were practised not only by the messenger himself but also 'by a party of those with you'. While v. 20 only documents a much later stage of the Qur'an's process of emergence, the fact that the vigils commanded in surah 73 were practised collectively rather than only by the messenger is already attested by Q 51:17–18 ('Little of the night they used to slumber, / and in the mornings they used to seek forgiveness').[45]

In conclusion of this brief synopsis of the early Qur'an's understanding of virtuous behaviour, we may note what appears to be a reference to celibacy. It occurs towards the end of the catalogue of virtues contained in Q 70:22–35, which qualifies a preceding rebuke of man:

> [19] Man was created anxious,
>
> ...
>
> [22] Except for those who pray,
> [23] who persevere in their prayer,
>
> ...
>
> [29] and those who guard their private parts
> > [30] – except with their spouses and what their right hands possess; then they are not blameworthy;
> > [31] but those who seek more than that are transgressors! –
> [32] and those who keep their trusts and their covenant,
>
> ...

As suggested by my indentation of vv. 30–31, it is perfectly conceivable that these latter two verses could form a later interpolation, given that at least v. 30 stands out not only by virtue of its length but also, and perhaps more importantly, by its paraphrasing of slaves as 'what their right hands possess', a phrase that is otherwise attested only in surahs that must be considerably later than Q 70 (see Q 16:71, 24:31, 33:50.55).[46] Incidentally,

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45. Neuwith, 'Rezitationstext', p. 88 considers such vigils to have primarily been private devotions of the messenger.

46. Neuwirth, *Frühmekkanische Suren*, p. 441 judges the entire passage Q 70:22–35 to be a later addition, thereby revising her more cautious assessment in Neuwirth, *Studien*, p. 202. A number of considerations can be adduced in support of this view: (i) In other surahs, too, categorical denunciations of man like 70:19–21 appear to have been secondarily restricted by means of adding exceptive clauses (see Q 95:6, 103:3; cf. also 84:25); (ii) Q 70:36 connects well with 70:21; (iii) the partial identity of Q 70:22–35 and 23:1–11 could be taken to indicate that the former passage was inserted roughly at the same time at which Q 23 was first promulgated. Nevertheless, since Q 70:22–35 as a whole, with the exception of v. 30, does not display a markedly higher MVL than the

the same reasoning applies to Q 23:5–7, which constitutes a doublet to Q 70:29–31. If this reconstruction is accepted, then the explicit approval of sexual relationships with spouses and slaves in Q 70:30–31 would constitute a secondary toning-down of an originally unqualified esteem of carnal abstinence.[47] In support of this analysis one might add that a very similar retrospective mitigation of overly stringent injunctions clearly occurred in surah 73, as pointed out above.

THE SYRIAC BACKGROUND

I now turn to a consideration of the intertextual background of the distinctive bundle of virtues and vices that the previous section has attempted to untangle. First of all, it is important to recognize *that* such a background exists, as one might otherwise be tempted to infer from the Qur'an's strictures against social exploitation and dishonest business dealings that it must have addressed a society at the very brink of moral collapse.[48] As a matter of fact, the early Qur'an's social critique is part

remainder of Q 70, I prefer, at least for the time being, to err on the side of caution and retain the passage in question, with the exception of vv. 30–31, as part of the surah's original version. In any case, even if the entire passage 70:22–35 were considered to be secondary, the hypothesis that vv. 30–31 were secondarily embedded in it would remain just as plausible, and my conjecture that an originally unqualified call for celibacy was subsequently mitigated would still stand.

47. One might object that 'guarding one's private parts' simply calls for pudency rather than celibacy and buttress this by appealing to Q 24:30–31, where 'guarding one's private parts' occurs in combination with injunctions to lower one's gaze and to shun revealing clothing (cf. also Q 33:35, where the phrase is used without any further behavioural details). Yet if that was indeed the original meaning of the expression, it becomes difficult to make sense of the intent of the exceptive clause in Q 70:30–31 and 23:6–7, for surely sexual intercourse with spouses (and slaves) is opposed to *abstinence* from such intercourse, rather than to modest behaviour and dress. As a further corroboration of my hypothesis, I would also point out that the verb *ḥāfaẓa* in the Qur'anic locution 'guarding one's private parts' maps onto Syriac *nṭar* as used in appeals to 'guard' the treasure of virginity (see ES IV, no. 1, ll. 309–310.329). In sum, while I find it impossible to deny that 'guarding one's private parts' in Q 24:30–31 and probably also in Q 33:35 refers to pudency rather than abstinence, my analysis of Q 70:29–31 and 23:5–7 inclines me to view this as a secondary acceptation of the phrase that masks an original esteem of celibacy, as do Q 70:30–31 and 23:6–7.

48. The classic example for this view is Watt's depiction of Mecca as an international financial hub (Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, p. 3) where the traditional values of tribal society were rapidly crumbling under the pressure of unchecked individualism (see ibid., p. 20). While Watt's view of the Qur'anic phenomenon as an attempt to create a new religious basis for social solidarity (ibid., p. 73) has been amply criticized before, it still bears pointing out that one of the scenario's main flaws consists in the fact that it rests on an understanding of passages like Q 83:1–6, 89:17–20, or 107 that fails to take their intertextual background into due account.

and parcel of an ancient literary tradition. In particular the Qur'anic denunciations of fraud and avarice in Q 83:1–3 or 107:1–2 and its ardent partisanship for orphans and the poor recall similar passages in the prophetic books of the Bible.[49] One early Qur'anic paragraph, a catalogue of virtues contained in Q 90:12–16, even exhibits a palpable structural correspondence to a segment from the book of Isaiah (58:5–7).[50] The inclement view that the early Qur'an takes of its addressees and of humans in general is thus as much a result of its subscribing to a particularly exacting moral vision enshrined in a long literary tradition stretching back to the Hebrew Bible (and, of course, further beyond) as it is an expression of outrage at contemporary social ills.[51]

This raises the question of which particular formation of this tradition in the Qur'an's historical environment is closest to the early Qur'anic moral vision. As Andrae has shown, Syriac Christianity yields a particularly close fit. The parallels highlighted by him include 'the direct motivation of moral action by the idea of the Last Judgement',[52] accompanied by a strong emphasis on the fear of God (Arabic *taqwā*, Syriac *deḥlat alāhā*);[53] a concern for similar categories of socially marginalized persons, especially orphans and the poor;[54] and the importance and unique salvific

49. See, for example, the castigation of false measures in Amos 8:4–6 and of those 'who defraud the poor' and 'rob the needy' in Amos 4:1–3, as well as the concatenation of orphans, the poor and other categories of socially marginalized persons in Mal. 3:5. Some pertinent material is also found in the Pentateuch, of course, although its general tone is less similar to the Qur'an: thus, Deut. 25:13–16 forbids the use of false measures (cf. also Prov. 11:1), and Exod. 22:21–22 and Deut. 14:29 warn against mistreating orphans and the poor.

50. The structural similarity of the two passages is noted in Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 10. Both passages are introduced by a rhetorical question that metaphorically encodes the behaviour expected by God as 'the fast that I have chosen' or 'the steep path', respectively, and both then proceed to illustrate this mode of conduct by a very similar selection of examples: setting free slaves or 'the oppressed', feeding the hungry and the poor, and showing solidarity with one's relatives (the order is slightly different in the Qur'an).

51. See also Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 91–92.

52. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 90, 97, 100, 129.

53. The central position that fear of the judgement occupies in the Syriac homiletic tradition is well illustrated by ES I, no. 5 (which Beck considers to be inauthentic but which, due to its attestation in several manuscripts, seems to have been remarkably popular), with its multiple occurrences of *deḥlā* (e.g., in ll. 32.36.40.56.104 etc.) and *zawʿā*, 'trembling' (e.g., in ll. 2.32.72.197). See also ES III, no. 1, a homily entirely devoted to the fear of God and the Judgement, or the various references to 'trembling' that punctuate HS, no. 31.

54. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 129 and 182–85. In addition to the material adduced there see, e.g., ES I, no. 3, ll. 449–462 (the rich and greedy prey upon the poor, widows, and orphans); ES III, no. 2, ll. 225–226: 'The avaricious one (*yaʿnā*) robs the orphan / and despoils the house of the widow'; ES III, no. 4, ll 53–54. Against that, ES III, no. 4, ll. 561–570 calls upon the addressees to support the poor, the hungry, orphans, and widows:

effectiveness ascribed to almsgiving.[55] Following A.J. Wensinck, Andrae also points to the Qur'anic evidence for the performance of vigils, which corresponds to the nocturnal Psalm reading that is a prominent feature of Christian monastic piety.[56] Obviously, the same goes for celibacy, of which we saw two putative Qur'anic traces in Q 70:29 and 23:5.[57]

The impression that the moral dimension of the early Qur'anic kerygma is strongly linked to Syriac Christianity is thus amply borne out. An examination specifically of the Syriac homiletic tradition yields further convergences. Just like the early Qur'an, the *mimrē* literature censures the 'love' of wealth[58] and its 'hoarding' (Arabic *ǧama'a* = Syriac *knaš / kanneš*),[59] the insatiable desire to 'have more',[60] and the vice of miserliness.[61] The early Qur'an's passing references to the transitoriness of the world and the inevitability of old age and death (Q 75:20–21, 95:4–5) are illuminatingly juxtaposed with the more elaborate treatment of these topics in one of the homilies attributed to Ephrem.[62] Like the Qur'an, the *mimrē* tradition reiterates the Biblical condemnation of false

cf. also ibid., ll. 645–660. Care for orphans and the poor is also prominent in the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum* (see Holger M. Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* [Tübingen, 2013], pp. 59 and 73).

55. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 129–30 and 179–82. On almsgiving, see also CN 76:17 and Arthur Vööbus (ed. and trans.), *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, 4 vols. (CSCO 401–402, 407–408; Louvain 1979), pp. 168–70 (pointed out in Zellentin, *Legal Culture*, p. 59).

56. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 191–96. Cf. Arent J. Wensinck, *Muhammed en de Joden te Medina* (Leiden, 1928), pp. 104–106 (= *Muhammad and the Jews of Medina*, trans. Wolfgang Behn [Freiburg, 1975], pp. 75–77). Wensinck also draws attention to the fact that prostrations formed part of the devotions of late antique Syriac Christians.

57. *Pace* Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 186 (asserting that the Qur'an contains no references to virginity).

58. Cf. Q 89:20 and 100:8 (*ḥubb al-ḫayr / ḥubb al-māl*) with ES I, no. 2, l. 987 (*reggat dahbā*) and HS, no. 31, ll. 117.263 (*reḥmat kespā*); see also HP 2:4 (love of 'good things', *ṭubē*) and the admonishment not to be 'a lover of money' (*rāḥem kespā*) in Vööbus, *Didascalia*, p. 36, ll. 6–7. Denouncements of the love of money in the Qur'an and in the Syriac tradition ultimately echo Matt. 13:22 (condemnation of *hē agapē tou ploutou*) and 1 Tim. 6:9–10 (condemnation of *philargyria*), yet once again there is no reason to attribute to the Qur'anic messenger and his audience any first-hand acquintance with the pertinent New Testament verses (see the remarks on Q 102:1–2 above and further comments below).

59. Cf. Q 70:18 and 104:2 with ES I, no. 3, ll. 453–476 and ibid., no. 4, ll. 25–28 (hoarding); see also CN 76:16. Jacob of Serugh similarly disapproves of the 'gathering' (*kanneš*) of treasures, see HS, no. 192, l. 21.

60. See the discussion of Q 102:1–2 above.

61. Cf. Q 92:8 and 53:34 with ES I, no. 2, l. 793 and ibid., no. 3, ll. 455.461.

62. ES I, no. 4. Cf. in particular the Qur'anic accusation that 'you love that which is fleeting' (*al-'āǧila*) at 75:20 (see also 76:27 and 17:18) with the occurrence of derivatives of '*bar* in ES I, no. 4, l. 8 or l. 149 (for a similar statement in the *Synodicon Orientale* see Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 130). Regarding Q 95:4–5, it should be borne in mind that man's decrepitude in old age is also a frequent topos in ancient Arabian poetry, as pointed out in Neuwirth, *Frühmekkanische Suren*, p. 191.

measuring, which appears to function as a metonymy for exploitation and fraud in general,[63] and expresses a strong aversion to mockery and slander[64] and ostentatious praying.[65]

Apart from such specific conceptual intersections, there are also some striking affinities of literary form. For example, both the early Qur'an and the *mimrē* literature utilize such Biblically derived forms as woes[66] and beatitudes[67] and employ pessimistic or accusatory statements about 'man' (*bar nāšā / al-insān*).[68] More generally, the early Qur'an's multifarious reproaches (e.g., Q 75:20.21, 77:48, 82:9, 84:22, 85:19, 87:16.17, 89:17-20, 102:1.2), its enumerations of miscellaneous vices (e.g., Q 74:43-47 and 92:8-9), and the accompanying eschatological threats and warnings could defensibly be described as falling into the same overarching class of 'discourses of rebuke' (*mimrē d-makksānutā*) to which an

63. Q 55:7-9, 83:1-3; ES I, no. 2, ll. 367-404.533-542; ES III, no. 4, app. 6 (formulated, like 83:1-3, as a woe). The Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum* also insists on the use of 'unaltered weights', see Vööbus, *Didascalia*, p. 181, ll. 3-4 (pointed out in Zellentin, *Legal Culture*, p. 73).

64. Cf. Q 104:1 with ES I, no. 2, ll. 1315-1404.1501-1678 and ES III, no. 4, ll. 571-574 and app. 1, ll. 69-76. See also Vööbus, *Didascalia*, p. 36, ll. 8--10.

65. Cf. the condemnation of 'those who make a show' (*alladīna hum yurā'ūn*) during prayer in Q 107:6, which recalls Matt. 6:5-6 (Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 13), with HS, no. 68, ll. 159-162 (where Matt. 6:5-6 is clearly alluded to). Note the close proximity of *alladīna hum yurā'ūn*, Matthew's *hopòs phanōsin tois anthrōpois* ('so that they are seen by the people'; Peshitta: *d-nethzōn la-bnay nāšā*; see Kiraz, *Comparative Edition*), and Jacob's paraphrastic *nhawwē napšeh* ('in order to show himself'), followed by an occurrence of the root *ḥ-z-y* in HS, no. 68, l. 161. It also appears distinctly likely that Matthew's wording might be cited verbatim elsewhere in the Syriac homiletic corpus. See also the condemnation of prayer that is vitiated by pride in ES I, no. 2, ll. 1237-1238. The condemnation of neglecting prayer (or praying neglectfully?) in the preceding Qur'anic verse, 107:5, has counterparts in ES I, no. 7, ll. 377-380 (where the verb *ahmi men* is used, thus yielding a noticeable correspondence with the Qur'anic *sahā*) and, more remotely, ES III, no. 2, ll. 95-96.

66. Q 51:60, 52:11-12, 75:34-35, 77:15 (which recurs as a refrain throughout the rest of the surah), 83:1-3, 83:10-11, 104:1-2, 107:4-7; ES I, no. 5, ll. 348-379; ES III, no. 4, ll. 25-156; ibid., no. 4, appendices 3, 4, and 6 (although Beck is doubtful about the authenticity of the text, it seems improbable that at least its basic structure should be post-Qur'anic). Neuwirth points out that woes already appear in ancient Arabian poetry but agrees that the form ultimately belongs to the Biblical tradition (*Frühmekkanische Suren*, p. 137).

67. Cf. the Qur'anic formula *qad aflaḥa man* in Q 87:14-15 and 91:9 with the long list of beatitudes in ES III, no. 4, ll. 641-738 (each couplet of which is introduced by *ṭubā rabbā b-haw yawmā l-aynā d-* or *ṭubaw l-aynā d-*), which is obviously patterned after Matt. 5:3-12.

68. Cf. the statement about the caducity of man (*bar nāšā*) in ES I, no. 4, l. 1-4, which quotes Ps. 144:4, with Qur'anic *insān* statements such as Q 70:19-21, 75:5-6, 75:14-15, 90:4, 95:4-5, 96:6-7, 100:6-8, and 103:2. For another Syriac parallel to the Qur'anic *insān* statements see CN 75:22-23, the first stanza of which recalls Q 70:19-20 (as well as the later verses Q 17:83, 41:49, and 11:9), while the second stanza is reminiscent of Q 17:11 and 21:37 (both of which fall well outside my primary text base) and also the numerous Qur'anic warnings not to 'seek to hasten' (*ista'ǧala*) the Judgement (e.g., in Q 51:14.59).

early manuscript assigns three of Ephrem's homilies.[69] The crucial differ-
ence that the Qur'an, unlike Syriac homilies, styles itself as divine speech
will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter. But first, we
must turn to the second of the two chief dimensions of the early Qur'anic
kerygma, namely, eschatology proper.

THE QUR'ANIC VISION OF THE JUDGEMENT AND THE HEREAFTER

As underlined by Andrae, the early Qur'an's evocations and portrayals
of the end of the world and the hereafter primarily serve to stoke and
keep awake the fearful anticipation of the Judgement that the early
Qur'anic proclamations place at the centre of their moral vision.[70]
Qur'anic eschatology is therefore moralistic rather than apocalyptic: the
Qur'an exhibits no interest in speculating about the future course of his-
tory leading up until the end of the world or in reassuring a group of
people who seem to be on the losing side of history that they are, in fact,
on the winning side.[71] This lack of apocalyptic interest is most immedi-
ately apparent from the fundamentally ahistorical character of the way
in which the Qur'an represents the Day of Judgement: passages such as
Q 81:1-14 or 82:1-5, which enumerate different aspects of the world's
eschatological disintegration and the preparations immediately preced-
ing the final reckoning, nowhere attempt to date the end in relation to
the present or to spell out the signs by which one would be able to discern
that it is imminent.[72] As Andrae remarks, the extended eschatological
drama laid out in Matt. 24-25 or in the Book of Revelation appears com-
pressed into a single event.[73]

What the early Qur'an is primarily interested in, then, is not in fore-
telling when and under which historical circumstances the world will

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69. ES I, nos. 1-3 (all likely to be authentic, according to Beck). According to Beck,
the title 'sermons of rebuke' (derived from akkes, 'to rebuke, reprove') is attested in an
early manuscript from the 6th century (ES I, introduction to the Syriac edition, p. vii) and
can thus be assumed to have been current in pre-Qur'anic times.

70. See Andrae, Ursprung, p. 70.

71. See Andrae, Ursprung, p. 4: 'It is characteristic of Muhammad that he does not
exhibit any of the moods and interests of the apocalyptic. Indeed, he betrays a pro-
nounced animosity towards the apocalyptic desire for knowledge.'

72. The only Qur'anic statement remotely reminiscent of the usual apocalyptic pre-
views of history is Q 30:2-4, which predicts a future victory (or defeat, depending on
how one vocalizes the main verb) of the Byzantines. Yet even this passage does not
explicitly attach any apocalyptic significance to the event in question: the passage is not
framed as a prophecy of the end time.

73. Andrae, Ursprung, pp. 62-64.

come to an end. Rather, it is concerned to confront its hearers, through the artful deployment of a whole range of literary techniques, with the judgement they will ultimately have to face and to convince them that this basic fact necessitates a fundamental makeover of the way they live and act. I take it that it is primarily to inculcate such an eschatologically tinged outlook on the world that several Qur'anic verses make the dramatic announcement that the Day of Judgement is, or has drawn, 'nigh' (see Q 70:6–7 as well as 54:1, and, even later, 21:1).[74] At the same time, already the early Qur'an insists that only God, not Muhammad, knows when the end will arrive (Q 79:42–46). As indicated by the opening verse of this latter passage (Q 79:42: 'They ask you about the Hour: When is the time of its anchoring?'; cf. also 75:6 and 51:12), the Qur'an's insistence that it is not part of Muhammad's mandate to predict the time of the end responds to pressing queries by some of his hearers to be told when exactly the Hour would occur.[75] That such agnosticism about the exact time of the end was not necessarily seen as incompatible with announcements of eschatological imminence is confirmed by a sermon of Jacob of Serugh, which advances a very similar combination of claims.[76]

74. Cf. Jesus' declaration that 'the kingdom of God is at hand (*ĕggiken)*' (Mark 1:15, Matt. 4:17).

75. It is probably in response to the same queries that later Qur'anic verses substitute the announcement that the end *is* nigh by the more cautious formula that it *may be* (*la'alla, 'asā an*) nigh (see Q 17:51, 33:63, 42:17, all of which fall well outside this chapter's primary text base). A different scenario is envisaged in Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginning of Islam* (Philadelphia 2012), p. 168: after Muhammad had died without the end of the world having arrived, the qualifiers *la'alla* or *'asā an* could have been edited into what were originally unqualified announcements of eschatological imminence like 54:1. In response to this hypothesis, I would point to the numerous verses documenting that the problem of eschatological delay was acute even before Muhammad's death (apart from Q 51:12, 75:6, and 79:42, see also 7:187, 10:48, 21:38, 27:71 etc.). Hence, a toning-down of the imminent eschatological expectation expressed in Q 70:6–7, 54:1, and 21:1 makes perfect sense already during Muhammad's lifetime.

76. HS, no. 192. From l. 75 onwards, Jacob evokes the question posed by Jesus' disciples in Matt. 24:3 (as well as Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7) when the end of the world will take place, and Jesus' own statement that nobody, 'not even the Son', knows when the Hour will come (Matt. 24:36 and parallels). This is followed by a long explanation of Christ's apparent ignorance of the Hour, which appears to conflict with scriptural statements implying that Christ has the same knowledge as the Father (e.g., John 16:15). Jacob resolves the dilemma by arguing that since 'the knowledge of the Father and of the Son is the same' (l. 145), Christ only pretended not to know the time of the end (see ll. 129–130 and ll. 183–184). Despite the fact that no human accordingly knows when the end will come, from l. 237 onwards Jacob insists that the end is nevertheless nigh (e.g., ll. 238.272.301–304; it is unsurprising but still significant that these passages use the same Semitic root as Q 70:7 or 54:1, namely, *q-r-b*). In the light of HS, no. 192 it is justified, I think, to connect the frequent Qur'anic assertion that the 'knowledge' of the end is with God (Q 7:187, 31:34, 33:63 etc.) with Jesus' statement in Matt. 24:36 (and parallels).

A further rejoinder to bothersome queries about the precise time of the end is intimated in Q 79:46 and various later passages: since the deceased will spend the period between their individual demise and the Day of Judgement in a sleep-like state of unconsciousness, it will at least *appear* to them that the Resurrection occurs only a short time after their death.[77] As pointed out by earlier scholars, this notion of a slumber of souls is set forth by various Syriac writers ranging from Aphraates to the dyophysite church leader Babay the Great (d. 628).[78] Thus, regardless of when the Day of Judgement will take place in absolute historical terms, it is at least as near as anyone's individual death.[79] To all intents and purposes, then, it is incumbent on people to live their lives as if the end *were* nigh, regardless of how much history still remains to be traversed until the Resurrection is actually going to occur. Exactly the same moralistic, rather than apocalyptic, approach to eschatology is expressed by Jacob of Serugh: 'Henceforth, my brethren, hasten the course with good works, / for the road is swift, and time has been cut short for the one who is on it. / Even if the time of the world in its entirety may not be short, / our life flickers, as it is short.'[80]

So what does the early Qur'an have to say about the Day of Judgement and the afterlife? Appendix 2 gives an extensive, although doubtlessly preliminary, register of parallels to Qur'anic eschatology from the homilies and hymns attributed to Ephrem and Jacob of Serugh, which permits me to limit myself to a number of salient remarks here.[81] The most important observation to draw attention to is that the register documents that almost every aspect of the Qur'an's portrayal of the end of the world and of the hereafter has close counterparts in the Syriac tradition; in a number of cases, it is even possible to map characteristic details of the Qur'anic diction onto that of the Syriac sources (for example, the Qur'an's frequent use of *yawma'idhin*, 'on that day', which corresponds to Syriac *b-haw yawmā*, or the verbs *ḥašara* and *'aḏḏaba*). This is not to say that

77. According to Q 79:46, it will appear to the resurrected as if they had spent only a single night in their graves. Later passages speak of a period of ten days (Q 20:103), 'only an hour' (Q 10:45, 30:55), and 'a short while' (Q 17:52, 23:114).

78. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 156–63 (citing Hubert Grimme and Wilhelm Rudolph), especially pp. 158–60; Thomas J. O'Shaughnessy, *Muhammad's Thoughts on Death: A Thematic Study of the Qur'anic Data* (Leiden, 1969), pp. 69–70.

79. This would also seem to be the reason why Q 75:26–30 depicts the individual's death throes by employing stylistic features that in other Qur'anic passages are clearly associated with eschatological themes (namely, a series of temporal clauses introduced by *iḏā* and the eschatologically potent *yawma'iḏin*).

80. HS, no. 195, ll. 239–242.

81. Note that the register in Appendix 2 covers the entire Qur'an rather than just the early surahs.

Syriac sources are the only literary corpus with which the early surahs engage: for example, as Josef Horovitz has shown in a seminal article, Qur'anic descriptions of paradise deploy some of the stock motives that figure in the banquet scenes of ancient Arabic poetry,[82] no doubt in an attempt to relegate the wasteful revelry of which pre-Qur'anic poets were wont to boast to second place. Horovitz's findings demonstrate that a balanced intertextual reading of the Qur'an must take ancient Arabic poetry into full account (see below). Nevertheless, Appendix 2, taken together with the affinity between the moral vision of the early Qur'an and the *mimrē* literature that was found to obtain above, certainly bears out a very close link between the early Qur'anic kerygma and Syriac Christianity.[83]

Once again, it is not only the content and conceptual field of the early Qur'an's eschatological kerygma that is closely aligned with the Syriac homiletic tradition but also some prominent features of its literary form. For example, one of Jacob's homilies contains a long section describing 'the great judgement' that is composed of a series of couplets introduced by 'when' (*mā d-*), in a manner that is highly reminiscent of the concatenation of eschatological *idhā* clauses in Q 77:8–11, 81:1–13, 82:1–4, 84:1–5, and 99:1–3.[84] Indeed, the *mimrē* literature's employment of serial parallelism may be relevant to an appraisal of the early surahs' use of parallelism more generally.[85] Another formal similarity between the two corpora consists in

82. Josef Horovitz, 'Das koranische Paradies', in R. Paret (ed.), *Der Koran* (Darmstadt, 1975), pp. 53–73.

83. It is true that many of the eschatological motifs listed in Appendix 2 are shared by Christianity and Judaism, but see the general considerations in favour of a greater proximity of Qur'anic eschatology to Christianity than to Judaism that are advanced in Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, pp. 29–36. Particularly relevant is Rudolf Leszynsky's observation that Rabbinic literature displays a tendency to exempt all but the most severe Israelite sinners from eternal damnation (Rudolf Leszynsky, *Mohammedanische Traditionen über das jüngste Gericht: Eine vergleichende Studie zur jüdisch-christlichen und mohammedanischen Eschatologie* [Kirchhain, 1909], pp. 12–13). As both Rudolph and Leszynsky point out, Q 2:80 and 3:24 confirm that at least some of the Jews who were present in the Qur'anic milieu shared this conviction (2:80: 'And they say: The Fire will touch us only for a few days.'). The thoroughgoing individualism of early Qur'anic eschatology (see, e.g., 80:37 or 53:38–39) is therefore much closer to the Syriac homiletic tradition than to Rabbinic Judaism.

84. HS, no. 68, ll. 207–280. For another series of *mā d-* statements, see HS, no. 192, ll. 205–224.

85. Cf., for example, the parallelistic usage of *yawma'idhin* in 75:22–25, 80:37–41 or 99:4–6 with the recurrence of *b-haw yawmā* in ES III, no. 4, ll. 9–24. For further examples of serial parallelism see ES III, no. 3, ll. 105–120 (recurrence of *kmā / mā*, 'how ... !'; note that this passage also exemplifies the technique of contrastive cross-cutting, on which see below); HS, no. 32, ll. 141–155 (recurrence of *w-aynā d-*, 'and he who ... '; this passage also employs cross-cutting); HS, no. 192, ll. 83–98 (questions), ll. 239–248 (*en / ellā*), ll. 251–272 (*l-mānā*).

their artful reliance on antithetical juxtapositions in descriptions of paradise and hell. Already the early surahs exhibit a marked predilection for contrastive presentations of the fate of the blessed and of the damned (see Q 55:41-77, 56:10b-56.88-94, 69:19-37, 75:22-25, 77:29-44, 78:21-36, 82:13-16, 83:7-28, 84:7-15, 88:2-16, 92:5-11, 92:14-21, 99:7-8, 101:6-9). Many of these passages have a bipartite structure, consisting of two consecutive sections, one positive and the other negative, which are of roughly equal length and frequently mirror each other in one way or another; Angelika Neuwirth has accordingly coined the term 'eschatological diptychs' for them.[86] The *mimrē* literature, too, makes extensive and sometimes very similar use of contrastive juxtaposition.[87] To add one more formal similarity not specifically tied to eschatology, it is tempting to view the occurrence of a refrain in surahs 55 and 77 and in the narrative sections of surahs 26, 37, and 54 as a Qur'anic adaptation of the response verse (sg. *'unītā*) that is a standard component of Syriac hymns.

Moving on to further observations arising from Appendix 2, the register shows that a significant number of eschatological motifs in the Qur'an ultimately hark back to verses from the New Testament, chiefly from the synoptic gospels and the Book of Revelation.[88] A good example is the pervasive Qur'anic temporal qualifier *yawma'iḍin*, 'on that day' (namely, the Day of Judgement): the expression, whose Syriac counterpart is *b-haw yawmā*, is ultimately descended from the New Testamental phrase *en ekeinē tē hēmera* (see Matt. 7:22) and, even more remotely,

86. Neuwirth, *Studien*, p. 180 (basing herself on remarks by Anton Baumstark).

87. One may distinguish three varieties of contrastive juxtaposition: (i) simple antitheses, where a statement about the blessed contrasts with a statement about the damned (yielding the form AB); (ii) extended diptychs, where a series of statements about one of the two groups is followed by another series about the other group (yielding the form $A^1A^2A^3 ... B^1B^2B^3 ...$); and (iii) cross-cutting, where the focus alternates between statements about the damned and the righteous (yielding the form $A^1B^1A^2B^2A^3B^3 ...$). Simple antitheses are exemplified, e.g., by HP 2:4-5 (the sinners have lost their earthly possessions, the just are set free from their earthly suffering) or HP 7:29 (the damned justify God, whereas the blessed praise him). For diptychally structured passages in the Syriac sources see ES II, no. 2, ll. 71-230 (hell) and ll. 231-252 (paradise); ES III, no. 2, ll. 359-394 and ll. 395-452 (the righteous and the sinners await the divine judge; note the contrastive focus on clothing or the lack thereof in both sections), ll. 517-558 and ll. 559-665 (the righteous and the sinners are judged), ll. 716-739 and ll. 740-771 (the ultimate fate of the sinners and the righteous); ES III, no. 3, ll. 105-120 (where the section about the damned is considerably shorter than that about the blessed, similar to the unequal proportions of Q 55:41-77). For cross-cutting see ES III, no. 3, ll. 99-104 and ll. 159-166; HS, no. 32, ll. 141-144.147-150.153-154; HS, no. 67, ll. 175-180.183-186 (the just ascend to heaven, the sinners descend to hell).

88. On the Qur'an's relationship with Revelation see David Brady, 'The Book of Revelation and the Qur'an: Is There a Possible Literary Relationship?', *JSS* 23 (1978), pp. 216-25.

from Old Testament references to the 'Day of the Lord' as in Zeph. 1:8–18. Other Qur'anic reverberations of New Testament eschatology include the end's being ushered in by an earthquake, the darkening of the heavenly bodies, the falling down of the stars, the eschatological trumpet blast(s), and the claim that the Resurrection will happen 'in the glance of an eye'. Yet despite this considerable New Testament imprint on Qur'anic eschatology, Appendix 2 also demonstrates that in virtually all instances in which the Qur'an employs motifs and concepts originating from the Gospels or the Book of Revelation, these figure in the Syriac homiletic tradition as well, usually in multiple instantiations. The situation in all these cases is thus fundamentally the same as with regard to the condemnation of takāṯur in Q 102:1 discussed above, or Q 107:6's overlap with the condemnation of ostentatious praying in Matt. 6:5–6, for which it is again possible to point to a Syriac parallel[89] – that is, there is no compelling argument to show that the relevant Qur'anic verses are to be construed as targeted allusions to specific verses of the New Testament. More probably, the Qur'anic texts are simply appropriating ideas that had much wider, and much more fluid, circulation in oral Christian sermons for which the Syriac homiletic corpus would have served as a blueprint. To be sure, the hypothesis that sections of the Biblical text itself had a certain presence in the Qur'anic milieu in the form of liturgical readings remains eminently plausible.[90] Yet given that Qur'anic echoes of the New Testament never amount to quotations or paraphrases of substantial portions of text,[91] that they normally have not just one but a number of parallels in the Syriac corpus, and that they often occur in more than one place of the Qur'anic corpus as well, Emran El-Badawi's recent insistence that the Qur'an is engaged in a direct manipulation and recasting of specific Gospel passages seems exaggerated.[92] Instead, the

89. See n. 65 above.

90. A paramount candidate for this would be the Psalms, the nocturnal recitation of which was a prominent feature of Christian monastic piety (Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 193–94) and echoes of which may be discovered in various Qur'anic passages; see Angelika Neuwirth, 'Qur'anic Readings of the Psalms', in Angelika Neuwirth *et al.* (eds.), *The Qur'an in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 733–78. On the possible liturgical presence of the prophetic books of the Bible in the Qur'anic milieu see below.

91. Cf. Griffith's observation that 'for all its obviously high degree of biblical awareness, the Qur'ān virtually never actually *quotes* the Bible' (*Bible*, p. 55), which reflects similar assessments by earlier scholars; see, e.g., Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 18, who prefers to speak of *Anklänge* (which incidentally underlies my occasional utilization of the words 'echo' and 'reverberation') rather than citations proper.

92. Cf. Emran El-Badawi, *The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (Abingdon, 2014), *passim* (but note that El-Badawi does not discount that oral tradition may also

more conventional emphasis by scholars such as Rudolph or, more recently, Griffith on the Qur'an's link with oral tradition and on the accompanying fluidity of transmission would seem to better reflect the overall picture.[93]

THE EARLY QUR'ANIC KERYGMA AND ITS MILIEU

It should by now have become amply clear that I endorse Andrae's claim that the early Qur'an articulates an eschatologically focused type of piety that displays a far-reaching convergence with Syriac Christianity. If one accepts the historian's premise that a high degree of specific similarity indicates some sort of historical contact, then it seems highly likely that the sermons attributed to Ephrem and Jacob would have functioned as a reservoir of motifs, concepts, and literary forms for oral sermonizing in the Qur'an's wider cultural habitat. Such sermons – which would have encompassed a goodly dose of Biblical diction, allusions, and occasional quotations – were probably delivered in Arabic, which may already in pre-Qur'anic times have come to serve as a vehicle for the spontaneous oral translation of scriptural pericopes from Syriac,[94] as a consequence of which it would have accumulated a suitable vocabulary for the expression of Biblical and specifically eschatological ideas.[95]

have played a role; see ibid., p. 8). Arguably, El-Badawi sometimes succumbs to the temptation of overinterpretation, as when he construes Q 6:158's polemical question 'Do they await (yanẓurūn) anything other than that the angels should come to them ... ?' as an allusion to Jesus' final command to his disciples in Matt. 28:20: 'And teach them to keep (Peshitta: n-ṭ-r; see Kiraz, Comparative Edition) all that I commanded.' (El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, p. 167) Such overinterpretation then vitiates his conclusion that 'the Qur'ān confesses a keen awareness of the terminology, sentence structure, and thesis of coherent literary units (chapters and passages) within the Aramaic Gospels themselves' (ibid., p. 209). This criticism is not meant to deny that El-Badawi's study is valuable, as indicated by my numerous references to it.

93. Rudolph, Abhängigkeit, pp. 17–25; Griffith, Bible, pp. 52, 54–56, 89.

94. On the likely nonexistence of a written translation of the Bible in pre-Qur'anic times see Griffith, Bible, pp. 41–53; on the possible use of Arabic for spontaneous oral translation of Biblical pericopes or of homiletic material see ibid., pp. 42–43. The hypothesis that during church services held by Arabic-speaking Christians scriptural readings in Syriac may have been accompanied by oral renderings into Arabic appears especially attractive in view of the fact that an exactly analogous setting gave rise to the ancient Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, the so-called targums, during the first centuries of the Common Era.

95. Pace El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, p. 217, the alternative of a direct link between the Qur'an and the Syriac sources examined above and particularly the possibility that Muhammad and/or some of his adherents were 'bilingual' appears far less likely, at least if one retains Mecca as the Qur'an's putative place of origin. The presence in Qur'anic

Notwithstanding my general admiration for Andrae's pioneering work, I am less impressed by his attempt to substantially flesh out the general framework just presented. In a nutshell, Andrae supposes that Muhammad was exposed to sermons that Nestorian missionaries operating out of South Arabia delivered at one of the seasonal Arabian markets, most likely 'Ukāẓ, and that he then subconsciously imitated the basic message and structural pattern of such missionary preaching.[96] This scenario is unsatisfactory for various reasons. Firstly, speculation about the biographical experiences and psychological states of the Qur'anic messenger has rightly fallen out of favour in recent scholarship, requiring as it does a problematic reliance on extra Qur'anic anecdotes about the life and times of Muhammad that may well be later products of the hagiographic imagination. Thus, the appealing concreteness of Andrae's theory is purchased at the price of accepting at face value Islamic reports according to which Muhammad heard Quss ibn Sā'ida preach during a visit to 'Ukāẓ. Secondly, it is difficult to share Andrae's certainty that the Qur'an's eschatological piety is to be situated against the background specifically of Nestorian or dyophysite Christianity. The most unequivocal link with the Nestorian tradition that is highlighted by Andrae consists in the Qur'an's reliance on the notion of a slumber of souls, which was indeed endorsed by the dyophysite Babay the Great in the early seventh century. Yet the idea that the resurrected will awake from death as if from sleep – which, as we saw above, provides the Qur'an with a convenient way of maintaining that the Resurrection is subjectively 'nigh' without having to make any concrete predictions about when it will occur – is present in the Syriac tradition more widely,[97] and it is at best one facet of Qur'anic eschatology among others. Another major connection that Andrae discerns between the Qur'an and the dyophysite Church of the East is the positive view of marriage and procreation taken by both.[98] However, as I have argued above, two Qur'anic verses (Q 70:29 and 23:5) may reasonably be

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Arabic of Syriac loanwords is hardly sufficient to establish that Muhammad or his audience may have been bilingual; the Qur'an may simply have used words that despite their Aramaic (or Ethiopic) origin had long since become an integral part of the Arabic lexicon (see Griffith, *Bible*, p. 18).

96. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 201–203.

97. See ES I, no. 4, ll. 105–116; HP 2:5; HF 18:15; CN 53:5; HS, no. 67, l. 396. Of course, the notion that death is analogous to sleep and the Resurrection to awakening is already expressed in several Biblical passages, e.g., Daniel 12:2.

98. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 186–91. According to ibid., p. 186 the Qur'an 'nowhere mentions – not even by way of a rejection – the chief virtue of the monk, virginity, which is so prominently celebrated both by the Western church and by most Oriental churches'.

regarded as reflecting an original esteem of chastity that was obscured by later additions.[99] A final objection to Andrae's focus on the Church of the East consists in the numerous parallels that exist between the early Qur'anic kerygma and the eschatological homilies of Jacob of Serugh, who was certainly not a dyophysite.[100] There is of course no reason to rule out that dyophysites may have preached about the end of the world in very similar terms. Nevertheless, the very specific connection proposed by Andrae between the early Qur'an and the dyophysite church can hardly be considered a proven fact.

There is a third reason why Andrae's scenario is unsatisfactory. At bottom, the basic question with which he grapples is how Muhammad, an individual who had supposedly grown up in a pagan environment unfamiliar with the Biblical tradition, could have acquired sufficient knowledge of Christian eschatology in order to be able to compose the Qur'anic texts. Andrae's fundamental concern is therefore to explain the flow of eschatological information into an environment presumed to be unfamiliar with it; and after having identified a plausible gateway through which this influx could have occurred, he is content to suppose that Muhammad simply could not help reproducing, to the best of his ability, the Christian teachings he had soaked up. Such a paradigm, however, is seriously flawed, for there are very good reasons for assuming that Muhammad's audience was familiar not just with Biblically inspired narrative lore,[101] but also with Judaeo-Christian eschatology. As Patricia Crone has recently underlined, the Qur'an's opponents, whose views and utterances are frequently reflected in Qur'anic polemics against them, come across as quite entrenched in their doubts about the Resurrection, which do not just appear to be a reaction to the Qur'an's own teachings. For example, the fact that these opponents are able to label the Qur'anic message of an eschatological resurrection and reckoning as 'ancient fables' indicates that they were thoroughly au fait with the general idea

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99. Even if Andrae were corrected that the Qur'an does not endorse nor even explicitly reject chastity, this might simply be due to a deliberate rejection of this particular aspect of much contemporary Christian piety.

100. Andrae (*Ursprung*, pp. 194–96) additionally draws attention to the fact that the Nestorian tradition limited the eight canonical hours to a morning and an evening prayer, on top of which clerics and those striving for exceptional piety were expected to perform a nocturnal prayer. This prayer regime indeed corresponds closely to the impression conveyed, e.g., by Q 50:39–40 that Muhammad and his followers originally performed two daily prayers in addition to the holding of vigils.

101. The Qur'an's allusive style of rendering Biblical narratives evidently presupposes significant prior acquaintance with the stories told; the point is made, for instance, in Griffith, *Bible*, p. 57.

(and probably with a fair amount of relevant detail, too).[102] Crone also demonstrates that some of the utterances ascribed to the Qur'anic opponents display acquaintance with time-honoured objections to the Resurrection (for example, how could God bring back bodies that have been torn apart and devoured by wild animals and whose matter may thus have entered into other human bodies?).[103] An impressive further indication that the Qur'anic opponents were familiar, even on a terminological level, with Judaeo-Christian eschatology consists in the fact that they are presented as describing man's demise as the 'first death' (Q 44:35), which presupposes the description of eternal damnation as a 'second death' appearing, *inter alia*, in the Book of Revelation (2:11, 20:6.14, 21:8).[104] As Crone puts it,

> pagans though the Messenger's opponents may have been, they were not pagans of a hitherto isolated kind now being exposed to the doctrine of the resurrection for the first time. The non-existence of the afterlife is a fully articulated doctrine to them ... Like the Messenger, his opponents are drawing on a polemical armoury built up by participants in the debate about the resurrection outside the peninsula. Both sides, in other words, are contributing to a debate that had by then been going on for a long time in the Near East.[105]

In sum, the Qur'an patently addresses a cultural environment that was too thoroughly impregnated by Biblical and post-Biblical ideas in order for Andrae's speculation about Muhammad's individual exposure to Christian eschatology to be fruitful.

While it is a moot question how the Qur'an's milieu of origin is to be most defensibly characterized, I am inclined to envisage it as marked by a syncretistic amalgamation of pagan Arabian rituals with concepts, narratives, and practices derived from the Judaeo-Christian heritage,[106] as

102. See Patricia Crone, 'The Quranic *Mushrikūn* and the Resurrection (Part I)', *BSOAS* 75 (2012), pp. 454–55.

103. Crone, 'Resurrection', pp. 450–51.

104. Crone, 'Resurrection', pp. 457–61.

105. Crone, 'Resurrection', p. 451. I should note that I do not at present accept important further aspects of Crone's profile of the Messenger's opponents, aspects that seem to be based on very circumstantial evidence – namely, that these opponents hailed from a milieu whose acquaintance with the Biblical tradition was not primarily oral, but drawn from apocalyptic writings (Crone, 'Resurrection', p. 463); and that the Qur'anic opponents hailed from 'a community that drew its beliefs from either Judaism or a form of Christianity closer to its Jewish roots than was normally the case' (Crone, 'Resurrection', p. 469).

106. Cf. Uri Rubin, 'The Ka'ba: Aspects of its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times', *JSAI* 8 (1986), p. 102, on the tradition that the interior of the Ka'ba was decorated with the images of various prophets, Jesus, and Mary. For a general characterization of the Qur'anic milieu along the lines just suggested see Nicolai

well as some acquaintance with, yet also widespread dismissal of, Judaeo-Christian eschatology. As indicated above, the thematic and formal convergence of the early Qur'an with Syriac homiletic and hymnic literature makes it historically probable that Christian preaching, and perhaps also Christian liturgy, had some presence in this milieu.[107] The appearance in this environment of the early Qur'anic surahs may then be viewed as a highly selective appropriation of Christian eschatological piety, set forth as divine revelation and presented in Arabic. The remainder of this chapter will be taken up by a number of concluding comments on these three basic characteristics of the early Qur'an: its selectivity, its claim to constitute divine revelation, and its Arabicness.

To begin with the aspect of selectivity: There would by now seem to be broad agreement that the Qur'an, despite its manifold continuities with earlier configurations of the Biblical tradition, must not be mistaken for a mere echo chamber but takes up a 'corrective stance' towards Judaism and Christianity.[108] Applying such a perspective specifically to early Qur'anic eschatology, what one is perhaps first bound to notice, especially against the background of its far-reaching convergence with Syriac homiletic literature, is the consistent elimination of the soteriological and eschatological function of Christ, who is not so much as mentioned until a clearly later period of the Qur'an's genesis.[109] For all its thematic and

Sinai, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh, 2017), pp. 59–77. Employment of the term 'syncretism' requires some conceptual groundwork that I cannot here provide; but see David Frankfurter, 'Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003), pp. 339–85 and John F. Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans: A Conspectus* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 14–16, who prefers to speak of 'assimilation' and 'acculturation' (I owe my awareness of Healey's discussion to El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, p. 215, n. 13).

107. As El-Badawi (*Gospel Traditions*, p. 58) reminds us, the 'Islamic literary sources mention numerous Christian landmarks in the vicinity of Mecca and Medina', including a Christian cemetery and a *masǧid Maryam*, as well as Christian tribes in the Hijaz and even Christian clans among the Quraysh.

108. Thus Griffith, *Bible*, p. 89, which matches El-Badawi's characterization of the Qur'an as undertaking a 'dogmatic re-articulation' of pre-existing traditions (El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, pp. 5–10). In view of my earlier criticism of El-Badawi, I should clarify that I have no quarrel with El-Badawi's notion of re-articulation as such.

109. Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 64 (who considers the earliest reference to Jesus to occur in surah 19). One aspect of the early Qur'an's elimination of Christ consists in the fact that it casts God rather than Christ as the eschatological judge who will arrive together with the angels (see Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 36 and El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, pp. 7 and 185; detailed Qur'anic, Biblical, and Syriac references are given in Appendix 2, beginning of section 3). Lest it be objected that the title 'your Lord' (*rabbuka*) in passages such as 89:22 (which states that on the Day of Judgement 'your Lord' and the angels will come in ranks) might refer to Christ (to whom the New Testament of course commonly refers as the *kyrios*) rather than to Allāh, let me point out that this hypothesis is extremely improbable in view of Q 96:1–2 (which states that 'your Lord' created man)

formal affinities to the Syriac *mimrē* corpus, the early Qur'an shows no trace of the basic Christian conviction that salvation is to be achieved through Jesus Christ. This removal of Christ is bound up with a wider set of Qur'anic eschewals, all of which are extremely unlikely to have arisen from accidents of transmission (such as Muhammad's alleged proclivity for 'misunderstanding' contemporary Christian or Jewish positions that earlier generations of Western scholars were wont to invoke) and must therefore reflect conscious theological choice, or *hairesis* (used here in an emphatically value-free sense). For one, the early Qur'an avoids attaching any salvific significance to orthodoxy, beyond the simple acceptance of the reality of a divine judgement, and limits the requirements for entry to paradise to an attitude of pious eschatological fear, expressed in concrete behaviour like charity and persistent prayer.[110] The early Qur'an also contains no hints suggesting that the messenger and his adherents practised such key Christian rituals as baptism and the Eucharist, or that they recognized an apostolically authorized ecclesiastical hierarchy.[111] There is consequently a very considerable set of features that the early Qur'anic kerygma, notwithstanding its extensive appropriation of Christian eschatology, does *not* share with Christianity.

Against this background, the early Qur'anic surahs are best described as putting forward a selectively focused restatement of what they take to be the essential message of an amorphous heritage of previous scriptural revelations associated with such venerable figures as Abraham and Moses (Q 87:18–19; see also 53:36–37)[112] – more particularly, a restatement that

and also given the general absence of a further divine figure besides 'your Lord' who might be construed as God the Father, especially in the Qur'an's frequent injunctions to invoke and praise 'your Lord'.

110. The salvific significance that contemporary Christianity ascribed to orthodoxy is illustrated by the dramatic manner in which the first-person voice in the *Testament of Ephrem* (which Beck plausibly considers to be apocryphal) affirms his lifelong adherence to the equal rank of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (see ES IV, 'Testament', ll. 77–100).

111. The underlying argument is admittedly from silence: since the early Qur'an does not, as far as I can see, contain any hints suggesting that the messenger and his adherents would participate in Christian ecclesiastical rituals (in contrast to other passages implying, for instance, the holding of vigils and an original esteem of chastity), it is inferred that they did not in fact participate in them. I would nevertheless submit that the inference is sound.

112. Crone ('Resurrection', p. 463) proposes to identify these 'scrolls / scriptures (ṣuḥuf) of Abraham and Moses' with apocalypses, arguing that the fact that the Qur'an takes these ṣuḥuf to deal with the Resurrection, as indicated by the context of both passages, 'rules out the possibility that the scrolls of Moses were the Pentateuch'. This line of reasoning strikes me as inconclusive, for one cannot dismiss the possibility that despite the Qur'anic milieu's deep impregnation with Jewish and Christian lore, detailed first-hand knowledge of the Bible may have been in limited supply, and people's notion of the contents of the Biblical canon, in whatever version, correspondingly vague. I would therefore stand by my proposal

identifies the individualistic and moralizing eschatology of Syriac Christianity as the core of this scriptural heritage and readily discards virtually everything else.[113] In doing so, the early Qur'an exhibits a strong concern to safeguard the unrivalled preeminence of God (which also explains its denial of any intercessory activity during the Last Judgement not based on prior divine permission[114]) as well as an utter lack of interest in the debilitating theological (in particular, christological) controversies besetting late antique Christianity, and determinedly displaces all institutionalized religious authority in favour of the Qur'anic messenger's prophetic charisma. All of this, I would submit, distinctly bespeaks an outside perspective on the contemporary landscape of Biblically descended religions, suggesting that the Qur'anic messenger and the original core of his adherents, despite their intimate awareness of Judaeo-Christian lore, did not hail from within any of the communities already populating this landscape. As far as one can tell from the bitter polemics contained in later Qur'anic surahs, the early Qur'an's eschatological restatement of the Biblical tradition profoundly destabilized the syncretistic fusion of paganism and eclectic Biblicism current in its immediate environment. In the medium and long run, the early Qur'an's resolute trimming down of the Biblical tradition cleared the ground for the subsequent emergence of new religious doctrines, practices, and institutions (which of course happened in interaction with Judaism and Christianity), and thus of Islam as an independent religion.

One further deconstructive move inherent in the early Qur'anic texts deserves to be highlighted separately. This is the fact that, unlike Syriac homiletic literature, the Qur'an generally does not defer to any scriptural authority beyond itself. While the Qur'anic proclamations do of course take for granted the existence of scriptures revealed to earlier prophets, such as the *tawrāh* and the *inğīl*, and profess to be conveying the same religious message as these, such earlier scriptures are not actually treated as endowed with an authority that is binding upon the Qur'anic

to construe the expression simply 'as a loose way of referring to the Biblical canon ... via two of its most prominent protagonists' and as indicating a 'blurred perception of the Bible' (Nicolai Sinai, 'An Interpretation of Sūrat al-Najm (Q. 53)', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 13 [2011], pp. 17–18).

113. To use the Qur'an's own terminology, the early surahs provide 'confirmation' (*taṣdīq*, see Q 10:37 and elsewhere) of Syriac-Christian eschatology.

114. While one class of Qur'anic verses rules out any intercession on the Day of Judgement, a second class of verses recognizes a thoroughly domesticated form of intercession that is dependent on prior divine permission (for references see Appendix 2, at the end of section 3).

proclamations and as meriting explicit citation and interpretation. This constitutes a palpable difference from the way in which the Syriac homiletic corpus relates to the Bible. To be sure, very often Syriac homilists, like the Qur'an, simply present amplifying retellings of Biblical narratives, recycle Biblical diction, or drop subtle allusions that are only recognizable to someone with a good prior command of the Bible.[115] However, one also encounters explicit references to the Bible as an independent textual entity.[116] Sometimes one even comes across passages serving a downright exegetical objective. A particularly intriguing example is Jacob of Serugh's extended treatment of Jesus' statement that nobody, 'not even the Son', knows when the Hour will come (Matt. 24:36), a discussion prompted by the fact that Jesus' utterance seems to contradict the assumption, partly based on other scriptural passages (e.g., John 16:15) but also on theological considerations, that the knowledge of Christ and the Father are identical.[117] Elsewhere, Jacob devotes a similarly detailed explanation of the statement in Heb. 4:13 that 'all things are naked and opened unto the eyes' of God.[118] By contrast, the Qur'anic corpus contains very few verses that both show specific overlap with a particular Biblical statement and are clearly marked as referencing another text,[119] while explicitly exegetical digressions on the Bible similar to Jacob's discussion of Matt. 24:36 and Heb. 4:13 are entirely absent from it. The Biblical text therefore has a very different literary presence in the *mimrē* literature and in the Qur'an, something that is unhelpfully obscured by Reynolds' proposal to characterize the Qur'an as a homiletic discourse presupposing an underlying 'Biblical subtext'.[120] As a matter of

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115. For an illustration see ES I, no. 2, ll. 1199–1220, a passage featuring a quick succession of allusions to Mark 12:41, Luke 23:42, and Num. 12:1–15 yet which contains no fully-fledged quotations nor any obvious indications that another text is being referenced.

116. E.g., HS, no. 31, ll. 183–184 (summarizing 1 Cor. 13:8, presented as something that Paul 'said', *emar*); HS, no. 67, ll. 283–284 (paraphrasing Ezek. 37:7, explicitly labelled as something that 'has been written', *ak da-ktība*); HS, no. 67, ll. 402–405 (supporting Jacob's portrayal of the Resurrection by asserting that 'the Apostle' = Paul 'testifies', *sāhed*, to its truth and introducing a report of 1 Thess. 4:15 as something that Paul 'said'). See also ES I, no. 2, ll. 1557–1571, which evokes a statement by the 'blessed Apostle' (again, Paul) condemning, *inter alia*, backbiting (perhaps 1 Cor. 6:10) and juxtaposes this with a treatment of Noah's cursing of Canaan in Gen. 9:25, arguing that it was due to the latter's mockery of him and that the episode thus support's Paul's point; see also ibid., l. 1601 ('Hear the Apostle ... ') and l. 1635, where the explicit quotation marker *w-emar* is used.

117. HS, no. 192, ll. 75ff. (see above, n. 76).

118. HS, no. 68, ll. 65–134.

119. But see the quotation of Psalms 37:29 at Q 21:105, marked as something that 'We have written (*katabnā*) in the *zabūr*'. Cf. also Ps. 1:3 and Q 14:24–26.

120. Reynolds, *Biblical Subtext*, pp. 230–58.

fact, the only texts that the Qur'anic surahs actually treat as possessing scriptural status and as deserving significant interpretive effort are earlier Qur'anic surahs.[121] In short, the Qur'an is very much its own scripture.

The reason for this self-sufficiency is to be sought in the second of the three characteristics mentioned above: namely, the fact that already the early Qur'anic proclamations take the 'revolutionary step' of presenting themselves as divine speech[122] rather than as human discourse amplifying or commenting on a prior divine revelation, as Syriac homilies and hymns do.[123] This claim is expressed above all by the Qur'an's pervasive use of the divine first person and is further underlined by self-referential passages such as Q 80:11–16 or 81:15–29.[124] It is true that the early surahs frequently refer to God in the third person (rabbuka, 'your Lord') and that a significant number of them (e.g., Q 82, 85, 91, 99–107 and 111) lack occurrences of the divine first person. Other early proclamations, however, are marked relatively unequivocally as divine speech, either by means of a second-person singular address of the messenger or by an occurrence of the divine 'I'.[125] The overall impression is thus that the juxtaposition of a divine speaker and a human messenger was present already in the earliest layer of the Qur'an, albeit perhaps less insistently so than in later proclamations.[126] This forms a stark contrast to the mimrē literature's frequent and explicit deployment of a human auctorial perspective, usually in the form of dramatic self-incriminations or appeals for God's assistance in delivering the following homily.[127] Syriac

121. See in detail Nicolai Sinai, Fortschreibung und Auslegung: Studien zur frühen Koraninterpretation (Wiesbaden, 2009).

122. This is appropriately highlighted in Ludwig Ammann, Die Geburt des Islam: Historische Innovation durch Offenbarung (Göttingen, 2001), pp. 43–44.

123. This is recognized in passing by Reynolds (Biblical Subtext, p. 236: 'But the Qur'ān does not only recount the words of the prophets. It speaks as a prophet ... '), although he arguably fails to appreciate the difficulty that this creates for his proposal to characterize Qur'anic discourse as homiletic. At the very least, one would have to add that it is God himself who is presented as taking up the role of the homilist in the Qur'an (cf. the characterization of the Qur'an as 'targumic speech' delivered by a divine meturgeman in Sinai, 'Self-Referentiality', p. 125).

124. For a detailed analysis of these passages see Sinai, 'Self-Referentiality'.

125. In a number of surahs this is the case only towards the end (Q 79:42–43.45, 84:24, 86:16–17, 88:21–22.25–26, 96:15–16.18), while other texts with a very low MVL utilize the divine perspective earlier (Q 94:1–4, 74:11–17.26, 108:1, 92:7.10.12–14). Q 81, vv. 19–24 of which speak about the messenger in the third person, may also be considered to be coded as divine speech.

126. See in more detail Sinai, 'Self-Referentiality', pp. 108–109.

127. E.g., Jacob of Serugh's disclaimer: 'Who gave me the eloquent mouth of a prophet / that I should speak with it of this judgement?', followed by an invocation of the Apostle Paul who will 'teach us the truth' (HS, no. 68, ll. 57–62); or Jacob's opening

homilies and hymns do not attempt to transcend the voice of a human speaker, and indeed make much rhetorical hay over that speaker's inherent sinfulness and inability to adequately depict the divine judgement. The Qur'an, by contrast, squarely styles itself as divine speech, thus drastically outbidding any human preaching of the sort delivered by Jacob. It is a telling measure of the radicalness of the Qur'an's claim to authority that it even spurns the device of pseudepigraphy, always a convenient means for extending the corpus of revealed texts by driving in the slipstream of past authorities without venturing the assertion that revelation has occurred here and now.

Are there literary precedents for the Qur'an's sustained use of the divine first person at a time when revelation had long since ceased to be a contemporary phenomenon and become solidified into closed textual corpora that were recited, interpreted, or paraphrased? There lurks an evident danger here of carrying the parallel-mongering too far, but an experimental consideration of the question may nevertheless be of interest. The various versions of an alleged letter by Christ believed to have 'fallen down from heaven' certainly constitute an intriguing analogue to the Qur'an's extensive employment of the divine perspective.[128] Above all, however, the basic discursive constellation of the Qur'an – a divine 'I' or 'We' addressing a human 'you' (both in the singular and the plural) – may have been perceived (and been meant to be perceived) as reactualizing patterns of discourse that are characteristic of Biblical prophecy.[129] To be sure, it is extremely improbable that the Qur'anic milieu would

address of God in HS, no. 192, ll. 1ff. ('The day of your revelation incites me to speak of it. / Open my lips so that I may deliver the homily of your judgement!'), followed by profuse self-incriminations and further requests for divine assistance. Prolonged first-person introductory sections also figure, for example, at the beginning of HS, nos. 31, 67, 193, and 195. For further examples of auctorial self-incrimination or pleas for God's mercy see ES I, no. 5, *passim*, and ES III, no. 3, ll. 79–88.193–284.

128. See Maximilian Bittner, *Der vom Himmel gefallene Brief Christi in seinen morgenländischen Versionen und Rezensionen* (Wien, 1905) (I owe this reference to a handout distributed by Jane Baun at the conference from which this volume ultimately originates, held at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 18 March 2013).

129. See also the observation, made in connection with the analysis of surah 102 above, that the Qur'an and Biblical prophecy make similar use of condemnatory and minatory pronouncements. Furthermore, the Qur'anic *qul* statements, which frequently follow the quotation of an objection voiced by Muhammad's opponents (for an early example, see Q 52:30–31), bear some resemblance with the so-called 'words of disputation' that are characteristic of the book of Ezekiel, where a certain utterance or objection of the audience is first quoted and then refuted (e.g., Ezek. 12:26–28: 'Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, / Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. / Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord

have been marked by detailed first-hand study of the prophetic books of
the Bible. After all, unlike the Torah (tawrāh), the Gospel (inǧīl), and the
Psalms (zabūr), the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible do not even
figure as a distinct literary corpus in the Qur'an; and with the exception
of Jonah, the Qur'an mentions none of the eponymous authors of the
prophetic books, such as Isaiah or Jeremiah, by name. Nonetheless, it is
possible that prophetic concepts and forms of expression could have
circulated in the Qur'anic habitat via the reading of brief prophetic per-
icopes in a liturgical context,[130] perhaps also the quotation and amplifica-
tion of prophetic pronouncements in sermons.[131] Neither way of encoun-
tering prophetic sound bites would necessarily have entailed a detailed
command of the names of specific prophetic figures,[132] but may still have
been sufficient to fuel a generic sense that prophets deliver warnings,
often in the divine first person, of imminent punishment for miscellane-
ous social and religious offences, especially a lack of social solidarity with
widows and orphans and ungratefulness towards God. It may be that the
Qur'an's employment of the divine first person latches on to such a dif-
fuse awareness among its audience of how and about what prophets gen-
erally speak.

Finally, a few remarks about the Qur'an's Arabicness. Already the fact
that later surahs emphasize that the Qur'anic revelations are sent down

God.'). See Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, 'Das Buch Ezechiel', in Erich Zenger et al. (eds.),
Einleitung in das Alte Testament (Stuttgart, 2004⁵), p. 493.

130. For example, Isa. 58:5-7, which appears to be reflected in Q 90:12-16, was a
popular scriptural reading: it is part of the readings for the Sunday before Lent according
to two sixth century Syriac lectionaries listed in Francis C. Burkitt, The Early Syriac
Lectionary System (London, 1923), p. 28; is divided up among the 'lessons' for two dif-
ferent days of the fast according to Arthur Vööbus (ed.), The Lectionary of the Monastery
of 'Azīzā'ēl in Ṭūr 'Abdīn, Mesopotamia: A Startling Depository of the Syro-Hexapla Texts
(Louvain, 1985), pp. 12 and 26, pp. 129-30 = fols. 38a-39b, and pp. 133-34 = fols. 40a-
40b; and was part of the readings for the third Sunday of the fast according to Arthur
Vööbus (ed.), A Syriac Lectionary from the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, Ṭūr
'Abdīn, Mesopotamia (Louvain, 1986), p. xxi and p. 114 = fol. 57b.

131. That the reading of scriptural pericopes in a liturgical context was not the only
setting in which one might be exposed to bits of prophetic discourse is illustrated by the
fact that Isa. 58:5-7, which appears to underly Q 90:12-16, is cited at four different places
in the Syriac Didascalia Apostolorum; see Vööbus, Didascalia, pp. 75, 136, 139, 157. See
also ES I, no. 1, ll. 280-299, which recaps Isaiah's upbraiding of the daughters of Zion
and employs the diction of Isa. 3:24. However, this passage does not employ the divine
first person.

132. Unlike the Pentateuch and the Gospels, the Prophets are not read continuously
either in Jewish or Christian services. In addition, prophetic pericopes are usually no
longer than ten verses and are frequently marked out in a way that obscures to which
prophet they were ascribed. Regarding the quotation of prophetic material in sermons,
note that ES I, no. 1, ll. 280-299 (which amplifies Isa. 3:24) only refers to Isaiah as 'the
prophet'.

'in clear Arabic language' or 'as an Arabic recitation' (e.g., Q 12:2, 20:113, 26:195 etc.) indicates that the Qur'anic proclamations' being in Arabic was perceived as noteworthy.[133] This is not surprising: if indeed there was no written Arabic translation of the Bible in pre-Qur'anic times,[134] then it was with the Qur'an that the Biblical tradition was given its first proper articulation in Arabic. It is vital to appreciate that this Arabicness was not just a linguistic fact but had an important literary dimension. Most visibly, the early Qur'anic proclamations are composed in rhymed prose (sağ'), 'the preferred medium of the kuhhān (sing. kāhin), the soothsayers, oracles or religious specialists of pre-Islamic Arabia.'[135] Pre-Islamic soothsayers are also reported to have employed the literary form of oaths, which figures prominently in the early Qur'anic surahs as well, particularly in their introductory sections (e.g., Q 37, 51, 77, 79, 89–93, 95, 100, 103).[136] Hence, although the early Qur'anic texts are not themselves oracular, they nevertheless seem to intentionally harness certain literary features commonly associated with ancient Arabian mantic discourse in order to effectively convey their claim to derive from divine revelation.[137] Similarly, while the Qur'an emphatically distinguishes itself from poetry (Q 69:41 and elsewhere)[138] and can indeed in many respects be described

133. But see Alan Jones, 'The Language of the Qur'ān', *The Arabist: Budapest Studies in Arabic* 6–7 (1993), pp. 29–48, who warns against a simple identification of the language of the Qur'an specifically with the language of poetry.

134. Griffith, *Bible*, pp. 41–53.

135. Devin J. Stewart, 'Divine Epithets and the Dibacchius: Clausulae and Qur'anic Rhythm', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15 (2013), p. 22. See also id., 'Saj' in the Qur'an: Prosody and Structure', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 21 (1990), pp. 101–39.

136. See Angelika Neuwirth, 'Der Horizont der Offenbarung: Zur Relevanz der einleitenden Schwurserien für die Suren der frühmekkanischen Zeit', in Udo Tworuschka (ed.), *Gottes ist der Orient, Gottes ist der Okzident: Festschrift für Abdoljavad Falaturi zum 65. Geburtstag* (Köln, 1991), pp. 3–39; ead., 'Der historische Muhammad im Spiegel des Koran – Prophetentypus zwischen Seher und Dichter?', in Wolfgang Zwickel (ed.), *Biblische Welten: Festschrift für Martin Metzger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Freiburg–Göttingen, 1993), pp. 83–108. It deserves to be pointed out that the pseudonymous *Testament of Ephrem* also contains a series of oaths (see ES IV, 'Testament', ll. 77–88), including one by 'him who descended on Mount Sinai', which is of course eerily reminiscent of Q 95:2. The passage suggests that oaths may already in pre-Qur'anic times have been employed as a medium of Biblicizing discourse.

137. This relatively evident fact is somewhat obscured by my earlier claim that 'early qur'ānic oaths do not function as invocations of a supranatural authority *beyond* the text, but rather as literary devices *within* the text' (Sinai, 'Self-Referentiality', p. 108). I now think that this is a questionable antithesis.

138. The various Qur'anic denials that Muhammad was a *kāhin*, *šā'ir* ('poet'), *sāḥir* ('magician') or *maǧnūn* ('possessed by a demon') would seem to indicate that he was indeed called all these things – probably because they were all associated with some sort of contact with the supernatural, albeit not of the particular kind to which Muhammad laid claim. On the notion that poets were inspired by demons see Ignaz Goldziher, 'Ueber

as 'the complete antithesis of contemporary poetry',[139] scholars like Horovitz and Neuwirth have identified a number of Qur'anic passages that purposefully deploy poetic constructions and motifs, possibly even brief quotations.[140] All in all, the Qur'anic proclamations appear to exhibit a selective engagement with earlier genres of Arabic literature that would certainly have contributed to their credibility as a properly Arabic restatement of the Biblical heritage. In this sense, one might speak of the early Qur'an as an innovative cultural translation or Arabic naturalization of Syriac eschatology.

die Vorgeschichte der Higā'-Poesie', in id., *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1896), pp. 1–105. But see the reservations about the construal just presented that are expressed in Thomas Bauer, 'The Relevance of Early Arabic Poetry for Qur'anic Studies Including Observations on Kull and on Q 22:27, 26:225, and 52:31', in Angelika Neuwirth *et al.* (eds.), *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 721–22.

139. Bauer, 'Relevance', pp. 704–706.

140. On the relationship between the Qur'an and pre-Islamic poetry, see Bauer, 'Relevance', and Neuwirth, *Frühmekkanische Suren*, pp. 65–67. On the use of poetic motifs in Qur'anic descriptions of paradise see Horovitz, 'Paradies'. Meticuluous attention to poetic assonances is a particular hallmark of the first volume of Angelika Neuwirth's commentary on the Qur'an, see, e.g., Neuwirth, *Frühmekkanische Suren*, pp. 91–92 (on Q 94:5–6), pp. 148–49 (on Q 104:3), p. 230 (on Q 92:7.10), p. 231 (on *tawallā*), pp. 241–42 (on Q 90:6), p. 244 (Q 90:14–16). See furthermore Sinai, '*Sūrat al-Najm*', p. 14 (on Q 53:5–6) and p. 25, n. 48 (on the possible link between the early Qur'anic predilection for enigmatic participial paraphrases of the Day of Judgement, such as 80:33: *aṣ-ṣāḫḫa*, 88:1: *al-ġāšiya*, 101:1–3: *al-qāri'a* etc., and metonymic periphrasis, a characteristic trope of ancient Arabic poetry); Nicolai Sinai, 'Religious Poetry from the Quranic Milieu: Umayya b. Abī ṣ-Ṣalt on the Fate of the Thamūd', *BSOAS* 74 (2011), pp. 397–416. It is likely that more such instances will come to light in the future, as students of the Qur'an acquire a better command of the pre-Islamic poetic corpus.

APPENDIX 1: THE QUR'ANIC SURAHS WITH THE LOWEST MEAN VERSE LENGTH

I owe the transcription of the Qur'an on which the values in the following graph are based to Prof. Hans Zirker.[141] The transcription follows the conventions of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (that is, it uses *ǧ* and *ḍ*, etc.; word-initial glottal stops are transcribed). Before computing the length of individual verses, I transformed all verse endings into pausal forms (by omitting brief vowels and *-un/-in*, changing the accusative ending *-an* to *-ā*, and omitting gemination) and then conducted an electronic count of all letters excluding hyphens and space characters. This allowed me to compute the mean verse length (MVL) of all Qur'anic surahs.

The graph represents the seventy-two surahs that exhibit, on average, the shortest verses, rearranged in the order of ascending MVL (black columns). The grey columns chart each surah's standard deviation, which measures how much the length of individual verses strays from the surah mean. A low standard deviation indicates relatively consistent verse length across the entire surah. Surahs displaying a high standard deviation often contain what appear to be secondary insertions (see, for instance, Q 73:20 and 74:31). Where a surah number is marked with an asterisk, this refers to the surah in question excluding such putative additions. 'Q 103*' thus means Q 103 without v. 3, while 'Q 103' refers to the full version of the text. Passages that I would consider to constitute secondary additions to an earlier core are Q 52:21, 53:23.26–32, 69:7, 73:20, 74:31.56, 78:37–40, 81:29, 84:25, 85:7–11, 87:7, 89:15–16.23–24.27–30, 90:17–20, 95:6, 97:4, and 103:3. This list largely corresponds to that in Neuwirth, *Studien*, pp. 201–203 (see also n. 46). For further comments on the data underlying the graph see Sinai, 'Inner-Qur'anic Chronology'.

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141. See http://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de/servlets/DocumentServlet?id=10802 (8 August 2013).

NICOLAI SINAI

number of letters

■ mean verse length
■ standard deviation

surah no.
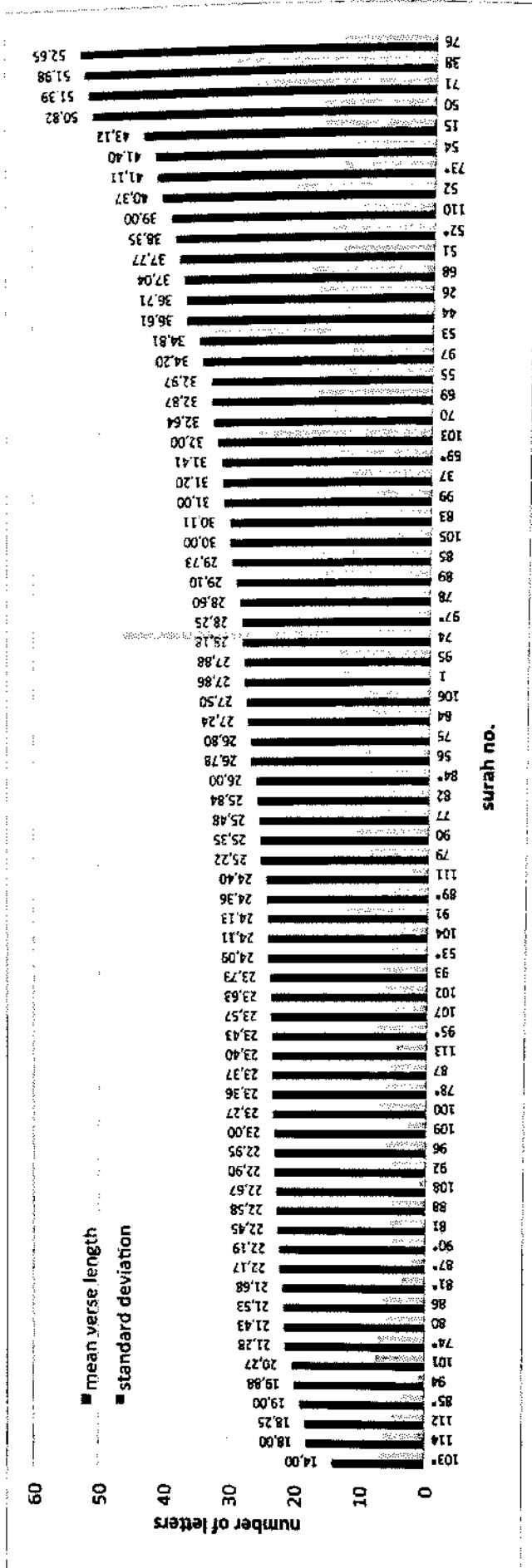
Appendix 2: A Preliminary Catalogue of Parallels to Qur'anic Eschatology from Syriac Homilies and Hymns

The following register records discoveries made in the course of a relatively superficial trawling of some Syriac texts. While I am under no illusion that occasional mistakes are bound to have crept in (for example, an accidental omission of relevant Qur'anic verses) and that a more exhaustive examination of the Syriac material would probably yield many more references, the usefulness of the register for other scholars will hopefully outweigh its flaws.

The register is structured thematically and is subdivided into four general sections devoted to general eschatological terminology, cosmic upheaval and the Resurrection, the Judgement, and the hereafter. The left-hand column contains brief descriptions of the term or motif in question, while the middle column enumerates pertinent Qur'anic verses (surahs are listed in reverse order, as this to some degree approximates their probable historical sequence). The right-hand column contains the following information:

(i) 'OT' / 'NT': Select verses from the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament and, much more frequently, from the New Testament (in one case also from the Apostolic Fathers) that are cited, paraphrased, or alluded to in the Syriac texts, or which appear otherwise relevant. Where Matthew parallels Luke or Mark these latter passages are normally omitted, as they can be easily located. Where a New Testament passage alludes to an Old Testament one, the latter is sometimes given in brackets.

(ii) 'Syr.': Passages in the Syriac sermons and hymns attributed to Ephrem and Jacob of Serugh that overlap with the Qur'an (the abbreviations are decoded in the bibliography below; note that the authenticity of some of the sermons ascribed to Ephrem is doubtful).

References to relevant secondary literature are sometimes given in additional notes. For a comprehensive catalogue and discussion of parallels between the Qur'an and the Book of Revelation see Brady, 'Book of Revelation'.

Motif	Qur'anic verses	Parallels
(1) Some general terminology[142]		

Motif	Qur'anic verses	Parallels
	(1) Some general terminology[142]	
'The Day of Judgement' (al-dīn / yawm al-dīn = yawmā d-dīnā)	multiple occurrences (e.g., 107:1; 95:7; 83:11; 82:9.15.17–18 etc.)	NT: Matt. 10:15, 11:22.24, 12:36 (see El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, pp. 189–90) Syr.: multiple occurrences (e.g., HS, no. 31, l. 3; HS, no. 32, l. 1; HS, no. 192, ll. 41.307)
'The hour'	multiple occurrences (e.g., 79:42; 54:1.46 etc.)	NT: cf. Matt. 24:36, 25:13 Syr.: multiple occurrences, e.g. in HF 77–79 and HS, no. 192 (ll. 61.76.89.107.111.117.134–149 etc.)
'On that day' (yawma'idin = b-haw yawmā)	multiple occurrences (e.g., 102:8; 100:11; 99:4.6; 89:23.25; 88:2.8)	NT: Matt. 7:22 (cf. Zeph. 1:8–18) Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 86.233.257; ES III, no. 1, l. 338; ES III, no. 4, ll. 9–156 and app. 3 and 4.
'A hard / bitter day'	74:9–10; 54:8; 25:26	OT: cf. Isa. 13:9 Syr.: CN 75:1; HS, no. 31, l. 91; HS, no. 192, l. 340; HS, no. 193, ll. 225–226
	(2) Cosmic upheaval and the Resurrection[143]	
The end is, or may be, nigh	70:6–7; 54:1; 42:17; 33:63; 21:1.97; 17:51; 16:1	NT: Matt. 4:17 Syr.: ES III, no. 2, ll. 1–8; HS, no. 192, ll. 225–336 (especially ll. 234.238.248.272.274.301–304.315); HS, no. 193, ll. 89–144
The exact time of the end is hidden	79:42–45; 72:25; 51:12–14; 41:47; 21:109; 7:187 (cf. also 43:41–42; 40:77; 23:93–95; 13:40; 10:46)	NT: Matt. 24:36, 25:13 Syr.: HF 77–79; HS, no. 192, ll. 75–224.273.307–310.335
People are heedless (fī ġafla) of the coming end	50:22 (about individual death); 21:1.97; 19:39 (cf. also 54:1.2)	Syr.: ES III, no. 2, ll. 1–8 (see also Andrae, Ursprung, pp. 135–37, with quotations from the Greek Ephrem)

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142. I have not attempted to produce a comprehensive list of occurrences of dīn in the sense of 'judgement', a term that is extremely frequent both in the Qur'an and in the Syriac sources. The word as such obviously passed into Arabic from Aramaic (see Arthur Jeffery, The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān [Leiden, 2007], pp. 131–33).

143. The following isolated echoes of apocalyptic material are omitted (see Andrae, Ursprung, pp. 62–63): the coming of Gog and Magog (Q 21:96; cf. Rev. 20:8) and the emergence of a 'beast' (dābba) from the earth (27:82; cf. Rev. 13:11).

The eschatological earthquake	99:1; 79:6–7[144]; 73:14; 56:4; 52:9; 22:1	NT: Mark 13:8; Rev. 6:12, 11:13, 16:18 Syr.: ES III, no. 4, l. 3; HS, no. 31, ll. 91.97.117.122; HS, no. 32, ll. 5–6.20–22; HS, no. 67, ll. 110–144.219.243.247–251.417.422.431; HS, no. 192, ll. 355–359.361–364; HS, no. 193, ll. 145.157.163–164
The oceans overflow (Qur'an) / are emptied	82:3; 81:6 (cf. 52:6)	Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 357–358.415; ES III, no. 2, ll. 255–256; HS, no. 32, l. 23; HS, no. 67, l. 261; HS, no. 192, l. 370
The mountains are moved / destroyed / melt	101:5; 81:3; 78:20; 77:10; 73:14; 70:9; 69:14; 56:5.6; 52:10; 27:88; 20:105; 18:47; 13:31	NT: Rev. 6:14, 16:20 (cf. Isa. 54:10) Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 361–364; ES III, no. 2, ll. 259–260; HS, no. 67, ll. 259–260.297–298; HS, no. 192, l. 363–364; HS, no. 193, ll. 165.304
Darkening of the heavenly bodies, especially the sun and the moon	81:1; 77:8; 75:8.9	NT: Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12 (cf. Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7–8) Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 353–356; ES III, no. 2, ll. 271–272; HS, no. 32, l. 9; HS, no. 67, ll. 263–268.270.273–274; HS, no. 192, ll. 367–368; HS, no. 193, ll. 149–150
The stars fall from the sky	81:2?; 82:2	NT: Matt. 24:29; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:13 (cf. Isa. 34:4) Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 350–352; HS, no. 31, ll. 99–100; HS, no. 32, l. 9; HS, no. 67, ll. 269–270; HS, no. 193, l. 158
The heaven melts	70:8; 55:35	NT: 2 Pet. 3:10.12; 2 Clement 16:3 (see Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 66). Syr.: HS, no. 68, l. 207
The heaven is split / stripped away / opened	84:1; 82:1; 81:11; 78:19; 77:9; 73:18; 69:16; 55:37; 25:25	Syr.: ES III, no. 2, l. 269; HS, no. 192, l. 369 Note: See also Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 143 (quoting a passage from the Greek Ephrem corpus: 'Then the heavens will be split … ').
The heaven is rolled up	39:67; 21:104	NT: Rev. 6:14 (cf. Isa. 34:4) Syr.: ES III, no. 1, l. 349; ES III, no. 2, l. 270; HS, no. 192, l. 369

144. The following verse, Q 79:8, mentions the 'throbbing' (*wāǧifa*) hearts of the resurrected: the external tremor of the eschatological earthquake thus finds its psychological echo in the trembling of the human psyche. A similar correspondence of external and internal trembling can also be discerned in the Syriac homiletic tradition; see, for instance, the psychological, rather than physical, use of *zaw'ā*, 'trembling', in ES I, no. 5, ll. 32.107 or HS, no. 31, l. 78.

The blast(s) of the trumpet	78:18; 74:8; 69:13; 50:20; 39:68; 36:51; 27:87; 23:101; 20:102; 18:99; 6:73	NT: Matt. 24:31; Rev. 11:15; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16 Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 495–498; ES III, no. 2, ll. 243–244; HS, no. 31, l. 93; HS, no. 192, ll. 353–355; HS, no. 193, l. 271 Note: See *Andrae*, Ursprung, pp. 141–42.
The eschatological shout (*sayha*, *zaġra*)	79:13–14; 50:42; 37:19; 38:15; 36:29.49.53; also associated with inner-historical punishments, see 29:40 and parallels	In addition to the references in the preceding entry (cf. Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 64–65, who identifies the shout with the call of the trumpet) see HS, no. 67, l. 342 and no. 192, l. 363.
The dead are brought forth from the earth / graves	100:9; 99:2.6; 84:4; 82:4; 70:43; 54:7; 50:44; 36:51; cf. also 21:96	NT: Rev. 20:13 Syr.: HS, no. 32, ll. 27–28.35–52; HS, no. 67, ll. 277–288.309–347.392–395; HS, no. 193, ll. 153.271–333 Note: Jacob's portrayal of the resurrection as a cosmic childbirth amplifies Matt. 24:8 and 1 Thess. 5:3, which compare the onset of the end to the beginning of birth pains (see also ES III, no. 2, ll. 197–202).
The resurrected awake from death as if from a brief slumber	79:46; 46:35; 36:52; 30:55.56; 23:112–114; 20:104; 17:52; 10:45; 2:259; cf. also 18:19	Syr.: ES I, no. 4, ll. 105–116; HP 2:5; HF 18:15; CN 53:5; HS, no. 67, l. 396 Note: For further references , in particular to Aphraates, Narsai and Babay the Great, see Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 156–63 and O'Shaughnessy, *Muhammad's Thoughts on Death*, pp. 69–70.
'In the twinkling/ glance of an eye'	54:50; 16:77	NT: 1 Cor. 15:52 Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 499–500; HS, no. 67, ll. 351.358–359.406.446 See also Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 142.
All human relationships severed	80:33–37; 23:101; 22:2	NT: Mark 13:12.17; Matt. 24:19 (see El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, pp. 170–72) Syr.: HS, no. 67, ll. 135–140.243–244; see also ES II, no. 2, ll. 169–184 (although this scene is set in hell) Note: See Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 144.
The downcast eyes of the resurrected	88:2; 79:9; 70:44; 68:43; 54:7; 42:45	Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 364–367; cf. HS, no. 32, l. 87 Note: See Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 72.

(3) The Judgement		
Arrival of the divine judge (God / Christ) accompanied by the angels; the angels come / stand in file and praise God	89:22; 78:38; 69:17; 37:1.165–166; 25:22;16:33; 15:8; 6:158; 2:210	NT: Matt. 16:27 Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 495–498; ES III, no. 2, ll. 233–240.285–290.305–308.319–320; HS, no. 32, l. 4; HS, no. 68, ll. 269–270; HS, no. 194, ll. 130.265–266.269–270 Note: See Andrae, Ursprung, p. 143; Rudolph, Abhängigkeit, p. 36; El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, pp. 7, 185.
The resurrected are assembled (ḥashara = kanneš)	multiple occurrences of ḥ-š-r (e.g., 67:24; 58:9; 50:44; 46:6; 41:19)	NT: Matt. 24:31, 25:31–32 Syr.: ES III, no. 1, l. 501; HS, no. 31, ll. 95–96; HS, no. 32, ll. 107–108; HS, no. 68, ll. 253–254.257–270
The resurrected are presented before the divine judge	99:6, 69:18;19:80.95; 18:48, 11:48; 6:94	
Only the divine judge speaks; the damned not allowed to proffer excuses or plead for mercy	77:35–36; 40:52; 30:57; 27:85; 16:84	Syr.: ES I, no. 3, ll. 81–98; ES III, no. 3, ll. 61–64; HS, no. 31, ll. 153–154.211; HS, no. 32, ll. 109–110.117.119
All human actions recorded in a book / books	86:4; 83:7–9.18–21.82:10–12; 78:29; 68:1?; 54:52–53; 50:4.18; 43:80; 36:12; 23:62; 13:11; 10:21; 6:61	NT: Rev. 20:12 Syr.: ES I, no. 2, ll. 585–608; ES I, no. 3, ll. 29–90.99–152; ES I, no. 5, ll. 332–335; HS, no. 32, ll. 133–134 (referring to an individual record book as in the Qur'an)
Use of books at the Judgement	84:7–12; 81:10; 69:18–20.25–26; 52:2–3?; 45:28–29; 39:69; 18:49; 17:13–14.71 (some of the Qur'anic passages speak of individual or communal record books)	
Everything, even the most secret sins, is brought into the open	100:10; cf. also the frequent statements that God 'knows what is in the breasts' or the like (e.g., 67:13; 13:10; 11:5 and elsewhere)	Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 85–92.301–329.382–383; ES III, no. 1, ll. 321–324.333–336; ES III, no. 3, ll. 21.133–134; HS, no. 31, ll. 219–220; HS, no. 68, ll. 182.211–213

The scales of justice	101:6.8; 99:6-8; 31:16; 23:102-103; 21:47; 7:8-9	Syr.: ES III, no. 5, ll. 13-16 Note: Beck considers this sermon to date only from the second half of the 7th century; see Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 69-70 and 121 on other pre-Qur'anic occurrences of the notion.
The sinners have their misdeeds written on their limbs	41:20-23; 36:65; 24:24	Syr.: HS, no. 32, ll. 137-140
No need to question the sinners about their misdeeds	55:39; 28:78	Syr.: HS, no. 31, ll. 65.153
The sinners are questioned	43:19.44; 37:24; 34:25; 21:23; 16:56.93; 29:13; 15:92-93; 7:6; 2:134.141	Syr.: HS, no. 68, l. 146; HS, no. 192, ll. 9.15
Condemnation of infanticide or abortion; resurrection of children who were killed or aborted	81:8	Syr.: ES III, no. 1, ll. 537-554; ES III, no. 4, app. 1, ll. 77-78 (quoting Job 3:16). Note: The prohibition of abortion and/or infanticide is also found in the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum*, see Vööbus, *Didascalia*, p. 33, ll. 15-16 (pointed out in Zellentin, *Legal Culture*, p. 73).
The resurrected grasp their misdeeds	99:6-8; 82:5; 81:14; 78:40; 75:13 and multiple later parallels (e.g., 59:18; 39:7; 31:15; 29:8; 18:49; 6:60.108; 5:105; 3:30)	Syr.: ES I, no. 4, ll. 117-124; ES I, no. 5, ll. 322-335; HS, no. 31, 123-125.212-216; HS, no. 32, ll. 133-136; HS, no. 192, ll. 11-24
The sinners incriminate / judge themselves	75:14; 68:29.31; 21:14.46.97; 7:5 (cf. 100:7)	
Earthly possessions are of no avail	111:2; 92:11; 69:28; 58:17; 45:10; 40:82; 39:50; 15:84; 7:48; 3:10.116	Syr.: HP 2:3-4
No (mutual) help for the resurrected, no stratagems (*kayd* = *şen'ātā*)	82:19; 77:39; 70:10; 69:35; 59:12; 52:46; 48:22; 40:18; 31:33; 28:41; 26:101; 3:111; 2:48.123	Syr.: ES IV, no. 4 (Testament), ll. 353-356; HS, no. 32, ll. 114.117.127-128 (see in particular Q 31:33)

No intercession (*šafā'a* = *apis* / *etkaššap*)	multiple occurrences, incl. 74:48; 40:18; 39:43–44; 36:23; 32:4; 30:13; 26:100–101; 10:18; 6:51.70.94; 2:48.123.254	Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 536–587; ES III, no. 1, ll. 455–456.459–460.465–466 Note: See Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 71–72 and 144, as well as the note in the following entry. Given that the notion of intercession is well attested in the Syriac literature and the Christian tradition more broadly (whether it is endorsed or rejected), I am highly sceptical of El-Badawi's proposal (*Gospel Traditions*, pp. 190–93) to interpret the Qur'anic term *šafā'a* according to the meaning that the root *š-p-'* has in Syriac, namely, as meaning "abundance" rather than "intercession".
Endorsement of intercession (Qur'an: only with divine permission)	53:26; 43:86; 34:23; 21:28; 20:109; 19:87; 10:3; 4:85 (seemingly unconditional endorsement of intercession); 2:255; see also the Qur'anic use of *istaġfara*, e.g., in 40:7 or 8:33 etc.	Syr.: HP 6:19, 7:25. Note: As Beck remarks in a note to his translation of ES III, no. 1, l. 466, which responds to Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 144, these passages from the *Hymns on Paradise* conflict with the denial of intercession in some of the sermons attributed to Ephrem (see the references given in the previous entry). Beck plausibly takes this to indicate the inauthenticity of the respective *mimrē*.
Separation (*faṣl* = *puršānā*) of the righteous and the sinners	78:17; 77:13–14.38; 60:3; 44:40; 37:21; 32:25; 22:17	NT: Matt. 13:37–43; Matt. 25:32–33 (see El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, pp. 193–94); cf. the expression *hēmera kriseós* in Matt. 10:15, 11:22.24, and 12:36 (Neuwirth, *Frühmekkanische Suren*, p. 508) Syr.: HS, no. 32, ll. 53–80; HS, no. 67, ll. 145–246 (l. 156: *puršānā*)

(4) *Paradise and hell*

Those of the right vs. those of the left	90:18–19; 74:39; 56:8–56.90–91 (cf. also 84:7–9; 69:19–24; 17:71)	NT: Matt. 25:31–46 (see Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 31) Syr.: ES I, no. 2, ll. 1101–1130; ES I, no. 5, ll. 356–359; HS, no. 67, ll. 171–172.
The fire of hell is stoked	81:12 (cf. 89:23; 79:36; 26:91)	Syr.: ES III, no. 4, l. 225
The sinners are whisked away by angels or demons	96:18; 47:27; 44:47; 16:28; 8:50; cf. also 32:11; 7:37; 6:61; 4:97 (with similar diction, but probably referring to the moment of death)	Syr.: ES III, no. 1, l. 628; ES III, no. 2, ll. 265–268; ES III, no. 3, l. 124; ES III, no. 4, ll. 213–216.221–224 Note: See Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 72–76 for a comparison of the Qur'anic data with other Jewish and Christian sources and also ibid., pp. 145–46.

The sinners are shackled by the angels of hell	76:4; 73:12; 69:30.32; 40:71; 36:8; 34:33; 13:5	Syr.: ES III, no. 4, ll. 221–226
The sinners are cast down into the fire	101:8–11[145]; 92:11; 76:4; 73:12; 69:31; 44:47; 40:72; 13:5; multiple assertions that the sinners will 'roast' in the hellfire (111:3; 92:15; 88:4; 87:12; 84:12 etc.)	NT: Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20, 20:15 Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 264–265; ES II, no. 2, ll. 89–164.221–230; ES III, no. 1, ll. 405–412.453–454.481–482; ES III, no. 3, ll. 117–120; ES III, no. 4, ll. 225–226; HS, no. 31, l. 90 (and multiple further references to the fire of hell throughout Jacob's eschatological homilies)
The sinners are tormented (ʿaḏḏaba = ṣanneq, ahheś)	multiple occurrences of ʿaḏḏaba and ʿaḏāb, e.g., 89:13.25; 88:24; 85:10; 84:24; 78:30.40 etc.	NT: Matt. 25:46 (see El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, pp. 193, 195) Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 256.264.281.288; ES I, no. 6, l. 45; ES II, no. 2, l. 78; ES III, no. 1, l. 600; ES III, no. 3, l. 37; HS, no. 67, ll. 162.202.240
The sinners are the fuel of the hellfire	66:6; 3:10; 2:24 (cf. also 85:4.5)	Syr.: ES III, no. 2, ll. 158.717.733
The eternity (ḫ-l-d = l-ʿālam) of the hellfire	multiple occurrences, e.g., in 98:6.8; 72:23; 64:10; 40:76; 39:72	NT: Matt. 25:46 (see El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, pp. 193, 195); Mark 9:43.48 Syr.: ES I, no. 5, ll. 259.289.532; ES I, no. 6, l. 48; ES III, no. 2, ll. 720–731
Paradise = 'Eden'	98:8; 61:12; 40:8; 38:50; 35:33; 20:76; 19:61; 18:31; 16:31; 13:23; 9:72	Syr.: multiple occurrences in HP, e.g., 4:10; 5:5; 6:19; 7:8.10.20; 9:1.2.13 Note: For a wider selection of parallels see Künstlinger, 'Namen', 617–619.

145. In my view, the notoriously enigmatic verse Q 101:9 (fa-ummuhū hāwiyah) is best viewed as a deliberate pun that would have been simultaneously understood both as an announcement of damnation ('His mother is an abyss' = he will be cast into the pit of fire) and as an imprecation ('May he – paraphrased by 'his mother' – perish'; on this latter signification see A. Fischer, 'Eine Qorān-Interpolation', in C. Bezold [ed.], Orientalistische Studien Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet, vol. 1 [Gießen, 1906], pp. 33–55). Unlike El-Badawi (Gospel Traditions, p. 202), I prefer to follow Brady, 'Book of Revelation', p. 220 in linking the hāwiya mentioned in Q 101:9 with the 'pool of fire' (hē limnē tou pyros) of Rev. 19:20 and 20:15 (see also the reference to the 'angel of the abyss' in Rev. 9:11) instead of the 'great abyss' mentioned in Luke 16:26 (which separates paradise and hell rather than denoting hell itself). It is clearly Revelation, not Luke, which stands in the background of the 'deep chasm' (peḥtā ʿamiqa) of fire into which the damned tumble according to ES II, no. 2, ll. 229–230.

The righteous are invited to enter paradise in peace	89:29–30; 50:32–34; 43:70; 39:73; 36:26; 16:32; 15:46; 7:49; cf. also 39:72 and 40:76, where the sinners are commanded to enter hell, and the peace greeting in 56:25–26.90, 14:23 etc.	NT: Matt. 25:34 (see El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, p. 195) Syr.: ES III, no. 2, ll. 530-533.556-557
Paradise as an 'elevated garden' (ǧanna 'āliya) on a mountain	88:10; 69:22; multiple occurrences of the phrase 'gardens beneath which rivers flow', e.g., in 98:8; 85:11; 66:8; 65:11; 64:9	Syr.: HP 1:4–5 (see Reynolds, Biblical Subtext, pp. 59–61), 2:10–11, 3:1, 4:8 Note: See Andrae, Ursprung, p. 146.
The different levels (sg. daraǧa = dargā) of paradise	58:11; 56:7–10; 46:19; 20:75; 17:21; 12:76; 9:20; 8:4; 6:83; 4:95–96; 3:163; 2:253; cf. also, but only with respect to this world, 43:32 and 6:165	Syr.: HP 2:10–11; ES III, no. 2, ll. 740–761 Note: See Andrae, Ursprung, p. 146.
The fruits of paradise, their abundance and easy accessibility	77:42; 76:14; 69:23; 55:54; 56:20.32–33; 55:52.68; 52:22; 47:15; 44:55; 43:73; 38:51; 37:41–42; 36:57; 13:35	NT: Rev. 22:2 (cf. 19:9: paradise as a marriage banquet) Syr.: HP 5:15, 6:11–13.15, 7:3.16–18.21.26, 9:4–6, 10:2.5–7.10–13, 14:8 (cf. in particular HP 9:6 with Q 76:14, 69:23 and 55:54)
No sadness in paradise	35:34; 7:43	NT: Rev. 21:4 Syr.: HP 7:22–23 (cf. also 11:2)
No idle talk / shouting in paradise	88:11; 78:35; 56:25; 19:62; cf. 52:23	
No dying in paradise	44:56; 37:58–59	Syr.: HP 7:22 Note: For the expression 'to taste death' from Q 44:56 see Matt. 16:28 (cf. Rudolph, Abhängigkeit, p. 14 and El-Badawi, Gospel Traditions, pp. 168–70).

The inhabitants of paradise are protected from heat and frost	77:41; 76:13.14; 56:30; 36:56; 13:35; 4:57	NT: Rev. 7:16 (see Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 14; cf. Isa. 49:10 and Ps. 121:6, noted in Brady, 'Book of Revelation', pp. 220–21) Syr.: HP 9:5, 11:2 (cf. in particular with Q 76:13)
The springs of paradise	88:12; 83:27–28; 76:5–6.17–18; 55:50.66; 47:15; 13:35	NT: Rev. 7:17 Syr.: HP 1:17, 2:8, 10:6, 11:11–12 Note: See Andrae, *Ursprung*, pp. 146–47.
Paradise and hell are separated by a barrier / an abyss	7:46 (cf. 57:13)	Luke 16:26 (see Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 15; Andrae, *Ursprung*, p. 77; El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, p. 202) Syr.: HP 1:12–13.17
The inhabitants of paradise and the damned see and converse with each other; the blessed mock the damned	83:34; 74:40–48; 37:50–57	NT: Luke 16:19–31 (see Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 15; El-Badawi, *Gospel Traditions*, pp. 200–201) Syr.: ES III, no. 3, ll. 167–184; ES III, no. 4, 227–228.263–264; HP 1:12–14.17, 7:29; HS, no. 32, ll. 77–78; HS, no. 67, ll. 187–188; HS, no. 193, ll. 161–162 Note: For further echoes of Luke 16:24 see ES I, no. 7, ll. 31–32 and ES III, no. 3, ll. 41–42, and HS, no. 16, *passim*.
The damned plead with the inhabitants of paradise for water	7:50	

APOCALYPTICISM IN SUNNI HADITH

Christopher MELCHERT

Most Islamic apocalypticism is in hadith. In Arabic, *hadith* literally means something spoken. Technically, it means the body of reports of what the Prophet and sometimes other early Muslims said and did. It probably corresponds to the Oral Law of the Jews, as the Qur'an corresponds to the written Torah. According to the Sunni tradition, it is equally authoritative with the Qur'an, being equally inspired by God although less certainly transmitted down the centuries. Non-Sunni theologians, especially Khawārij and Mu'tazilah, sometimes questioned its authority. (Most of the Shī'ah accepted such hadith as had come through their imams.) The Qur'an has always been endorsed by all Muslims, so what is in Sunni hadith, what not, is the more reliable indicator of Sunni orthodoxy.

My plan here is to provide a series of sample translations with commentary. The Qur'an is only about two-thirds as long as the New Testament (in Arabic translation). Its contents seem to have been fixed by the end of the seventh century.[1] The literature of hadith is much larger, and the outer boundaries of authoritative hadith have never been fixed.[2] I shall stress here hadith from the Six Books, collections of hadith dating from the mid-ninth to early tenth centuries, which over the next two or three centuries became the most highly respected collections among Sunni Muslims. Whereas earlier studies have tended to stress the wider (and wilder) range of apocalyptic ideas circulating amongst Muslims, the present study will develop the uses of apocalyptic at the most impeccably orthodox centre of Sunni Islam.[3]

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1. See Harald Motzki, 'The collection of the Qur'an', *Der Islam* 78 (2001), pp. 1–34, for a good review of the earlier controversy over when the Qur'an was collected, and Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann, 'The codex of a Companion of the Prophet and the Qur'an of the Prophet', *Arabica* 57 (2010), pp. 343–436, for the latest manuscript evidence.

2. The best survey is Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Foundations of Islam; Oxford, 2009).

3. A good short survey deliberately not emphasizing Sunni Islam is Said Amir Arjomand, 'Islamic apocalypticism in the Classic period', in B. McGinn (ed.), *Encyclopedia of apocalypticism 2: Apocalypticism in Western history and culture* (New York, 2000), pp. 238–83. A longer is David Cook, *Studies in Muslim apocalyptic* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 21; Princeton, 2002). See also Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic beliefs and imperial politics in medieval Islam* (Studies in Comparative Religion; Columbia SC, 2009), esp. Introduction and chaps. 1–2

This study presumes a certain history and certain definitions of Sunni orthodoxy. One difficulty with defining it is just that it has long been used in multiple senses. Marshall Hodgson puts the problem succinctly and well:

> We may summarize three ways in which the term *Sunni* has been most used, as follows: to mean *Jamāʿī* as vs. *Shīʿī*; to mean *Ḥadīthī* as vs. *Kalāmī* (including Muʿtazilis and Ashʿarīs); to mean *Sharʿī* as vs. *Ṣūfī*. Then it has been extended to those ʿAlid-loyalists, kalām men, and Ṣūfīs who accepted key positions of their respective opponents.[4]

Jamāʿī has been helpfully defined as indicating 'all those who did not opt out of the community by reserving their allegiance for current or future imams of their own'.[5] 'Shīʿī' is a familiar term, now designating those who believe that the caliphate should have been handed down among various descendants of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (different Shiʿi groups differ as to exactly which descendants). *Kalām* designates dialectical theology, more or less severely distrusted by those who called themselves Sunni in the ninth century but increasingly accepted when used in defence of Sunni dogmatic tenets from the tenth century, as by the Ashʿari and Māturīdi schools. *Sharʿī* refers to preferring observance of Islamic law as the chief expression of faithfulness, whereas *ṣūfī* refers to the Islamic mystical tradition.

As Hodgson indicates, use of the term 'Sunni' has varied not only from one group to another but also over time. The Sunni tradition naturally presents itself as re-establishing Islam just as the Prophet taught it to his Companions. (It acknowledges some elaboration; for example, it is freely acknowledged that formal jurisprudence and Sufism, among other things, were not cultivated by the Companions but appeared only later, as 'good innovations'.) Historians will naturally suppose it evolved over time. Of particular relevance to this study, most non-Sunni historians suppose that the hadith they cited in support of their distinctive doctrines represent a good deal of back projection from the eighth and ninth centuries (as likewise supposed their non-Sunni opponents of the ninth century). From the beginning to the end of the ninth century, *ahl al-sunnah wa-al-jamāʿah* ('the people of normative precedent and the great majority'), to use their term for themselves, went from being a veritable sect, actively persecuted by the caliphs at the Inquisition, to being indeed the great majority, the default category into which went everyone who was not a declared Shiʿi or Khāriji.[6]

4. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The venture of Islam*, vol. 1: *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago–London, 1974). p. 278, n. 18.

5. Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 75.

6. For the Inquisition of 218–37/833–52, see M. Hinds, s.v. 'Miḥna', in C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7 (Leiden, 1993), pp. 2–6.

in the midst of this evolution there was of course some disagreement over what the Sunnah included. For spectacular example, the hadith collector al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) was expelled from a series of cities near the end of his life for contending that although the Qur'an was increate (the contention for which the caliphs had persecuted the Sunni party at the Inquisition), one's pronunciation of the Qur'an was create, a concession to the necessity of theological distinctions repugnant to most of the Sunni party of his time. Nevertheless, his collection of sound hadith would become (by the eleventh century) the most revered Sunni text after the Qur'an itself.[7] Of more immediate importance, the Sunni party seems to have grown suspicious of world-renouncing piety from at least the beginning of the ninth century and of the earliest signs of mystical piety from about the last third of the century, as manifest in the Sufi Inquisition of Ghulām Khalīl in 264/877–88.[8] The polarity of Sunni and Shi'i was not strong until the mid-tenth century, while full Sunni mutual recognition and self-awareness prevailed only from the eleventh century. This said, I think that the leading Sunni collections of hadith from the later ninth century show sufficient convergence on a particular worldview, law-centred and moderately world-affirming, to merit study together before anyone meritoriously investigates how they differ one from another and from other Sunni collections of the time. (The Sunni view is of course that they converge on the Prophet's teaching, with those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim quoting him just a little more reliably than the others.)

EXAMPLES OF SUNNI HADITH

Many details of the End Times and Last Judgement are found in hadith only. Indeed, although the Qur'an has much to say of the Last Judgement, then the pleasures of Paradise and the torments of Hell, the whole concept of an *eschaton*, a considerable period before the Last Judgement when present-day arrangements are upended, seems to be found only in

7. For Bukhārī's growing reputation, see Jonathan Brown, *The canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim* (Islam [sic] History and Civilization. Studies and Texts 69; Leiden, 2007). On Bukhārī's persecution, which Brown prefers to blame on personal envy, cf. Christopher Melchert, 'Bukhārī and his *Ṣaḥīḥ*', *Le muséon* 123 (2010), pp. 425–54, at pp. 451–53.

8. For this Inquisition, see Richard Gramlich, *Alte Vorbilder des Sufitums 1: Scheiche des Westens* (Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Mainz, Veröffentlichungen der orientalischen Kommission 42.1; Wiesbaden, 1996), pp. 384–85.

hadith. (David Cook proposes that the Prophet must have thought he was already living in the End Times.[9]) It was controversial whether hadith was a reliable complement to the Qur'an. In particular, the Mu'tazili and Khāriji theological parties advocated a law and theology inferred from the Qur'an, not hadith, whereas the developing Sunni party insisted on the equal authority of hadith.[10] Here is an eschatological passage from a ninth-century Sunni creed:

1. (One must have) faith in the torment of the tomb and faith in Munkar and Nakīr. (One must have) faith in the basin and intercession. The intercession is that of the Prophet for the cardinal sinners of his nation. (One must have) faith that the people of Paradise will see their Lord (blessed and exalted be he). (One must have) faith that the monotheists will come out of the Fire after having been burnt, as it has come in hadith reports from the Prophet ... concerning these things.[11]

The torment of the tomb is an apparent purgatorial period (for unbelievers, an anticipation of Hell) developed in hadith.[12] Munkar and Nakīr are

9 Cook, *Studies*, p. 301.

10. Regrettably, non-Sunni theological positions from before the tenth century usually have to be inferred from Sunni arguments against them, not directly from early texts, of which few survive. See for now Michael Cook, 'Anan and Islam: the origins of Karaite scripturalism', *JSAI* 9 (1987), pp. 161–82, esp. pp. 165–74. For an example of the Sunni case for equal authority, see Shāfi'ī, *Ibṭāl al-istiḥsān*, K. al-Umm, 7 vols. in 4 (Bulaq, 1321-25), vol. 7, p. 271 = ed. Rif'at Fawzī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, 11 vols. (Cairo, 1422/2001, repr. 1425/2004), vol. 9, p. 70: 'The Messenger of God ... never imposed (*faraḍa*) anything save by God's inspiration (*waḥy*). There is the inspiration that is recited and there is what came as inspiration (*waḥy*) to the Messenger of God ... that is to be followed as *sunnah* (*yustannu bih*).'

11. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (attrib.), Creed IV, apud Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābilah*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1371/1952), vol. 1, p. 295. An excellent alternative translation at Ibn al-Jawzī, *Virtues of the imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. and trans. Michael Cooperson (New York, 2013), vol. 1, p. 307. Ibn Abī Ya'lā reproduces six creeds attributed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) in his biographical dictionary of the Ḥanbalī school of law. They were numbered and summarized by Henri Laoust, 'Les premières professions de foi hanbalites', *Mélanges Louis Massignon*, 3 vols. (Damascus, 1957), vol. 3, pp. 7–35, at pp. 12–15; idem, *La profession de foi d'Ibn Baṭṭa* (Damascus, 1958), pp. xv–xvi. On the basis of other evident quotations, Saud Al-Sarhan attributes Creed IV rather to al-'Abbās ibn Mūsá ibn Miskawayh (fl. early 9th cent.) in his contribution to the Paul Auchterlonie Festschrift, forthcoming. Cook mentions some other ninth- and tenth-century creeds featuring other apocalyptic details: Cook, *Studies*, pp. 328-29, n. 20.

12. For example, Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. al-janā'iz 86, mā jā'a fī 'adhāb al-qabr, nos. 1369-74; Muslim, *Jāmi'*, k. al-masājid 24, bāb istiḥbāb al-ta'awwudh min 'adhāb al-qabr, nos. 123-26; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. al-sunnah 23, bāb al-mas'alah fī al-qabr wa-'adhāb al-qabr, nos. 4750-54; Nasā'ī, *Mujtabá*, k. al-janā'iz 114, 'adhāb al-qabr, nos. 2058-61, 115, al-ta'awwudh min 'adhāb al-qabr, nos. 2062-69. See A.J. Wensinck and A.S. Tritton, s.v. ''Adhāb al-kabr', in H.A.R. Gibb et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1986), pp. 186-87. The labour of looking up hadith reports is much increased by the conceit of editors who introduce their own numbering systems. There are many commercial editions of the most authoritative Sunni hadith collections, so citing one by volume and page is seldom acceptable. I shall cite hadith in the Six Books according to

the two interrogating angels, not mentioned in the Qur'an but only hadith.[13] The basin' (al-hawd) is a feature of the landscape on the Day of the Resurrection not mentioned in the Qur'an but often in hadith.[14] Talk of the torment of the tomb, the basin, and the Prophet's intercession is directed against the Khawārij and Mu'tazilah, non-Sunni theological groups who interpreted the Qur'an as threatening cardinal sinners with eternal perdition, whether Muslim or not, and tended to base their religion on Qur'an to the exclusion of hadith.[15] Another ninth-century creed accuses them both of disbelieving in the torment of the tomb, the basin, and intercession.[16] Talk of seeing God in the afterlife is again directed against the Mu'tazilah, who thought that God must not be visible (as apparently taught by the Qur'an, which says, 'Sight does not reach Him, but He reaches sight', 6:103).[17] It is the Sunni doctrine that almost everyone will go into Hell. The Qur'an suggests it: 'There is none of you who will not go down to it'

book and section as they are counted by A.J. Wensinck, *A handbook of early Muhammadan tradition* (Leiden, 1927), then number according to what I take to be the most widely observed conventions, which is to say Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī's numbers for Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah, Muhammad Muhyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamīd's for Abū Dāwūd, and Muhammad 'Atā' Allāh al-Amritsarī's for Nasā'ī.

13. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, k. al-janā'iz 70, no. 1071. See also A.J. Wensink, s.v. 'Munkar wa Nakir', in C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7 (Leiden–New York, 1993), pp. 576–77.

14. E.g. Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, k. al-riqāq 53, *bāb fī al-hawd*, no. 6589; Muslim, *Jāmi'*, k. al-tahārah 12, *bāb istihbāb itālat al-ghurrah*, no. 249; k. al-imārah 1, *bāb al-nās taba' li-quraysh*, no. 1822; k. al-fadā'il 9, *bāb ithbāt hawd nabiyinā*, nos. 2289–90, 2295–97, 2305; Ibn Mājah 5, *bāb lā tarji'ū ba'dī kuffāran*, no. 3944. See also A.J. Wensinck, s.v. 'Hawd', in B. Lewis *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3 (Leiden–London, 1986), p. 286, and G.H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of canonical hadith* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 21, 473–74, with further references.

15. The Prophet's intercession is often mentioned in hadith. For intercession on behalf of Muslim cardinal sinners in particular, see Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. al-sunnah 20, *bāb fī al-shafā'ah*, no. 4739; Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, k. sifat al-qiyāmah 11, nos. 2435–36; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, k. al-zuhd 37, *bāb dhikr al-shafā'ah*, no. 4310. See also A.J. Wensinck and D. Gimaret, s.v. 'shafā'a', in C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 9 (Leiden, 1997), pp. 177–79. For an example of Mu'tazilī scepticism (asking who is better, Munkar or Nakir), see al-Jāhiz, *K. al-Tarbī' wa-al-tadwīr*, ed. Charles Pellat (Damascus, 1955), p. 43.

16. Ahmad ibn Hanbal (attrib.), Creed I, apud Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Tabaqāt*, vol. 1, pp. 32, 34. Al-Sarhan reassigns Creed 1 to Harb al-Kirmānī (d. 280/893–94), on whom see Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt *et al.*, 25 vols. (Beirut, 1401–1409/1981–88), vol. 13, pp. 244–45, with further references.

17. Translation from *The Qur'ān*, trans. Alan Jones (Cambridge, 2007). For the assertion that the believers will see God on the Day of the Resurrection, see Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, k. al-adhān 129, *bāb fadl al-sujūd*, no. 806; k. al-riqāq 52, *bāb al-sirāt*, no. 6573; k. al-tawhīd 24, *bāb qawl Allāh . . . wujūh yawma'idhin nādirah*, no. 7437; Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 235–36, with additional references; also Claude Gilliot, 'La vision de Dieu dans l'au-delà', in M.A. Amir-Moezzi *et al.* (eds.), *Pensée grecque et sagesse d'Orient: hommage à Michel Tardieu* (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des hautes études, sciences religieuses 142, Turnhout, 2009), pp. 241–73.

(Q. 19:71). Hadith adds detail, such as a term for some of those brought out, al-Jahannamiyūn.[18] The caliph 'Umar is credited with foreseeing skepticism of all these tenets, saying, 'There will come a people who deny the basin, intercession, the torment of the tomb, and a people who come out of the Fire.'[19] (See below for the Prophet's warning against future deniers of predestination.) The obvious point of the foregoing excerpt from a creed is to show three things: first, that hadith adds various details to what the Qur'an says about the Last Judgement; secondly, that these additions were controversial, rejected by some Muslims but considered crucial elements of orthodoxy by the Sunni party; thirdly, that the ninth-century Sunni party, although interested in taming apocalypticism to the extent that it should not support contemporary rebellion, also employed apocalypticism to discredit rationalistic, spiritualizing tendencies.

Here is an eschatological passage from yet another ninth-century creed:

> The root of the *sunnah*, in our view, is ... faith in the sight on the Day of Resurrection, as it is related of the Prophet ... in sound hadith, and that the Prophet ... saw his Lord. It is soundly handed down from the Messenger of God ... . It was related by Qatādah < 'Ikrimah < Ibn 'Abbās, by al-Ḥakam ibn Abān < 'Ikrimah < Ibn 'Abbās, and by 'Ali ibn Zayd < Yūsuf ibn Mihrān < Ibn 'Abbās. Hadith, in our view, is to be interpreted after its evident meaning, as it came from the Prophet ... . Talk of it (*kalām*) is an innovation. We believe in it as it came, after its evident meaning. We do not debate with anyone concerning it.

(It is) faith in the scale on the Day of Resurrection, as it came: 'The servant will be weighed on the Day of Resurrection. He will not weigh so much as a gnat's wing.' The deeds of the servants will be weighed, as it has come in *al-athar* (hadith). (It is) faith in it and belief and declaring it true. One turns away from whoever rejects that and refuses to argue about it. (It is) faith that God will speak to his servants on the Day of Resurrection. There will be no interpreter between him and them. (It is) faith in it and declaring it true. (It is) faith in the basin; that the Messenger of God ... will have a basin on the Day of Resurrection to which he will bring his nation, its breadth equal to its length, a month's journey

18. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. al-riqāq 51, bāb ṣifat al-jannah wa-al-nar, no. 6560; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. al-sunnah 20, bāb fī al-shafā'ah, no. 4740; Tirmidhī, *Jami* ..., jahannam 10, no. 2600; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, k. al-zuhd 37, bāb dhikr al-shafā'ah, no. ...; See Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 665–66.

19. Hannād ibn al-Sarī, *K. al-Zuhd*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Faraywā'ī, 2 vols. (Kuwayt, 1406/1985), p. 144. Ascribed by 'Umar to the Messenger of God in 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Rahmān al-A'zamī, 11 vols., Manshūrāt al-Majlis al-'Ilmī 39; Johannesburg, 1390–92/1970–72), vol. ..., p. 35; and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad imām al-muhaddithīn*, 6 vols. (Cairo, 1313 ...), ...; p. 23 = *Musnad al-imām*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt, et al., 50 vols. (Beirut, 1413 ...–..., 2001), vol. 1, pp. 296–97.

across, able to contain the number of the stars of heaven, as reports (akhbar) have soundly conveyed in more than one version.

(It is) faith in the torment of the tomb; that this nation will be tried in its tombs, asked about their faith and submission. (One will be asked) 'Who is his Lord?' 'Who is his prophet?' (The angels) Munkar and Nakir will come to him, however God wills and however he wishes. (It is) faith in it and declaring it true. (It is) faith in the intercession of the Prophet ... and in a group that will come out of the Fire after having burnt and become cinders. He will order them to go to a river at the gate of Paradise, as al-athar has come. However God wills it, and as God wills it, that is to be believed and considered true. (It is) faith in the Antichrist (al-masih al-dajjal) who rebels, with 'unbeliever' written between his eyes, and in the hadith reports that have come down concerning him. (It is) faith that this will be and that 'Isa (Jesus) will come down and kill him at the gate of Ludd.[20]

Here again is the sight of God in the afterlife, although connected also to a controversial incident in the life of the Prophet.[21] Sunnah refers to the normative example of the Prophet and other especially virtuous men of the past. It is the proper pattern of behaviour and belief. It is known mainly from hadith, and this creed, like the previous one, makes a point of requiring Muslims to believe in hadith as well as the Qur'an. (In the ninth century athar was a synonym of hadith. Only centuries later did it became customary to restrict hadith to sayings of the Prophet, athar to sayings of other Muslims.) At the end of the first paragraph, we come to literalism and the legitimacy of theological inquiry. 'Literalism' is a much-abused term. It does not mean 'rigorist', 'puritanical', or 'bigoted'. But here, in the ninth-century controversy between Sunnis and Mu'tazilah, it is appropriate. The literalism to which this creed points is admittedly qualified: they do not insist that they know the correct interpretation of the texts. God might have meant this in a way we cannot fathom. The Sunni approach was to discourage theological discussion. They said that since the Prophet and his Companions had got along without discussing these questions, it should be possible for present-day Muslims to get along, too. They thought that belief was important – as the creeds show, Sunni Islam is basically

20. Ahmad ibn Hanbal (attrib.), Creed III, apud Ibn Abi Ya'la, Tabaqat, vol. 1, pp. 241–43; Ibn al-Jawzi, Virtues, pp. 319–20. On the same grounds as for Creed IV, Al-Sarhan attributes Creed III to 'Ali ibn al-Madini (d. 234/849) or disciples of his.

21. Early disagreement documented in 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Tafsir, ad Q. 38:69, 53:8–9, II; ed. 'Abd al-Mu'ti Amin Qal'aji, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1411/1991), vol. 2, pp. 13?, 202–204. Cf. Bukhari, k. al-tawhid 4, no. 7380, quoting the Prophet's wife 'A'ishah: 'Whoever relates to you that Muhammad saw his lord, he has lied, for He says, "Sight does not reach Him"' (Q. 6:103; variants at 3234–35, 4855).

orthodox, not orthoprax –, but it was so tricky to formulate one's beliefs correctly, it was safer not to talk about it.[22]

The third paragraph concludes with the Antichrist and Jesus, the former not mentioned in the Qur'an, the latter at least not prominently an apocalyptic figure in the Qur'an.[23] Ludd (biblical Lydda) was a leading administrative centre when the Arabs conquered Palestine but it was eclipsed and fell into ruin when the caliphs built up al-Ramlah in the eighth century.[24] Its mention then bespeaks two things: this part of the tradition is fairly early and probably takes off from a pre-Islamic Christian tradition.

My next example comes from al-Nawawī (d. Nawá, 676/1277), *Arba'ūna ḥadīthan*, a very popular collection of the forty most important hadith reports, widely published and memorized throughout the Sunni world to the present.[25]

> 3. (1) On the authority of the commander of the Faithful Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may God be pleased with him. He said, 'I heard the Messenger of God ... say, "Actions are only by intentions. Every man has only what he intended. Whosoever migration is for God and his messenger, his migration is for God and his messenger. Whosoever migration is for something worldly or to take some woman in marriage, his migration is for that for which he migrated."'

22. On trickiness and caution, see A. Kevin Reinhart, 'On Sunni sectarianism', in Yasir Suleiman (ed.), *Living Islamic History* (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 209–25 (bibliography, pp. 279–308); on orthodoxy rather than orthopraxy, see Norman Calder, 'The limits of Islamic orthodoxy', in Farhad Daftary (ed.), *Intellectual traditions in Islam* (London, 2000), pp. 66–86, esp. 66–67.

23. See A. Abel, s.v. 'Daḏjḏjāl', in B. Lewis *et al.* (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*², vol. 2 (Leiden, 1991), pp. 76–77, and Neal Robinson, s.v. 'Antichrist', in J.D. McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2001), pp. 107–11. The Quran quotes Jesus fairly often, usually refuting Trinitarianism. Many early commentators also took Q. 43:61 to allude to Jesus's coming in the End Times; e.g. most of those cited by al-Ṭabarī, *ad loc.*; *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 11 (Beirut, 1420/1999), pp. 204–205. Among 20th-century Muslim translators, A. Yusuf Ali offers 'And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment)', but most seem to have followed Pickthall, 'Verily there is knowledge of the Hour.'

24. M. Sharon, s.v. 'Ludd', in C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*², vol. 5 (Leiden, 1986), pp. 798–803. Jesus's killing the Antichrist at the gate of Ludd is mentioned in Muslim, *Jāmi'*, k. *al-fitan* 20, *bāb dhikr al-dajjāl*, no. 2137; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. *al-malāḥim* 14, *bāb khurūj al-dajjāl*, no. 4321; Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, k. *al-fitan* 59, *bāb mā jā'a fī fitnat al-dajjāl*, no. 2240; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, k. *al-fitan* 33, *bāb fitnat al-dajjāl*, nos. 4075, 4077; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, ed. Cairo, vol. 4, pp. 181–82, 420, 226, 390; ed. al-Arna'ūṭ *et al.*, vol. 29, pp. 172–77, 209–12, 511, vol. 32, p. 226.

25. For scholarly purposes, the edition to consult is Louis Pouzet, *Une herméneutique de la tradition islamique: la commentaire des «al-Arba'ūn al-Nawawīya»* (Recherches: nouvelle série, A, Langue arabe et pensée islamique 13; Beirut, 1982), which includes a full translation. Nawawī states that these hadith reports are related by both Bukhārī and Muslim, which is true, but his wording is slightly discrepant.

(2) Also on the authority of 'Umar, who said, 'While we were sitting with the Messenger of God one day, there appeared before us a man with extremely white clothes and extremely black hair. No trace of journeying was to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He sat down by the Prophet ... . He supported his knees against his, placed the palms of his hands on his thighs, and said, "O Muḥammad, tell me about Islam." The Messenger of God ... said, "Islam is that you testify that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the messenger of God; that you perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast in Ramaḍān, and make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able." He said, "You have told the truth." We were amazed at his asking him and saying that he had told the truth. He said, "Then tell me about faith." He said, "(It is) that you have faith in God, his angels, his books, his messengers, and the Last Day; that you have faith in destiny (qadar), its good and its evil." He said, "You have told the truth." He said, "Then tell me about doing well (iḥsān)." He said, "(It is) that you to worship God as though you are seeing Him. Even if you do not see Him, he sees you." He said, "Then tell me about the Hour." He said, "The one being asked about it knows no better than the one asking." He said, "Then tell me about its signs." He said, "That the slave-girl gives birth to her mistress and that you will see the barefooted, naked, destitute shepherds competing in constructing tall buildings." Then he left while I stayed for a time. Then he said, "O 'Umar, do you know who the asker was?" I said, "God and his messenger know better." He said, "This was Gabriel come to you to teach you your religion."'

It seems noteworthy that, in a religion of law, good intentions should be considered so important as to begin a collection like this. (The same hadith report also begins the collection of al-Bukhārī.) I think it is noteworthy also that the second hadith report in the collection should review the basic ritual works – there is an element of orthopraxy to Sunnism –, then theological tenets to be believed, including some signs of the End Times.

Extra-Islamic origins are occasionally evident in more than just known parallels.

4. Ibn 'Uyaynah (Kufan, d. Mecca, 198/814) < al-Zuhrī (Medinese, d. 124/741–42?) < Sālim (ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar, Medinese, d. 106/725?) < his father that 'Umar once told a Jew, 'I think you are truthful. Tell me about the Antichrist.' The Jew answered him, 'By the god of the Jews, Ibn Maryam will kill him by the open space (finā') before Ludd.'[26]

(Indifference such as this to what separated Jews and Christians is typical of ninth-century references to learning from the People of the

26. Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Muṣannaf, k. al-fitan 2, mā dhukira fī fitnat al-dajjāl = ed. Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh al-Jum'ah & Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Luḥaydān, 16 vols. (Riyadh, 1425/2004), vol. 14, p. 133.

Book and their scriptures.) Here is the introduction to a story about a Companion's finding the Antichrist securely bound in a castle at some unspecified location:

> 5. Fāṭimah bint Qays: I heard that a congregational ṣalāh was announced. I went out and performed it with the Prophet. When he had finished, he sat down on the pulpit with a smile on his face and he addressed the people: 'Everybody must stay in his place. Do you know why I have called you here together? No? It was not because I wanted to warn you of something bad or good. But Tamīm ad-Dārī here, who used to be a Christian, came to me and swore allegiance to me. He told me a story which tallies with what I once told you about the Dajjāl ...[27]

All versions mention Tamīm al-Dārī, but some do not mention that Tamīm had told the Prophet nothing he had not spoken of already, as here; rather, they let the Prophet simply repeat what Tamīm had told him.[28] Another hadith report both acknowledges overlapping ideas and insists on Islamic uniqueness:

> 6. < ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar: 'The Messenger of God ... arose and praised God as he was worthy to be praised, then mentioned the Antichrist, saying, 'I do warn you of him. There has been no prophet but that he has warned his people; however, I shall tell you something about him that no prophet has told his people: that he is one-eyed, whereas God is not one-eyed.'[29]

Admittedly, however, there is another version, through a very different chain of authorities, by which he says, 'There is no prophet but that he warned his community of the one-eyed liar.'[30] Insistence on the uniqueness of the Muslims' knowledge seems likely to postdate the idea of the Antichrist's having only one eye.

27. Translation from Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, p. 625. The hadith report is to be found in Muslim, *Jāmiʿ*, k. al-fitan 24, qiṣṣat al-jassāsah, no. 2942; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. al-malāḥim 15, bāb fī khabar al-jassāsah, nos. 4325–27. See also Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 625–26; Cook, *Studies*, pp. 117–20.

28. Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ*, k. al-fitan 66, no. 2503; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, k. al-fitan 33, bāb fitnat al-dajjāl, no. 4074; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, ed. Cairo, vol. 6, pp. 273–74, 413, 417–18; ed. al-Arnaʾūṭ et al., vol. 45, pp. 57–61, 314–15, 336–38.

29. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. al-jihād 178, bāb kayfa yuʿraḍu 'l-islām, no. 3057; k. aḥādīth al-anbiyāʾ 3, no. 3337 (with an addition mentioning Noah in particular as an example of previous prophets); k. al-adab 97, bāb qawl al-rajul lil-rajul ikhshaʾ, no. 6175 (with Noah, again); k. al-fitan 26, bāb dhikr al-dajjāl, no. 7127; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. al-fitan 20, no. 2936 (completely different isnād); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. al-sunnah 26, bāb fī al-dajjāl, no. 4757 (also mentioning Noah); Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ*, k. al-fitan 56, bāb mā jāʾa fī ʿalāmāt al-dajjāl, no. 2235 (also mentioning Noah).

30. Muslim, *Jāmiʿ*, k. al-fitan 20, no. 2933; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. al-malāḥim 14, bāb dhikr khurūj al-dajjāl, nos. 4316–18; Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ*, k. al-fitan 62, bāb mā jāʾa fī qatl ʿĪsā ibn Maryam al-dajjāl, no. 2245.

Intercommunal relations come up in more distasteful ways in other hadith reports about the End Times.

> 7. Prophet: 'There is no prophet between me and him (meaning 'Īsā ibn Maryam). He is about to descend .... He will fight the people on behalf of Islam, so he will break the cross, kill the swine, and abolish the tax on non-Muslims (jizyah). In his time, God will destroy all the communities except Islam. The Messiah (masīḥ) will destroy the Antichrist and remain on the earth for forty years. Then he will be claimed (die) and the Muslims will pray over him.[31]

Shorter versions go on from abolishing the tax on non-Muslims to passing out so much wealth that no one accepts it any longer, not explaining why the tax will be abolished.[32] This version from the collection of Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889) evidently explains that the tax will be abolished because there will be no more non-Muslims to pay it. But Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) notes of one shorter version that it is an example of legal abrogation (naskh) in the future, since in the present the Christians have a legal right to their crosses and swine so long as they keep them out of sight.[33] Abū Dāwūd's version also raises the question of how long the eschaton will go on before the Last Judgement. 'Forty years' is a usual estimate, but they will evidently seem to go by faster than we are accustomed to, 'a year like half a year, a year like a month, a month like a week, and the last of his days like sparks' in one version.[34]

Apocalypticism also arises in connection with intra-Islamic disputes.

> 8. Messenger of God: 'Every nation has Magians (majūs). The Magians of this community are those who say there is no predestination (qadar). Whoever of them dies, do not witness his funeral. Whoever of them falls ill, do not visit him. They are the party (shī'ah) of the Antichrist.[35]

Perhaps the idea is that those who denied predestination (the Qadarīyah) resembled the dualistic Magians in that both denied that the good god alone had willed to happen everything that does happen.

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31. Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, k. al-malāḥim 14, bāb dhikr khurūj al-dajjāl, no. 4324.

32. Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, k. al-buyū' 102, bāb qatl al-khinzīr, no. 2222; k. al-maẓālim 31, bāb kasr al-ṣalīb, no. 2476; k. aḥādīth al-anbiyā' 49, bāb nuzūl 'Īsā ibn Maryam, no. 3448; Muslim, Jāmi', k. al-īmān 71, bāb nuzūl 'Īsā ibn Maryam ḥākiman bi-sharī'at nabīyinā Muhammad, nos. 155–59; Tirmidhī, Jāmi', k. al-fitan 54, bāb mā jā'a fī nuzūl 'Īsā ibn Maryam, no. 2233; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, k. al-fitan 33, bāb fitnat al-dajjāl, no. 4078. Comments from Juynboll, Encyclopedia, p. 608.

33. Ibn Ḥajar, Fatḥ al-bārī, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd Allāh Bin Bāz, 15 vols. (Beirut, 1428–29/2008), vol. 5, p. 316, ad Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, k. al-maẓālim 31, bāb kasr al-ṣalīb, no. 2476.

34. Ibn Mājah, Sunan, k. al-fitan 33, bāb fitnat al-dajjāl, no. 4077.

35. Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, k. al-sunnah 16, bāb fī al-qadar, no. 4692.

There is practically a genre of 'conditions of the Hour (ashrāṭ al-sā'ah)', mainly collections of hadith about signs of the End Times. The term itself is qur'anic: 'Do they expect anything except the Hour – that will come on them suddenly. The portents for it (ashrāṭuhā) have come' (Q. 47:18). As enumerated in hadith, they are often polemical. The Qur'an describes disturbances to nature like moving mountains and boiling oceans (Q. 81:3, 6), and some natural disturbances show up in hadith; for example, the sun will rise in the west.[36] But hadith tends to talk more about social disorder, as in no. 3 from Nawawī. More on this to come. External threats to the community could also be taken as conditions of the Hour.

9. Sa'īd ibn Muḥammad (Kufan) < Ya'qūb (ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'd, Baghdadi, d. 208/824) < his father (Medinese, transferred to Baghdad, d. 183/799–800) < Ṣāliḥ (ibn Kaysān, Medinese, d. 145/762–63?) < al-A'raj ('Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Hurmuz, Medinese client, d. 117/735– 36?) < Abū Hurayrah < Messenger of God: 'The Hour will not come until you fight the Turks: small of eyes, red of faces, small-nosed, with faces like layered shields. The Hour will not come until you fight a people whose sandals are made of hair.'[37]

Some versions omit to name the Turks expressly. Ibn Ḥajar observes in his commentary that there had already come a people who wore sandals of hair (in other versions expressly the Turks themselves), namely the followers of the rebel Bābak al-Khurramī, whose anti-Arab rebellion in Azerbaijan was suppressed only after more than twenty years in 222/837.[38]

Some material on the End Times is preserved in the Islamic literature of renunciation. Here for example is al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), than whom no renunciant is more highly renowned:

10. Our staying here will be short, our remaining there long. Your community (ummah) is the last community, and you are the last of your community. You soon must choose, so what are you waiting for?[39]

36. Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, k. al-tafsīr, ad Q. 6:150, no. 4635; k. al-tafsīr, ad Q. 6:158, no. 4636; k. al-riqāq 40, no. 6506; k. al-fitan 25, no. 7121; Muslim, Jāmi', k. al-īmān 72, bāb bayān al-zaman alladhī lā yuqbalu fīhi īmān, nos. 157–59; k. al-fitan 23, bāb fī khurūj al-dajjāl, no. 2941; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, k. al-malāḥim 12, bāb amārāt al-sā'ah, nos. 4310–12; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, k. al-fitan 32, bāb ṭulū' al-shams min maghribihā, nos. 4068–70.
37. Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, k. al-jihād wa-al-siyar 95, bāb qitāl al-turk, no. 2928; sim., k. al-manāqib 26, bāb 'alāmāt al-nubūwah fī al-islām, no. 3587; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, k. al-malāḥim 9, bāb fī qitāl al-turk, nos. 4303, 4305; Nasā'ī, Mujtabā, k. al-jihād 42, ghazwat al-turk wa-al-ḥabashah, no. 3179. See also Juynboll, Encyclopedia, pp. 254–55, 453; Arjomand, 'Islamic apocalypticism', p. 256; Cook, Studies, pp. 84–91.
38. See Patricia Crone, 'Bābak', in Kate Fleet et al. (eds.), The Encyclopaedia of Islam³.
39. Al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 vols. in 2 (Maktabat al-Jāḥiẓ 2; Cairo, 1367/1948), vol. 3, p. 132.

This does look like a plausible attribution to someone of the early eighth century. It has been said that expectation of apocalypse leads to dysfunctional behaviours, a reason for world-affirming systematizers to discourage it. Al-Ḥasan was sometimes remembered for dysfunctional behaviour. For example, someone once told him he ought to wash his shirt. He said, 'The matter is more pressing than that.'[40] Asked about a man who devoted himself to worship and another who devoted himself to his dependants, he said he preferred the one who devoted himself to worship.[41] It did not make sense to be concerned with one's appearance or even family if the world was about to end. However, it cannot be said that the End Times are more prominent in collections of renunciant sayings than in mainstream collections of hadith. For example, the chief features of al-Ḥasan's piety have been expertly sketched by Helmut Ritter under sixteen headings. Anticipation of what is to come after death (that is, fear of perdition) is the first of them, but Ritter has not found sufficient evidence of apocalypticism to make it one of the sixteen.[42] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's collection of renunciant sayings includes a chapter comprising two-hundred odd sayings of al-Ḥasan's. Only two or three, at a stretch, can be made out to concern the End Times; for example, 'Death, by God, is on your necks, the Fire is before you, so expect the judgement of God (mighty and glorious is he) every day and night.'[43]

The Qur'an seems to promise an imminent Last Judgement; for example, 'We have warned you of a punishment that is near' (Q. 78:40). Al-Ḥasan's expectation that his was the last generation (no. 10) was probably general in his time. Here is reassurance that the Prophet foresaw some delay:

11. Messenger of God: 'I was sent with the hour like these two.' Shuʿbah: 'I heard Qatādah say in his qaṣaṣ (preaching), "like the excess (faḍl) of one of them over the other." I do not know whether he was mentioning it on the authority of Anas or Qatādah (himself) said it.'[44]

The preacher would have held up his first two fingers as he said this. The Prophet's words seem to bespeak a fairly early time, promising that the Apocalypse will happen soon. The same statement often appears with

40. Aḥmad, al-Zuhd, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Qāsim (Mecca, 1357), p. 278 = (repr. Beirut, 1403/1983), p. 339.
41. Aḥmad, Zuhd (Mecca), p. 271 = (Beirut), p. 332.
42. H. Ritter, 'Studien zur islamischen Frömmigkeit I: Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', Der Islam 21 (1933), pp. 1–83, at pp. 14–53.
43. Aḥmad, Zuhd (Mecca), p. 285 = (Beirut), p. 347.
44. Muslim, Jāmiʿ, k. al-fitan 27, bāb qurb al-sāʿah, no. 2951.

no qualification.[45] Originally, it seems likely, the stress would have been on the fingers' being next to each other. Then someone stressed the small difference in length between the two fingers. It would be satisfying to say when the interpretation shifted. No. 11 here suggests a time of settling down. Qatādah has been mentioned before, in Ahmad's Creed IV. He was a Basran who died in the mid-730s. We see from this hadith report in Muslim's collection that Qatādah was also remembered as a preacher. Preachers are often blamed for expanding or even inventing hadith reports. Here the question is of expansion. Qatādah's lifetime spanned the end of the conquest period and the beginning of the settled, when Islamic law began to be elaborated. Qatādah's alleged addition is reassurance that some gap was expected between the Prophet's death and the Apocalypse, if not a long one.

12. 'Men of the rough Arabs would come to the Prophet and ask him, "When is the Hour?" He would look at the youngest of them and say, "If this one lives, old age will not reach him till your Hour comes upon you." Hishām: 'This means their death.'[46]

This commentator is Hishām ibn 'Urwah of Mecca (d. 146/761–62?). The Prophet's words are reminiscent of Matt. 16:28 ('There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom'), Mark 9:1, and Luke 9:27. Hishām's gloss suggests that the promise of imminent Apocalypse had been misunderstood: the Prophet was really talking about the Companions' deaths.[47]

13. The Prophet prayed the evening prayer with us one night near the end of his life. When he had saluted, he arose and said, 'What do you think of this night of yours? At the turn of a hundred years from it, there will

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45. E.g., 'I was sent with the Hour like this, it almost having preceded me', pointing with his two fingers, the forefinger and the middle (Hannād, Zuhd, vol. 1, p. 297 [2 versions]); 'I was sent with the Hour like these two' and he stuck together his two fingers, the forefinger and the middle, 'in the same hour' (Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Zuhd wa-al-raqā'iq, ed. Habīb al-Rahmān al-A'zamī [Malegaon, 1386; repr. Beirut, 1419/1998], no. 1592; sim., 1596). See also Bukhārī, Sahīh, k. al-tafsīr 79, no. 4936; k. al-talāq 25, bāb al-li'ān, no. 5301; k. al-riqāq 39, bāb qawl al-nabī bu'ithtu anā wa-al-sā'ah kahātayn, nos. 6503–6505; Muslim, Jāmi', k. al-fitan 27, bāb qurb al-sā'ah, nos. 2950; Tirmidhī, Jāmi', al-qadar 39, bāb mā jā'a fī qawl al-nabī . . . bu'ithtu anā wa-al-sā'ah ka-hātayn, nos. 2213–14; Nasā'ī, Mujtabá, salāt al-'īdayn 22, kayfa al-khutbah, no. 1579; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, k. al-sunnah 7, bāb ijtināb al-bida' wa-al-jadal, no. 45; k. al-fitan 25, bāb ashrāt al-sā'ah, no. 4040; Ahmad, Zuhd (Mecca), p. 25 = (Beirut), p. 33; Juynboll, Encyclopedia, p. 480.

46. Bukhārī, Sahīh, k. al-riqāq 42, bāb sakarāt al-mawt, no. 6511.

47. But cf. Bukhārī, Sahīh, k. al-adab 95, bāb mā jā'a fī qawl al-rajul waylak, no. 6167, in which likewise an Arab asks the Prophet when the Hour will come, to whom the Prophet replies, on seeing a slave boy pass by, 'If this one is left, old age will not reach him till the Hour comes', with no further gloss.

not remain on the face of the Earth one person.' Ibn 'Umar said ... , 'there will not remain on the face of the Earth one person', meaning that this generation would pass away.[48]

We seem to have a similar gloss here, now attributed to the same Companion who related the Prophet's saying. This has been quoted from the collection of Abū Dāwūd, who puts it near the end of his section on *malāḥim*, events of the End Times. It suggests that the Last Judgement will come about a hundred years after the Prophet's death. By contrast, al-Bukhārī quotes it in his book of knowledge, twice in his book on the times of the ritual prayer, suggesting that its main bearing is on the transmission of hadith by the Companions.[49]

Apocalyptic hadith could also serve social criticism; for example,

14. Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, Companion (d. 17/638–39?): 'The world will not pass until there come lying rulers, reprobate viziers, oppressive overseers, and depraved Qur'an reciters. They have various fancies. They have no restraint. They wear the clothes of monks but have hearts more rotten than corpses. God will confound them in the trial of wrongdoers, in which they will strut about in the fashion of the Jews.'[50]

There are many hadith reports like this, identifying present disorder as signs of the End Times. This is a little odd in apparently attributing clairvoyance to a Companion, not the Prophet himself, but then another example has already arisen, in which 'Umar foresees the rise of scepticism about the basin, intercession, and so on.

15. Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. Baghdad, 241/855) < Wakī' (Kufan, d. 197/812?) < Sharīk (ibn 'Abd Allāh, Kufan, d. 179/795–96?) < 'Alī ibn Zayd (Basran, d. 131/748–49?) < Abū Qilābah (Basran, d. 104/722–23?) < Thawbān < Messenger of God: 'When you see the black banners have come from the direction of Khurasan, come to them. Among them is God's deputy the Mahdi (*khalīfat Allāh al-mahdī*).'[51]

The 'Abbāsid revolution, accomplished by an army from Khurasan behind black banners, occurred in 750 C.E. Assuming *vaticinium ex eventu*, this saying has to be from around then. Notice how its transmission allegedly shifts from Basra to Kufa just before then (at Sharīk < 'Alī ibn Zayd). The *mahdī* (lit. 'guided one') is another figure not mentioned

48. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan, k al-malāḥim* 18, no. 4348.

49. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, k. al-'ilm* 41, *bāb al-samar fī al-'ilm*, no. 116; *k. mawāqit al-ṣalāh* 20, *bāb dhikr al-'ishā'*, no. 564; *mawāqit al-ṣalāh* 40, *bāb al-samar fī al-fiqh*, no. 601.

50. Marrūdhi, *K. al-Wara'*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Basyūnī Zaghlūl (Beirut, 1409/1988), p. 76 = ed. Zaynab Ibrāhīm al-Qārūt (Beirut, 1403/1983), p. 94.

51. Ahmad, *Musnad*, ed. Cairo, vol. 5, p. 277; ed. al-Arna'ūt et al., vol. 37, pp. 70–71. Similarly, Ibn Mājah, *Sunan, k. al-fitan* 34, *bāb khurūj al-mahdī*, no. 4084.

in the Qur'an. Early on, hadith appears to have usually elaborated the role of Jesus at the end of time, but rival traditions arose by which a purely Muslim figure would appear to establish right government at the end. Arjomand mentions a tradition by which it is the caliph 'Umar, not the prophet 'Isá, who will kill the Antichrist at the gate of Ludd.[52] The third 'Abbāsid caliph, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (r. 158–69/775–85), took the regnal name 'al-Mahdī'.

Here from Abū Dāwūd is another description:[53]

16. < Musaddad (ibn Musarhad, Basran, d. 228/842–43) < 'Umar ibn 'Ubayd (Kufan, d. 185/801–802?); also < Muḥammad ibn al-'Alā' (Abū Kurayb, Kufan, d. 247/861–62) < Abū Bakr, meaning Ibn 'Ayyāsh (Kufan, d. 194/809–10?); in the version of Musaddad < Yaḥyá (ibn Sa'īd al Qaṭṭān, Basran, d. 198/813) < Sufyān (ibn Sa'īd al-Thawrī, Kufan, d. 161/777?); also < Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm (Baghdadi, d. 246/860) < 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Mūsá (Kufan, d. 213/828–29) < Zā'idah (ibn Qudāmah, Kufan, d. 160/776–77?); also < Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm < 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Mūsá < Fiṭr (ibn Khalīfah, Kufan, d. after 150/767–68), all with the same gist, all < 'Āṣim (ibn Kulayb, Kufan, d. 130s/748–58) < Zirr (Kufan, d. 83/702–703?) < 'Abd Allāh (ibn Mas'ūd, d. 32/652–53?) < the Prophet ... 'If there were just one day left (Zā'idah said in his version, "God would prolong it" – after this they agreed) until God sent in it a man of me or of the people of my house whose name will agree with my name and whose father's name will agree with my father's name.' Fiṭr added in his version, 'He will fill the earth with fairness and justice as it is filled with wrongdoing and oppression.' Sufyān said in his version, 'The world will not go away or be ended until the Arabs are ruled by a man of my house whose name agrees with mine.'

Actually, there had been an important rebellion in the name of someone whose name and father's name both agreed with Muḥammad's during the Second Civil War, mainly Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyah (d. 81/700). He is said to have called himself al-mahdī.[54] Another had actively risen in rebellion, mainly the 'Alid Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Nafs al-Zakīyah, killed by the 'Abbāsids in 145/762. The 'Abbāsid caliphs began to adopt eschatological regnal names for themselves partly in response to his rebellion.[55] The Shi'ah, unsurprisingly, would make

52. Arjomand, 'Islamic apocalypticism', p. 247, citing an 11th-century chronicle.
53. Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, k. al-mahdī, no. 4282.
54. Ibn Sa'd, Biographien, ed. Eduard Sachau et al., 9 vols. in 15 (Leiden, 1904–40), vol. 5, pp. 66, 68–69 = al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrá, 9 vols. (Beirut, 1957–68), vol. 5, pp. 91–92, 94.
55. Said Amir Arjomand, 'The crisis of the imamate and the institution of occultation in Twelver Shi'ism: a sociohistorical perspective', International Journal of Middle East Studies 28 (1996), pp. 491–515, at 496; idem, 'Islamic apocalypticism', pp. 260–61, 268.

their Hidden Imam the one who kills the Antichrist.[56] Abū Dāwūd's hadith report (no. 16) shows that the line between Sunni and Shi'i was not sufficiently defined (perhaps till the tenth century) to prevent movement of hadith from one party to the other. It may have been especially to refute Shi'i claims that the following hadith report was put into circulation:[57]

> 17. < Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-A'lá (Egyptian, d. 264/877) < Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shāfi'ī (d. Old Cairo, 204/820) < Muhammad ibn al-Janadī (obscure) < Abān ibn Sālih < al-Hasan ibn Abī al-Hasan (that is, al-Basrī, d. 110/820) < Anas ibn Mālik < the Messenger of God ... : 'This affair will only get worse. The world is only turning away. People are only becoming greedier. The Hour will not come save to the worst of people. There will be no *mahdī* save Jesus the son of Mary.'

This was highly controversial. A fourteenth-century hadith critic related a story in which someone says,[58]

> I saw Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shāfi'ī in a dream. I heard him say, 'Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-A'lá lied about me concerning al-Janadī's hadith report < al-Hasan < al-Anas < the Prophet concerning the *mahdī*. This is not part of my hadith, I did not relate it, and Yūnus falsely attributed it to me.'

The dream thus defends the Sunni doctrine of a distinctly Muslim *mahdī* at the end of time. But the term *mahdī* was also appropriated by persons who would guide people (or force them) to the truth, not necessarily herald the end of the world; for example, when the Basran proto-Sufi Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896?) says that whatever servant undertakes anything God has commanded and avoids what God has forbidden, God will make him an imam and a *mahdī*.[59] It might also be extended to the point of triviality. Sufyān al-Thawrī, a leading transmitter of no. 16, is said to have been talking with the Medinese Ibn Abi Dhi'b (d. 158/774–75?) about a visit to the caliph Abū Ja'far (al-Mansūr, r. 136–58/754–75), in which he told him that he (as a man of religion willing to speak truth

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56. See M.A. Amir-Moezzi, s.v. 'Eschatology in Imami Shi'ism', in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. 8 (1998), pp. 575–81, with references to earlier studies.

57. Ibn Mājah, *Sunan, k. al-fitan* 24, *bāb shiddat al-zamān*, no. 4039. Cf. Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Musannaf, k. al-fitan* 10, *mā jā'a fi al-mahdī* = ed. Jum'ah & Luhaydān, vol. 14, pp. 181, 182, quoting not the Prophet but Followers (members of the generation that met Companions but never the Prophet) of Mecca and Basra.

58. Mizzī, *Tahdhib al-Kamāl*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, 35 vols. (Beirut, 1413/1992), vol. 25, p. 150, citing Ibn 'Asākir, but I have not located the story in *Tārīkh madinat Dimashq*.

59. Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, 10 vols. (Cairo, 1352–57/1932–38), vol. 10, p. 190. For a survey of Sufi and other apparently non-eschatological uses of *mahdī*, see Anna Akasoy, 'Niffarī: a Sufi Mahdi in the fourth c. AH/tenth c. AD?', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Antichrist* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 39–67, esp. 50–54.

to power) was better for him than his son the future caliph al-Mahdi. Sufyān protested: 'How was it permitted you to say *al-mahdī*?' He wanted it reserved for a future deliverer, not a princeling of this tyrannical dynasty. Ibn Abī Dhi'b answered, 'We are all guided (*mahdī*) – may God guide him.'[60]

COMPARATIVE INTEREST

Qur'anic apocalypticism suggests that there is no necessary connection between common distress and looking forward to the end of the world, for the early-seventh-century Hijaz was not the site of foreign occupation or persecution. However, the extended attention of hadith to eschatology may fit the pattern. No. 9 presumably reflects disquiet among the orthodox at the dangerousness of the Turks, although it does not promise triumph over them (nor even presume that they will attack the Muslims rather than the other way around). No. 14 clearly assumes a world perceived to be filled with injustice. Perhaps one might generalize that communal distress is not necessary to looking forward to the Last Judgement (as the Qur'an looks forward) but that communal distress does conduce to eschatology; that is, belief in an extended period when present-day arrangements are upended (as elaborated in hadith).

The application of apocalypticism to intercommunal relations and boundary maintenance has often been observed in the Christian tradition. Sunni hadith collections plainly show such applications. As for intercommunal relations, nos. 4, 5, and 6 above all seem to reflect a time when Muslims were more receptive than later to teaching from non-Muslims. Fred Donner's picture of seventh-century Islam as an inclusive, puritanical monotheism not yet a distinct, exclusive religion is probably too rosy.[61] After all, some people were collecting tribute while others were paying it, so there had to be a fairly sharp line from the beginning. However, the Qur'an itself sometimes recommends consulting Jews and Christians and acknowledges the contribution of informants.[62] There are numerous signs that eighth-century Muslims cited extra-Islamic

60. Al-Marrūdhī, *Akhbār al-shuyūkh*, ed. ʿĀmir Ḥasan Ṣabrī (Silsilat al-ʿizz al-ḥadīthiyah 35; Beirut, 1426/2005), pp. 86–87.
61. Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the believers: at the origins of Islam* (Cambridge MA, 2010).
62. See Claude Gilliot, 'Les «informateurs» juifs et chrétiens de Muhammad', *JSAI* 22 (1998), pp. 84–126.

scripture and pre-Muhammadan prophets more freely than later.[63] More controversially, studies of early Islamic law have repeatedly found rules that apparently developed first out of earlier legal systems, such as the Jewish and Late Roman.[64] By contrast, no. 7 looks forward to a time when the subjugation of non-Muslims will give way to their annihilation. As for intracommunal boundary maintenance, nos. 1 and 2 show that apocalypticism could also be used to identify and exclude unorthodox Muslims.

Almost entirely missing from Sunni apocalyptic hadith is new prophecy, or at least anything identifying itself as new. The Qur'an identifies Muhammad as the seal of the prophets (Q. 33:40) and it became an item of Sunni dogma that this means Muhammad was the last of the prophets.[65] 'Umar's prediction of heretical sects is alternatively presented as a quotation of the Prophet, whose business it was to predict. Sunni orthodoxy more generally has little truck with charismatic authority, leaving that chiefly to Shi'i Islam.[66]

DIRECTIONS OF NEW RESEARCH

It is unsurprisingly controversial how far back to trace hadith. Sceptical modern scholarship has often fastened onto elements that appear to be datable. Some examples have come up already: a tradition about Ludd (nos. 2, 4) that should go back to the seventh century, when it was still a major centre; one about black banners from Khurasan (no. 15) that should go back to the time of the Abbasid Revolution.[67] Wilferd Madelung

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63. See, for example, Christopher Melchert, 'Quotations of Extra-Qur'anic Scripture in Early Renunciant Literature', in A. Cilardo (ed.), *Islam and Globalisation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Proceedings of the 25th Congress of l'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (OLA 226 ; Leuven, 2013), pp. 97–107; R.G. Khoury, 'Quelques réflexions sur les citations de la Bible dans les premières générations islamiques du premier et du deuxième siècles de l'hégire', *Bulletin d'études orientales* 29 (1977), pp. 269–78.

64. A survey by me is Christopher Melchert, 'The early history of Islamic law', in Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and theory in the study of Islamic origins* (Islamic history and civilization, studies and texts 49; Leiden, 2003), pp. 293–324, esp. pp. 294–300.

65. Yohanan Friedmann, 'Finality of prophethood in Sunni Islam', *JSAI* 7 (1986), pp. 177–215.

66. See Calder, 'Limits', pp. 72, 80.

67. Anachronism is a chief part of the evidence for Ignaz Goldziher, who began the modern sceptical tradition with *Muslim Studies*, ed. S.M. Stern, trans. C.R. Barber & S.M. Stern, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1968–71), vol. 2, pp. 3–251. It is used by Michael Cook to argue that at least some of the material of hadith must be earlier than notable skeptics have generalized, since presumably no one would make up failed predictions: 'Eschatology and the dating of traditions', *Princeton papers in Near Eastern studies* 1 (1992),

has developed the way an apocalyptic hadith report in Abū Dāwūd's collection must have originally referred specifically to events in the Hijaz early in the Second Civil War, yet was apparently retained and quoted in new contexts from the early eighth century, when its failure to predict events in the early 70s/ca. 690 was no longer obvious.[68] But what of the great bulk of hadith reports that have no such easily datable elements? A *terminus ante quem* is provided by inclusion in a surviving book; for example, the Six Books often quoted here. But this is difficult when fixed, written texts evidently did not become usual until the middle of the ninth century.[69]

Scholars would naturally like to push our knowledge further into the past. G.H.A. Juynboll renewed the attempt to date hadith reports on the basis of *isnāds*, the chains of transmitters that the collectors themselves offered as documentation of how old their hadith were. Juynboll thought he could identify who first circulated one or another hadith report by means of identifying the Common Link.[70] This is a term invented by Joseph Schacht in a seminal 1950 book on the early development of Islamic law, although Juynboll has identified an Arabic term in ninth- and tenth-century hadith criticism that he thinks is functionally equivalent.[71] The Common Link is identified by putting together multiple versions of one hadith report, then seeing who transmitted it to multiple auditors. The more auditors report having heard something from someone, the more credible it is that they really did. Some such idea evidently governed Islamic hadith criticism as well, since the early collectors like to demonstrate multiple corroborative versions when they can, as above

pp. 23–47, also repr. in H. Motzki (ed.), *Hadith: origins and developments* (The formation of the classical Islamic world 28; Aldershot, 2004), pp. 217–41.

68. Wilferd Madelung, 'And Allāh b. al-Zubayr and the Mahdi', *Journal of Near Eastern studies* 40 (1981), pp. 291–305, esp. p. 293.

69. For eighth-century opposition to writing down hadith, see Michael Cook, 'The opponents of the writing of tradition in early Islam', *Arabica* 44 (1997), pp. 437–530. For the transition from oral to written records more generally, see the series of articles by Gregor Schoeler referred to by Cook, esp. 'Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung der Wissenschaften im frühen Islam', *Der Islam* 62 (1985), pp. 201–30, and 'Schreiben und Veröffentlichen. Zu Verwendung und Funktion der Schrift in den ersten islamischen Jahrhunderten', *Der Islam* 69 (1992), pp. 1–43. His work has now culminated in Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, rev. and trans. Shawkat M. Toorawa (The new Edinburgh Islamic surveys; Edinburgh, 2009).

70. G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim tradition: studies in chronology, provenance and authorship of early hadith* (Cambridge studies in Islamic civilization; Cambridge, 1983).

71. Joseph Schacht, *The origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1950); G.H.A. Juynboll, '(Re)appraisal of some technical terms in *hadīth* science', *Islamic law and society* 8 (2001), pp. 303–49; for a summary, see also Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, 'Introduction'.

in Creed III (no. 2) and the hadith report from Abū Dāwūd about the *mahdī* (no. 16). The point of offering multiple chains of transmission is that we needn't take their word for it – here is the evidence for us to examine ourselves. In the example above from Abū Dāwūd about the *mahdī*, the obvious Common Link would be Fiṭr ibn Khalīfah. (Fiṭr is associated with a number of reports about the *mahdī*, as remarked already by Wilferd Madelung.[72] But Juynboll himself does not identify Fiṭr as a credible Common Link, just a name that later traditionists liked to use.)

Juynboll's chief critic is Harald Motzki. He disallows considering the contents of hadith on the ground that we cannot know how they were understood at the time. I have repeatedly disregarded his proposition; for example, thinking that hadith referring to Jesus as fighting the Antichrist, referring to the gate of Ludd, and so on must be earliest; that hadith describing a *mahdī* with the same name as Muḥammad must be a little later; that a declaration that there will be no *mahdī* but Jesus probably the latest, a response to earlier hadith alleging alternatives. Motzki also thinks we do not need corroborative lines of transmission: it suffices if there is no particular reason to distrust a link, especially if there are many examples of transmission from one person to another and they do not altogether sound like what a forger would come up with; for example, if uncertainty is sometimes expressed about what the first one said, or if he is quoted inconsistently, or if he sometimes speaks on his own authority, sometimes on an earlier figure's.[73] Recently, he has also tried to correlate variant wordings and variant lines of transmission, a technique first used by Josef van Ess in the early '70s.[74]

To my mind, his assumptions are implausibly slanted in favour of authenticity. It looks to me reckless to exclude from consideration the contents of hadith. With so little evidence to work with, we need all we can lay our hands on. It seems to me he is also inconsistent: if two persons quote someone the same way, they are taken to corroborate each other; if they quote someone differently, it establishes that they are satisfactorily independent – one is not copying the other. Repetition and

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72. W. Madelung, s.v. 'Mahdī', in Bosworth *et al.* (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam²*, vol. 5, pp. 1230–35.

73. Harald Motzki, *The origins of Islamic jurisprudence*, trans. Marion H. Katz (Islamic history and civilization, studies and texts 41; Leiden, 2002).

74. For a very good summary of earlier scholarship and his own approach, see Harald Motzki, 'Dating Muslim traditions', *Arabica* 52 (2005), pp. 204–53. Cf. Josef van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie: Studien zum Entstehen prädestinationischer Überlieferung* (Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients, n.F. 7; Berlin, 1975).

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inconsistency are a sign that a collection is not a body of forgeries, but a collection of hadith without repetition or inconsistent quotation he will not pronounce forged. To my recollection, he has never come up with a body of hadith to show us what forgery looks like. But I feel bound to mention him. The practical difference between his method and Juynboll's is perhaps not great, about 50 years; that is, Juynboll has it that most of the hadith we have go back to the second half of the eighth century, whereas Motzki continually finds an authentic historical kernel going back to the beginning of the century and conceivably before.

I myself have tried to apply one additional criterion, again with precedents in the work of Schacht, mainly to identify particular hadith reports with particular centres. For example, no 15 above is purportedly transmitted from a Basran, ʿAlī ibn Zayd, to a Kufan, Sharīk, at just about the time of the revolution it predicts. To my mind, the jump from city to city confirms that it started in Kufa at the time of the revolution and was projected backward onto a series of Basran authorities. This agrees with an observation of Schacht's, that a favourite tactic in controversy among the different centres was to attribute one's own doctrine to a leading authority in the other centre. I have identified the men in the hadith report about the *mahdī* from Abū Dāwūd (no. 16). It certainly looks as though it goes back to Kufa in the mid-eighth century, although Juynboll refrains from identifying any probable inventor of it. (Of apocalyptic hadith reports in the Six Books that he feels comfortable assigning to particular traditionists, I count altogether nine he thinks were formulated by some Basran, seven by some Kufan, three by a Yemeni, and one each by traditionists from Baghdad, Medina, Khurasan, and Wasit.) On the other hand, whereas no. 9 on fighting the Turks looks as if it has moved from Medina to Baghdad, Medina seems an unlikely place for especially intense concern with the Turks, and indeed parallels point to other cities as well.[75] Juynboll is noncommittal about who originated this one.

There is much more to be done. One needs to compare at greater length apocalyptic hadith both in the most respected collections and elsewhere. One needs to figure out from their chains of transmission where they first circulated. One needs to compare them at greater length with Christian and Jewish traditions. One needs to extend the search to Shiʿi hadith – I have completely neglected that here, like most students

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75. e.g. parallels from Bukhārī himself quote similar warnings about people with sandals of hair, etc., through Kufan and Basran Followers as well as Medinese: *Ṣaḥīḥ, k al-manāqib* 26, *bāb ʿalāmāt al-nubūwah fī al-islām*, nos. 3587, 3590-92.

of hadith. One needs to examine their language – why they avoid cryptic words and expressions (like hadith generally by comparison with the Qur'an[76]).

What I hope to have shown is first that a great deal of Islamic belief is to be found in hadith. There were Muslims in the early Middle Ages who resisted hadith, as there have been Muslims since the turn of the 20th century who have downplayed it in favour of the Qur'an; but for most of history, hadith has been essential to orthodox Islam. Secondly, I think I have shown that apocalyptic hadith could serve several purposes, among others social criticism, and that to some extent one can infer from it the rise of different theological and political tendencies. In broad outline, my idea is that Islam began as a puritanical, generic monotheism, and took some time to disengage itself from Judaism and Christianity, somewhat as Christianity took some time to disengage itself from Judaism. There was a time when Muslims were happy to see themselves as part of a long tradition, not as having supplanted and made irrelevant older traditions; when the Bible was Scripture alongside the Qur'an. Hadith represents a secondary stage, in which a great deal of biblical and other Jewish and Christian material is being Islamized, almost everything being projected onto the Prophet and his Companions. But some of the pre-Islamic background still peeks through.

76. Fred Donner has argued that the perspicuity of hadith by comparison with the Qur'an is evidence that their texts were fixed in different centuries: Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins* (Studies in late antiquity and early Islam 14; Princeton, 1998), pp. 55–60.

'A PEOPLE WILL EMERGE FROM THE DESERT': APOCALYPTIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE EARLY MUSLIM CONQUESTS IN CONTEMPORARY EASTERN CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

Emmanouela Grypeou

The earliest Christian texts, which specifically deal with Islam, belong to the literary genre of the apocalyptic literature.[1] These texts present important sources for the history of apocalypticism as a literary genre as well as the history of the reception of early Islam in Christian lands. Moreover, they elaborate a theological response to the expansion of Muslim political and military power as well as to the overthrow of Byzantine rule and most importantly the – supposedly temporary – loss of a Christian hegemony. In addition, these writings also reflect historical and social conditions of the population of the Eastern Byzantine provinces at the time of the Muslim conquests and their aftermath.

These texts describe the Muslim rule in apocalyptic terms and language. Significantly, they are originally composed in Syriac and most probably in North Mesopotamia. The dating of these writings is a notoriously challenging task. It often remains speculative and as such, in many

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1. Previous studies on this literary corpus include: Paul J. Alexander, 'Historiens byzantins et croyances eschatologiques', in *Actes du XIIe Congrès International des Études Byzantines* 2 (Beograd, 1964), pp. 1–8; idem, 'Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works', *Medievalia et humanistica*, n.s. 2 (1971), pp. 47–68; idem, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 13–60; Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 256; Frankfurt, 1985); Gerrit Reinink, 'Early Christian Responses to the Building of the Dome of the Rock', *Xristiansky Vostok* 2 (2001), pp. 224–41; Francisco Javier Martinez, 'La literatura apocaliptica y las primeras reacciones cristianas a la conquista islamica en Oriente', in Gonzalo Anes y Alvares de Castrillon (ed.), *Europa y Islam* (Real Academia de la Historia, Serie Estudios 8; Madrid, 2003), pp. 143–222; Gerrit J. Reininik, 'From Apocalyptics to Apologetics: Early Syriac Reactions to Islam', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Religionen* (Millennium Studies 16; Berlin–New York, 2008), pp. 75–87; Pablo Ubierna, 'Recherches sur l'apocalyptique syriaque et byzantine au VIIe siècle: la place de l'Empire romain dans une histoire du salut', *Bulletin du Centre d'Études Médiévales d' Auxerre*, Hors série 2 (2008), pp. 1–28; Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13; Princeton NJ, 1997), pp. 257–306.

cases highly controversial. I shall focus here on those texts, which were – probably – composed in the second half of the seventh century. The discussion will include texts, such as the *Sermon of Pseudo-Ephraem*, *On the End of the World*, the so-called *Edessene Apocalypse*, the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and the *Apocalypse of John the Little* from the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*. The *Sermon of Pseudo-Ephraem*[2] is probably the earliest among these texts, followed by the so-called *Edessene Apocalypse*[3] and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*,[4] whereas the *Apocalypse of John the Little*[5] appears to be the latest one. However, all mentioned texts must have been composed during a time period that expands over five or six decades: that is, from the mid or end of the seventh century up to the early eighth century. Accordingly, they reflect Christian reactions to the Muslim conquests as well as to the transition into an established Muslim political rule. The time-frame, the geographical location, the common language and culture and perhaps more importantly the common literary

2. Edmund Beck, (ed.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones*, III (CSCO 320–321, Scr. Syri 138–139; Louvain, 1972), pp. 60–71 (ed.); 79–94 (trans.); Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII, Theologie 256; Frankfurt am Main–New York, 1985), pp. 12–33; cf. Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Pseudo-Ephraems "Rede über das Ende" und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des Siebenten Jahrhunderts', *ARAM* 5 (1993), pp. 437–63.

3. See Francisco Javier Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius* (Ph.D. Diss. Catholic University of America, Washington DC, 1985), pp. 222–46; Sebastian Brock, 'The Edessene Apocalyptic Fragment', in Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Translated Texts for Historians 15; Liverpool, 1993), pp. 243–45.

4. Gerrit J. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (ed./trans. 2 Vols., CSCO 540–541, Scr. Syri 220–221; Louvain, 1993); Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period*, pp. 58–205; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, pp. 34–85; cf. Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Pseudo-Methodius. A concept of history in response to the rise of Islam', in Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (eds.), *The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East. I: Problems in the literary source material* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 1; Princeton, 1992), pp. 149–87; idem, 'Pseudo-Methodius and the Pseudo-Ephremian "Sermo de Fine Mundi"', in R.I.A. Nip *et al.* (eds.), *Media Latinitas: A Collection of Essays to Mark the Occasion of the Retirement of L.J. Engels* (Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia 28; Steenbrugge–Turnhout 1996), pp. 317–21.

5. James Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles With the Apocalypses of Each One of Them* (Cambridge, 1900); Han J.W. Drijvers, 'The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles: A Syriac Apocalypse from the Early Islamic Period', in Cameron and Conrad (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East. I*, pp. 189–213; idem, 'Christians, Jews and Muslims in Northern Mesopotamia in Early Islamic Times: The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles and Related Texts', in Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais (eds.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam, VIIᵉ–VIIIᵉ siècles. Actes du Colloque international, Lyon - Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris -Institut du Monde Arabe, 11–15 Septembre 1990* (Publications de l'Institut français de Damas 137; Damascus, 1992), pp. 67–74.

genre and agenda allow for the study of these texts as a particular concise body of literature. These texts being the products of a particular historical period respond to specific historical and political events and form part of a shared literary discourse. This literary discourse pertains to a long Jewish and Christian apocalyptic tradition evidenced in pre-Islamic apocalyptic texts, which serve as inspiration sources and literary models for the post-Islamic literary production. Thus, the writings in view share a common literary background and demonstrate certain literary and possibly also textual interdependence between them. Significantly, they are related to pre-Islamic apocalyptic texts, such as the *Syriac Daniel Apocalypse*,[6] the *Syriac Testamentum Domini*[7] and most importantly, the *Syriac Alexander Legend*[8] and the *Syriac Song of Alexander*.[9]

The post-Islamic apocalyptic texts can be classified, in terms of literary genre, as political and historical apocalyptic literature.[10] According to the established definitions, historical and political apocalyptic literature employs traditional literary and exegetical symbols and motifs, in order to address urgent political, historical and social issues in the context of an apocalyptic interpretation.

The question of the historicity of the apocalyptic writings remains a bone of contention. Paul J. Alexander has long ago discussed the apocalypses as sources for historical information.[11] The idiosyncrasy of the

6. See text and translation in: M. Henze, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel. Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 11; Tübingen, 2001), cf. also Brock's contribution in this volume.

7. Ephrem Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi nunc primum editur, latine reddidit et illustravit* (Mainz, 1899); James Cooper and Arthur John Mac Lean, *The Testament of Our Lord*, trans. into English from the Syriac with Introduction and Notes (Edinburgh, 1902).

8. Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great* (London, 1896; Amsterdam ed.), pp. 255–75 (text); pp. 144–58 (trans.).

9. Gerrit J. Reinink, *Das Syrische Alexanderlied. Die Drei Rezensionen* (CSCO 455, Scr. Syri 196; Louvain, 1983); Budge, *The History and Exploits of Alexander the Great.*

10. On this definition, see John J. Collins, 'Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre', in idem (ed.), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre, Semeia* 14 (1979), pp. 1–20; According to the classification proposed in *Semeia*, 'the "historical" type includes a review of history, eschatological crisis and cosmic and/or political eschatology' (Collins, 'Introduction', p. 13); cf. Adela Y. Collins, 'Early Christian Apocalypses', in ibidem, pp. 121–61; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids MI, 1998²), pp. 1–32.

11. See Paul J. Alexander, 'Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources', *The American Historical Review* 73 (1968), pp. 997–1018 (p. 1018: 'Medieval apocalypses, then, are chronicles written in the future tense and deserve close attention on the part of the historians of the Middle Ages'); John Iskander, 'Islamisation in Medieval Egypt: The Copto-Arabic "Apocalypse of Samuel" as a source for the social and religious history of medieval Copts', *Medieval Encounters* 43 (1995), pp. 219–27.

genre that is characterised by literary conventions, descriptions of exaggerated emotions and mythological symbols would actually disqualify these texts as historical sources. Clearly, the apocalypses were not intentionally written down as openly historical reports. Rather, the intentionality of apocalyptic writing focused on the theological explanation of history.

However, the historical value of apocalyptic writing should be considered, if we acknowledge that these texts as literary products of a given time reflect the actual historical period and that they express certain feelings, thoughts and experiences of at least a part of the population. They are thus valuable witnesses of the reaction and reception of certain strata of the population to the Arab conquests and the early Islamic rule. Accordingly, we may also include the apocalyptic writings to the historical sources of that period, as subjective witnesses of dramatic historical events. New historical circumstances would equally affect the perception of eschatological symbols.[12]

The narrative frame of the apocalyptic visions is varied. Commonly the Muslim rule is described as a sign for the nearing end of the world, regardless of the specific literary genre. The end of times is clearly associated with the end of the time of the so-called Ishmaelites, that is, the end of the rule of the Muslims. The Muslim Arabs become part of the traditional eschatological drama. They often represent the first act of the apocalyptic drama, which is the most urgent and tragic one in the chronographical accounts of the respective narratives. The basic pattern of the typical deterministic view of world history predicts – according to our texts – the end of the Muslim rule and the following restoration and world dominion of the Christian Byzantine Empire. These texts intentionally operate between history and theology, visionary literature and moralistic exhortation

12. Thus, for example the figure of the Antichrist in the post-Islamic apocalypses is added on as a literary device, in order to complete the eschatological scenario, whereas in texts of the fourth or fifth century the same figure might have been the main protagonist of the story, reflecting actual ruler figures, who were perceived as tyrannical or ungodly. See, for example, the apocalyptic use of the figure of the emperor Julian (the Apostate), cf. Christian Badilita, *Métamorphoses de l'Antichrist chez les Pères de l' Église* (Théologie historique 116; Paris, 2005); Wilhelm Bousset, *Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judentums, des neuen Testaments und der alten Kirche* (Göttingen 1895); Osvalda Andrei, 'Aspetti del costruirsi della (e di una) identità cristiana: l'Anticristo di Ippolito', *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 20/1 (2003), pp. 75–110; Emmanouela Grypeou, 'Ephraem Graecus, In Adventum Domini: A Contribution to the Study of the Transmission of Apocalyptic Motifs in Greek, Latin and Syriac Traditions in Late Antiquity', in Samir Khalil Samir and Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala (eds.), *Graeco-latina et orientalia. Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani Sexagenarii* (Beirut, 2013), pp. 165–79.

Apocalyptic thinking permeates the literature of the time as is documented in a number of contemporary homiletical and historiographical works. The apocalyptic approach to contemporary events was expressed in a wide variety of literary genres, such as homilies, poems, historiographical works and hagiography.

Traditionally, apocalyptic writings are considered to have existed in the margins of the theological literary establishment. However, their wide circulation attests to their considerable popularity. It is perhaps exactly their marginality that explains their popularity, since they often appear to express feelings and anxieties of broader strata of the population that were not officially connected with the political and ecclesiastical establishment.

The most famous and popular text of all, the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, was soon translated from Syriac into Greek and Latin and later also into many other languages. It transmitted local perceptions of Islam far beyond the Syriac-speaking provinces until late in the Middle Ages.[13] Notably, there are nearly 190 attested manuscripts of the text only in Latin.[14] The most immediate experience of the Christian population with the Muslim conquests acquires a diachronic value, as it contributes to the formation of popular beliefs about the Moslems for centuries to come in East and West.

However, part of the appeal of the apocalyptic texts lies in their focus on contemporary concerns. These texts address current issues and urgent questions of Christian life under Muslim rule, which were ostensibly of immediate relevance for the Christian communities, such as, for example, how would they be treated by these new rulers, what their living conditions would be like, and perhaps most importantly of all: how long will this non-Christian rule last and how and when will it come to an end? Significantly, the apocalyptic scenario offered the deterministic reassurance that this new rule will not last for ever and that the final triumph of Christianity is near.

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13. The Syriac text is preserved in three manuscripts of two redactions, see Reininik, *Die syrische Apokalypse I*, pp. xiv–xxi; the Greek text is extant in 15 mss, the oldest of which dates to the 14th cent.; see W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius: Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, vol.1 (Louvain, 1998), pp. 38–48; Anastastios Lolos lists ca. 45 mss extant or fragments of four redactions, see A. Lolos, *Die dritte und vierte redaktion des Ps.-Methodios* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 94; Meisenheim am Glan, 1978) pp. 26–36.

14. See Daniels Verhelst, *Advo Dervensis. De ortu et tempore Antichristi, necnon et tractatus qui ab eo dependunt* (Turnhout, 1976), p. 139, n. 1; Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, 'Pseudo-Methodius (Latin)', in David Thomas *et al.* (eds.), *Christian Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History: Vol. 1 (600-900)* (Leiden, 2009), p. 250: 'there are no fewer than 190 Latin manuscripts, four of them go back to the 8th century, and one can perhaps be dated to the late 7th century'.

ISHMAELITES THE ROBBERS

Traditionally, the Ishmaelites were associated in Christian literature with robbery activities. This stereotype refers to an established biblical exegetical category.[15] Pseudo-Ephraem stresses that all the peoples will be defeated and humiliated in front of the 'robber people'. Consistent to their 'robber' character, it is added that they shall loot and devastate the earth.[16]

However, it should be stressed that in the post-Islamic apocalyptic literature of that period this stereotype is specifically linked with the taxation imposed upon the Christian population by the early Caliphate.[17] The motif of the heavy and exceedingly oppressive tribute becomes a *topos* in all the apocalyptic texts of the period – and not only of that period – with no exception.[18]

The taxation is described by Pseudo-Ephraem in highly dramatic language as a hitherto unheard tribute, an injustice that will rise on earth and even cover the clouds.[19] According to Pseudo-Methodius, paralleled by the *Edessene Apocalypse*, the Ishmaelites will take everything valuable of the natural revenue but also gold, precious gems, sacred garments and food.[20]

The practical consequences of the taxation on the lives of the population are expressed in very emotional scenes that describe how the people will wake up in the morning to find four tax-collectors at their doors, so that they will have to sell even their burial shroud or even their own sons and daughters and will hate their lives.[21]

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15. Interestingly, the Ishmaelites as a 'nation of robbers' appears as a common motif in the rabbinic literature, see Genesis Rabbah 45:9; Pesiqta Rabbati 21:2/3; Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 41; Targum Pseudo Jonathan on Gen 21:12; *et al.* For a discussion of this motif, see Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquty: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives 24; Leiden–Boston, 2013), pp. 243–45.

16. Beck, *Sermones*, p. 82.

17. See Chase F. Robinson (ed.), *The Rise of Islam, 600-705: The Formation of the Islamic World, Sixth to Eleventh Centuries* (The New Cambridge History of Islam 1; Cambridge, 2011), p. 219; Drijvers, 'Christians, Jews and Muslims', p. 67.

18. On the impact of the heavy taxation on the Christian population, see Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle*, 2.881, in Witold Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle: Known Also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin*, Part 3 (*Translated Texts for Historians* Series 22; Liverpool, 1996), p. 44; cf. John Lamoreaux, 'Early Eastern Christian Responses to Islam', in J.V. Tolan (ed.), *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (London–New York, 1996), pp. 3–31; D.C. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (Harvard Historical Monographs 22; Cambridge MA, 1950).

19. See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 260.

20. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XIII.

21. Cf. *The Apocalypse of John the Little* (Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 37; Pseudo-Athanasius, *Apocalypse*, IX.9–10 (Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, pp. 529–30).

These dramatic scenes become standard motifs of the post-Islamic apocalyptic literature. Furthermore, they are paralleled in historiographical texts, as well. According to the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, AG 1003:

'Abd al-Malik made a census and ordered that everyone should be registered together with his vineyards, cattle, sons, etc. From this time the poll-tax (Ar. Jizya) began to be levied on the skulls of adult males. From this all (sorts of) evils began to well up against the Christian nation. ... From this point onwards the Sons of Hagar began to subject the Sons of Aram to Egyptian slavery. But it is our own fault: because we sinned, slaves have become our masters.[22]

According to these testimonies, the tax reforms that were introduced by 'Abd al-Malik (690/91) have caused much despair among the population and with no doubt triggered some of the apocalyptic feelings that inspired the composition of these texts.[23] Importantly, according to a number of sources, the taxation urged some Christians to conversion to Islam.[24] The defection from the Christian faith presents an additional major incentive for the composition of these apocalyptic texts. Moreover, these texts fulfil an important pastoral function by expressing a tenacious exhortation for perseverance in the Christian faith.

The writings in view describe with dramatic and horrific images the brutality of the Muslim military conquests. According to the apocalyptic 'prophecy' of Pseudo-Ephraem, these wars will be the most horrible on earth. The earth will be filled with blood. The children will be trampled

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22. Trans. Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 60.

23. See Reinink, 'Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam', p. 180.

24. Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*, (Cambridge MA, 1979); 'Process and Status in Conversion and Continuity' and 'Conversion Stories in Early Islam', in Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (eds.), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Papers in Mediaeval Studies 9; Toronto, 1990), pp. 1–12, 123–33; Jean-Marie Fiey, 'Conversions à l'Islam de Juifs et de Chrétiens sous les Abbassides d'après les sources arabes et syriaques', in Johannes Irmscher (ed.), *Rapports entre Juifs, Chrétiens et Musulmans. Eine Sammlung von Forschungsbeiträgen* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 13–28; Nehemia Levtzion, 'Conversion to Islam in Syria and Palestine and the Survival of Christian Communities', in M. Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi (eds.), *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 289–311; Muhammad Shaban, 'Conversion to Early Islam', in Nehemia Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam* (Michigan, 1979), pp. 24–29; Martin Tamcke, 'Vom Dialog, interreligiös und intrareligiös: zwei syrische Lieder zur Konversion', in idem (ed.), *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages* (Beiruter Texte und Studien 117; Beirut–Würzburg, 2007), pp. 9–18; Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Following the Doctrine of the Demons. Early Christian Fear of Conversion to Islam', in Jan N. Bremmer, Wout J. Van Bekkum, and Arie L. Molendijk (eds.), *Cultures of Conversion* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 18; Louvain, 2005), pp. 127–38.

under the hoofs of the horses and the camels.[25] The Muslim conquerors are depicted as cruel, merciless and arrogant.[26] Pseudo-Methodius stresses how all regions conquered by the Muslims will be delivered to ruin and destruction, distress and affliction, captivity and sword and concludes: 'Utter desolation will be all over the world'.[27]

Apart from the heavy taxation, another major theme associated with the Muslim conquests, was the misery caused to the Christian population on account of the captivity and slavery suffered. John bar Penkaye refers to 'their robber bands (that) went annually to distant parts and to the islands, bringing back captives from all the peoples under the heaven'.[28]

Pseudo-Ephraem describes highly emotional separation scenes between families caused by slavery raids.[29] Similar scenes are also described in the historiographical texts. Dionysius of Tel Mahre recounts: 'After a few days ... they embarked their human loot in the ships. What misery and lamentation were seen then! Fathers were separated from their children, daughters from their mother, brother from their brother, some destined for Alexandria, others for Syria' [§ 97].[30]

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25. Beck, *Sermones*, p. 83; cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 260. The camel functions also here as a 'cultural signifier' for the Arab nomads. As J. Retsö remarks, the camel becomes a symbolic animal of Arab culture only in Late Antiquity: 'In the Old Testament the association between camels and the *'arab* is less evident. ... Camels appear regularly together with the Arabs in later ages. ... Later, camels and Arabs are mentioned together by Clement of Alexandria and Ammian. ... Judging from the picture given by the sources, the handling of the camel was the main and most exotic characteristic of the Arabs as seen by the surrounding communities' (*The Arabs in Antiquity, Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* [London–New York, 2003], pp. 581–82). On the role of the camels in the Qur'an and early Islam, see Sarra Tlili, *Animals in the Qur'an* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 154–59.

26. See *The Apocalypse of John the Little*: 'everybody shall be afraid and shall tremble and be terrified' (Harris *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 36).

27. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XI.

28. Trans. Brock, 'North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century', p. 61. The identification of the Arabs as slave traders is already alluded to in pre-Islamic Syriac literature, such as the *Cave of Treasures*: 'And Ishmael made a mill of the hands (i.e. a handmill) in the desert, a mill of slavery (i.e. a mill to be worked by slaves)' (Erwin Alfred Wallis Budge [trans.], *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* [London, 1927], p. 157).

29. Beck, *Sermones*, pp. 82–83; cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 263; Cf. also Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XI: 'The path of their advance will be from sea to sea, and from the East to the West and from the North to the desert of Yathrib. It will be a path to calamities; old men and women, rich and poor, will travel on it while they hunger and thirst, and suffer with heavy chains to the point that they will bless the dead' (trans. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 143).

30. This episode refers to the invasion of Cyprus by Muawiya in the mid seventh century, see Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 175; moreover, Dionysius of Tel-Mahre also reports of many instances of plundering and ravaging by the foraying Muslim armies, see ibidem, §§83–84: 'Muawiya besieged Caesarea – and laying it waste – until he conquered by the sword. All those in the city, including 7000 Romans sent there to guard it, were put to death. The city was plundered of vast quantities of gold and silver and then

Thus, the time of the Muslim conquests is univocally described in our sources as a time of utter tribulation and distress.[31] According to the *Apocalypse of John the Little*: 'in the end of their times they shall do evil to all flesh'.[32]

GODLESS SARACENS

The Muslims are stereotypically described as the godless Saracens in these texts. They are an ungodly people with no respect for the Christian religion. The *Apocalypse of John the Little* mentions that they shall persecute the Christians because they have a particular hatred against Christianity: 'they will afflict all of those who confess our Lord Christ, because they shall hate to the very end the name of the Lord – they will bring to nought his covenant'.[33] This claim is paralleled in Theophanes' *Chronicle*, in which the Arabs are understood as 'deniers of Christ' (*Chronicle*, A.M. 6164). Early on, the Muslim conquests were perceived as a direct attack against Christianity.

Sophronius of Jerusalem, in his famous sermon 'On the Epiphany' writes:

> Why do barbarian raids abound? Why are the troops of Saracens attacking us? Why has there been so much destruction and plunder? ... Why have churches been pulled down? Why is the cross mocked? Why is Christ, who is the dispenser of all good things and the provider of this joyousness of ours, blasphemed by pagan mouths?[34]

The disrespect of the Ishmaelites towards the Christian faith and institutions is epitomised by Pseudo-Methodius:

> They will sacrifice the ministers within the church and they will sleep with their wives and with the captive women inside the church. They will make the

abandoned to its grief ... Then he advanced to Euchaita. ... they plundered it, piling up great mounds of booty. They seized the women, the boys and the girls to take them back home as slaves' (ibid., pp. 165–66); cf. §55 (ibid., p. 149).

31. On the motif of the unprecedented distress and sorrow of the apocalyptic times, see Mark 13:19; Matt. 24:21; Ps.-Hippolytus, *Antichrist*, 25.

32. Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 37.

33. Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 38; and further in the same text: 'They shall do whatever is hateful in the eyes of the Lord' (ibid.); cf. The *Copto-Arabic Apocalypse of Pseudo-Shenoute*, 'they will deny my (Jesus') suffering on the Cross' (Émile Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Egypte chrétienne aux IV* et V* siècles: textes et traduction* [Paris, 1888], p. 341).

34. Sophronius, *Sermon on Epiphany*, 151–168 [162], trans. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 72–73, and further: 'they set fire on the holy churches, overturn the sacred monasteries ... they increase their blasphemy of Christ and the Church, and utter wicked blasphemies against God ... their leader is the devil' (ibid.).

sacred garments into clothing for themselves and their sons. They will tether their cattle in the shrines of the martyrs. They are insolent and murderous, shedders of blood and spoilers; they are a furnace of trial for all Christians.[35]

Moreover, a major sign of the nearing end would be that the divine service and the 'living sacrifice' would cease within the Church at that time.[36] The profanisation of society and desacralisation of life are declared as ultimate signs of the end. God's protection over the world will be removed and the world will fall into an apocalyptic disorder of all kinds, including dramatic religious upheavals.

The pre-Islamic 'Ishmaelites' occupied a grey zone between idolatry and Abrahamic legacy. The monotheistic faith now professed by the Muslim Arabs presented the Christians with a new puzzle. Certain historiographical accounts would acknowledge a new religious movement with an emphasis on a monotheistic turn in the beliefs of the Arabs. Early accounts, as evidenced in the writings of Pseudo-Sebeos or John bar Penkaye, indicate their familiarity with a religion, which has 'Abrahamic' features.[37]

The apocalyptic texts demonstrate little interest in the religious beliefs of their conquerors and hardly any knowledge of it. Although they explicitly refer to the danger of defection, they do not care – probably intentionally – to describe to what the Christians are converting.

Pseudo-Methodius warns that many Christians will deny the true faith: that is, the life-giving Cross and the holy mysteries. Implicitly, thus, Pseudo-Methodius summarises for the Christian communities the most important core tenets of Christian faith in contrast to the doctrines of Islam.

35. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XI (trans. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, pp. 144–45); Cf. also the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Shenoute* (Amélineau, *Monuments*, p. 341); cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 11.8: 'The Arabs enslaved the entire population, men and women, boys and girls. They committed a great orgy in this unfortunate city, fornicating wickedly inside the churches' (Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 166, n. 407).

36. The motif of the cessation of the holy sacrifice can already be found in Romanos Melodos' and Ephraem Graecus' descriptions of the rule of the Antichrist, but also in the Edessene Apocalypse (Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 236). On Romanos Melodos' poem, *On the Last Judgment*, see José Grosdidier De Matons, *Hymnes, Romane le Mélode*, vol. V. (Paris, 1981), pp. 209–67; Daniel Verhelst, 'Scarpsum de Dictis Sancti Ephraem Prope Fine Mundi', in R. Lievens *et al.* (eds.), *Pascua Medievalia* (Leuven, 1983), pp. 518–28; C.P. Caspari, 'Eine Ephraem Syrus and Isidor von Sevilla beigelegte Predigt über die letzten Zeiten, den Antichrist und das Ende der Welt. Aus zwei Handschriften saec. VIII...', in idem, *Briefe, Abhandlungen und Predigten und aus den zwei letzten Jahrhunderte des kirchlichen Altertums und Anfang des Mittelalters* (Christiana, 1890), pp. 208–20, 429–72.

37. Pseudo-Sebeos, *Armenian History*, 135: 'He (i.e. Muhammad) taught them to recognize the God of Abraham, especially because he was learned and informed in the history of the Jews' (Robert Thomson, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos* [Translated Texts for Historians 31; Liverpool 1999], p. 95); cf. the account of John bar Penkaye, in Brock, 'Northern Mesopotamia', p. 61.

It is only the *Apocalypse of John the Little*, the latest text to be taken into account here, that betrays some familiarity with the Muslims as a faith community. As its author remarks:

> And there shall rise from among them a warrior, and one whom they call a prophet, and they shall be brought into his hands ... those like to whom there has not been any in the world neither do there exist their like; and every one that hears shall shake his head and shall deride him and say 'Why does he speak thus? And God sees it and does not regard it.'[38]

This passage reflects the double perspective of the 'other' in the consciousness of the Christian population. Even if the Christians would have been aware of Muhammad's prophetic claims, they could only view him as a warrior.[39]

In the theological discourse of these writings, the Muslims are primarily the tools of divine wrath caused and provoked by the continuous and extreme sinful behaviour of the Christians. As Pseudo-Methodius stresses: 'It is not because God loves the Sons of Ishmael that He allows them to enter into the kingdom of the Christians, but because of the iniquity and the sin that is being wrought by the Christians, the like of which has never been done in any of the former generations.'[40]

John Lamoreaux suggests that the view that the Christians are punished for their sins seems to be alluded to in the Qur'an. According to Sura 5:18: 'The Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of God and his beloved". Say: "Why then does he punish you for your sins?"'[41]

Especially, Pseudo-Methodius underlines the 'boasting' of the conquerors on account of their military successes. Furthermore, it alludes to theological anxieties of the Christians or even controversies between early Muslims and Christians on the soteriological or metaphysical meaning of the Muslim victories and the defeat of the Christian armies:

> After these calamities and chastisements of the sons of Ismael at the end of that week, mankind will be lying in the peril of the chastisement. There will be no hope of their being saved from that hard servitude. They will be

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38. Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 36; cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 11:6, who expresses very similar sentiments with regard to the hostile actions of the early Muslims against contemporary Christians.

39. Cf. The view expressed in the *Doctrina Jacobi Nuper Baptizati* on the 'prophet who has appeared with the Saracens': 'He is false for the prophets do not come armed with the sword ... there was no truth to be found in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of men's blood' (trans. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 57).

40. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XI 5; XI 8; cf. the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Athanasius (Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic, passim*); John bar Penkaye, in Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', *passim*.

41. See John Lamoreaux, 'Early Eastern Christian Responses to Islam', p. 3.

persecuted and oppressed, and will suffer indignities, hunger and thirst. They will be troubled with a hard chastisement. All the while, those tyrants will be enjoying food, drink and rest, and they will be boasting of their victories ... They will dress up like bridegrooms and adorn themselves as brides, and blaspheme by saying, 'There is no Saviour for the Christians.'[42]

Moreover, this description corresponds to a standard cliché attached to the early Muslims that refers to the 'libidinous character' of the Muslim way of life.[43] This topos prevails in the Christian literature since the early times of their encounter with Islam and is often accompanied by descriptions of the gluttony of the Muslims, their love for beautiful, costly garments and open demonstrations of relishing a lavish way of life.

THE FORERUNNERS OF THE ANTICHRIST

The capture of Jerusalem and the conquest of the Holy Land by the Muslims was most probably one of the main events that triggered apocalyptic anxieties among the local Christian population.[44] A crucial event was the construction of the Dome of the Rock by 'Abd al-Malik, which was seemingly considered by the contemporaries as the re-building of the Temple of Jerusalem;[45] an action that in the classical Christian apocalyptic discourse is commonly ascribed to the Antichrist.[46]

42. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XIII (trans. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, pp. 148–49).

43. See *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, AG 932 (Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 56). This accusation was also later often reinforced by ridiculed descriptions of the 'carnal' paradise of the Muslims, which, nevertheless, reveal certain knowledge of Islamic lore and awareness of Muslim religious beliefs, see Theophanes, *Chronicle*, AM 6122 [629/30].

44. On the apocalyptic understanding of the building of the Dome of the Rock, see also the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Shenoute*, 'After that shall arise the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Esau, who hound the Christians, and the rest of them will be concerned to prevail and rule all over the world and to [re-]build the Temple that is in Jerusalem. When this happens, know that the end of times approaches and is near' (Amélineau, *Monuments*, p. 341; trans. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 280); on similar apocalyptic interpretations of the building of the Dome of the Rock by Jews and in a certain way later also by Muslims themselves, see Andreas Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem (324-1099)* (Freiburg Islamstudien 22; Stuttgart, 2002), *passim*; Guy Stroumsa, 'Christian Memories and Visions of Jerusalem in Jewish and Islamic Context', in Oleg Grabar and Benjamin Zeev Kedar (eds.), *Where Heaven and Earth Meet: Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade*, (Jerusalem–Austin TX, 2009), pp. 321-33, 404-405.

45. See Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, p. XXI. On the building of the Dome of the Rock, see Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge MA. 2006); idem, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton NJ, 1996); Chase F. Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 71-75.

46. See Wilhelm Bousset, *Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judentums und des neuen Testaments und der alten Kirche* (Göttingen, 1895), p. 105. This motif is associated

More specifically, in pre-Islamic Christian apocalyptic literature the biblical prophecy of the 'presence of the abomination in the Holy Place' is associated with the appearance of the Antichrist. Accordingly, whereas the Muslim rule is commonly understood as a precursor of the eschato-logical reign of the Antichrist, the description of the Muslim rule itself in the post-Islamic Christian apocalyptic literature follows traditional apocalyptic motifs attributed to the times of the Antichrist. The times of the Antichrist are typically depicted as a demonic, ungodly rule that will bring harsh persecutions on the faithful.

Theophanes in his Chronicle recounts how, the caliph, 'Umar (Ouma-ros), entered the Holy City dressed in filthy garments of camel-hair in order to meet the local patriarch, Sophronius'. Accordingly, 'Umar stood as the prototype of the uncivilised desert-dweller in front of the vener-able patriarch. As the story goes, 'the patriarch asked him to accept a linen garment to wear until his own cloak was washed'. The encounter between the patriarch and the caliph is thus introduced in terms of a profound cultural contrast. The seeming lack of respect on the side of the caliph introduces the main part of the story, which is the intention of 'Umar to build 'a place of worship for his own blasphemous religion' on the site of the 'Temple of the Jews'. Seeing this, Sophronius said, in a much quoted phrase: 'Verily, this is the abomination of desolation standing in a holy place, as has been spoken through the prophet Daniel'.[47]

Theophanes the Confessor shares this theological understanding of the presence of the Muslims in the Holy Land and describes, further, the building of the Dome of the Rock in a typical apocalyptic frame.

> In this year Umar began to build a temple in Jerusalem; the building would not stand but fell down. When he asked why, the Jews told him the reason: 'If you do not tear down the cross on top of the church on the Mount of Olives, your building will not stay up.' Therefore the cross was torn down, and thus their building arose. For this reason the Christ-haters tore down many crosses (*Chronicle*, A.M. 6135).[48]

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with the motif of the antichrist's session in the temple of Jerusalem, as Bousset remarks: 'Soll der Antichrist sich im Tempel zu Jerusalem niederlassen, so muß dieser vorhanden sein, - aber nach der Zerstörung Jerusalems wieder aufgebaut werden' (ebd., p. 106); cf. Gregory J. Jenks, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 59: Berlin-New York, 1991), pp. 69–72.

47. Sophronius, *Sermon on Epiphany*, 168; cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15.

48. Cf. Ps.-Sebeos, *Armenian History*, 142: 'I shall also speak about the plots of the rebellious Jews, who after gaining help from the Hagarenes for a brief while, decided to rebuild the temple of Solomon. Finding the spot called Holy of Holies, they rebuilt it with base and construction, as a place for their prayers. But the Ismaelites, being

Similarly, Anastasius of Sinai in his work, *Diegemata psychophele and sterektika* ('Edifying and Supporting Tales'), maintains that the site of the Temple was cleared and prepared for the new construction with the help of demons. Anastasius recounts that the demons call themselves the companions of the Saracens but are worse than demons, since demons often shrink from the Christian sacrament, the cross and the relics etc., whereas these physical demons (the Arabs) mock Christian holy things and destroy them.[49]

SIGNS OF THE END

Typical signs of the Muslim rule include serious draught, the dissolution of family bonds, the disturbance of the social order, *et al.* As in a number of other apocalyptic texts, the post-Islamic apocalypses stress that many people will wish their own death.[50] Equally, barbarian invasions would

envious of them, expelled them from that place and called the same of prayer their own' (trans. Thomson, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, pp. 102–103). A version of the same story is included in the Chronicle, attributed to Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, in which it is added that powerful gales kept damaging the building (The *Secular History* of Dionysius of Tel Mahre §86, in Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 167). There is a corresponding story with regard to the attempts of the emperor Julian to rebuild the temple. Ephraem the Syrian and other sources (such as, Gregory of Nazianzus) relate about earthquakes and other natural disasters that prevented Julian from carrying out his building plans, on this see: Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum* (CSCO 174–175, Scr. Syri 78–79; Louvain 1956), see especially pp. 18–23; cf. Sebastian P. Brock, 'A Letter Attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem on the Rebuilding of the Temple', BSOAS 40 (1977), pp. 267–86; cf. David Levenson, 'Julian's Attempt to rebuild the Temple: An inventory of ancient and medieval sources', in Harold W. Attridge *et al.* (eds.), *On Scribes and Scrolls* (Lanham Maryland, 1990), pp. 261–79. See also Sidney H. Griffith, 'Ephraem the Syrian's Hymns 'Against Julian'. Meditation on History and Imperial Power', VC 41 (1987), pp. 238–66.

49. G.J. Reinink, 'Following the Doctrine of the Demons. Early Christian Fear of Conversion to Islam', in Jan N. Bremmer *et al.* (eds.), *Cultures of Conversion* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 18; Peeters, 2000), pp. 127–38: p. 133; cf. on the same motif Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 100–101, who translates this passage by Anastasius; cf. Bernard Flusin, 'Demons et sarrasins. L'auteur et de propos de Diegemata Steriktika d'Anastase le Sinaïte', *T&MByz* 11 (1991), pp. 381–409; Sidney H. Griffith, 'Anastasius of Sinai, the *Hodegos* and the Muslims', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32 (1987), pp. 341–58; cf. the Jewish account of the new construction in a similar apocalyptic context: 'A second king will arise from Ishmael who will be a friend of Israel. He will repair their breaches and (fix) the breaches of the Temple and shape Mt. Moriah and make the whole of it a level plain. He will build for himself there a place for prayer upon the site of the "foundation stone"' (*Secrets of Rabbi Shim'on b. Yohai*, in A. Jellinek [ed.], *Bet ha-Midrash*, III [Lipsia 1855], p. 79; trans. John Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* [Society of Biblical Literature. Resources for Biblical Study 45; Atlanta, 2005], pp. 81–82).

50. Cf. Rev. 9:6; *Apocalypse of Elijah* II.5; Ephraem Graecus, *De Fine Mundi*, III.140; 2 Baruch 10.6; *et al.*

have been understood as a historical sign of apocalyptic significance. The authors of these writings compose new apocalypses using long established patterns and motifs, in order to include the Muslims in an end-of-the-days scenario and to make sense of the Arabic conquests. That is, they intentionally make use of a specific literary genre, in order to explain and to come in terms with a real, distressing historical situation.

In typical apocalyptic fashion, these texts juggle with the multivalent apocalyptic symbols, which potentially describe real historical events, albeit in an exaggerated manner. Motifs, which may be considered as typical apocalyptic, such as natural disasters, pest and famine[51] are recorded in the historiographical accounts as well.[52] Similarly, the eschatological narrative of Pseudo-Ephraem is introduced with a vision of famine and quakes, the earth drenched in blood and the plague prevailing in many places.[53]

Pest epidemics are reported to have repeatedly devastated Syria between the sixth and eighth centuries. Lawrence Conrad writes that in the early Middle Ages Syria was affected by the pest at least every seven years and there are even hints for even more frequent epidemics between the sixth and the eighth century CE.[54] Furthermore, as Michael Morony observes:

> Michael the Syrian estimated that one-third of the people in the world perished in the great pestilence (mawtāna rabbā) (in 704–705)[55] ... during the plague of 686–687 in upper Iraq, John bar Penkaye tells of human corpses strewn in the roads and streets like 'dung on the earth' (Jer. 16:4) so that springs and river became contaminated.[56]

51. Cf. Mark 13:7-8; 4 Ezra 5:9; 6:24; 9:3-4; 1 Enoch 100:1; On draughts, springs drying up, cf. 4 Ezra 6:24; 'a reversal of the prenennial founts of nature's blessings in 1 Enoch 68:17 and Sib. Or. 4:13' (Michael Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary* [Minneapolis, 1990], p. 171); On social corruption as a sign of the end of times, see 4 Ezra 11:10-43; 1 Enoch 91:67; 2 Baruch 48:30-43.

52. Cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 11:16.

53. Beck, *Sermones*, p. 80.

54. See Lawrence I. Conrad, 'The Plague in Bilād al-Shām in Pre-Islamic Times', in Muhammad 'Adnan al-Bakhit and Muhammad 'Asfur (eds.), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Bilād al-Shām During the Byzantine Period* (Amman 1986), vol. II, pp. 143-63; idem, 'Epidemic Diseases in Central Syria in the Late Sixth Century. Some New Insights from the Verse of Hassan ibn Thābit', *BMGS* 18 (1994), pp. 12-58; idem, 'The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East' (Ph.D. Diss. Princeton University, 1981); M.W. Dolls, 'Plague in Early Islamic History', *JAOS* 94 (1974), pp. 371-83; cf. Michael Morony, '"For Whom Does the Writer Write?": The First Bubonic Plague Pandemic According to Syriac Sources', in Lester K. Little (ed.), *Plague and the End of Antiquity, The Pandemic of 541-730* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 59-86, for an overview of sources.

55. Morony, '"For Whom Does the Writer Write?"', p. 73.

56. Morony, '"For Whom Does the Writer Write?"', p. 76; and further: 'In those regions where the plague recurred from the mid-sixth to at least the mid-eighth century there should have been a major, long-term demographic crisis. This was due not only to the plague; for more than two hundred years the population of the Levant was repeatedly decimated by epidemic, disease, famine, earthquakes, massacre, and deportation' (ibid., p. 79).

Similarly, the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (AG 1016= 713/714) reports that 'there was a great and virulent pestilence in the land, so devastating that the people were not equal to the task of burying their fellow human beings'.[57]

John bar Penkaye thought that famines, earthquakes and plagues were signs of the end of the world.[58] As Sebastian Brock has noted, John bar Penkaye also refers to a severe famine in Syria for the year 687. According to this account: 'People did not even bury the dead but left them and fled like pagans (that is, Zoroastrians). Dogs began to eat many people while they were still alive'.[59]

The above quoted passages actually reflect a very common apocalyptic motif, namely that the catastrophe and the despair will be so overwhelming that the dead will lie unburied. This motif is closely paralleled in the post-Islamic apocalyptic texts. For example, in Pseudo-Methodius, we read: 'there will be a great hunger; many men will die and their corpses will be thrown out in the streets for lack of anyone to bury them'.[60]

The psychological effects of actual natural disasters and epidemics as well as historical catastrophes would find a tool of literary expression in apocalyptic writing. In other words, the existing apocalyptic tradition would provide the people with an effective language to express their feelings of despair. Moreover, it would also provide them with a symbolic interpretative structure which would enable them to make sense of their current situation. Actual events were understood as part of a divine plan that would give hope and an optimistic perspective, since it promised ultimate salvation under the care of God's providence. Furthermore, the dreadful events were not seen simply as random strikes of destiny but rather as fulfilment of established prophecies, that is, they formed part of a meaningful and logical pattern of history.

THE END OF TIMES

One of the main functions of apocalyptic literature of the time was the prediction and calculation of the length of Muslim rule and of its

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57. Trans. Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 61; cf. John bar Penkaye, on pest and famine in Syria in ca. 686 (Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', pp. 68–70); Theophanes, *Chronicle*, AM 6176 (684/685).

58. Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', p. 72; cf. Morony, "For Whom Does the Writer Write?", p. 81.

59. Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', pp. 68, 70; cf. Morony, "For Whom Does the Writer Write?", p. 76, n. 123.

60. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XIII (trans. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 147).

ultimate downfall. The calculation of the duration of the Islamic rule is obscured by real expectations based on actual historical facts mixed with popular apocalyptic symbols. The apocalyptic writings include various suggestions on the length of the Muslim rule combining classical cryptic apocalyptic numeral symbols[61] with actual expectations on the downfall of the Muslims. Significantly, the second civil war in Islam raised hopes among the Christian communities that the Muslim rule was near.[62]

Pseudo-Ephraem maintains that the Muslim conquests are a precursor for the final invasions of the apocalyptic nations that will be sent by God so that the earth will be cleansed from the impurity. In a way, the Arabs are the forerunner of the unclean nations and they are implicitly associated with them as an apocalyptic nation that has already invaded the earth announcing its final destruction.

Finally, the post-Islamic apocalypses hope for the emergence of a messianic figure, who will overthrow the Islamic rule and will restore Christian dominion in an end-of-days scenario.

According to the apocalyptic scenario developed by the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, the liberation from the Muslim oppression will be ushered through the emergence of the messianic figure of the Last Emperor, the 'King of the Greeks'.[63]

Pseudo-Methodius depicts the last Emperor, as someone who was asleep and will go out with great anger to destroy the Ishmaelites and to

61. According to the *Apocalypse of John the Little*, they shall rule for one great week and the half of a great week (Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 37). The Edessene apocalypse calculates that the sons of Hagar will remain a week and a half (that is ten years and a half) (see Brock, 'The Edessene Apocalyptic Fragment', in Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 225, 245); Pseudo-Methodius expects their downfall in the tenth year-week (see Reinink, *Die syrische Apocalypse*, pp. 39, 57).

62. See the *Apocalypse of John the Little*, where there is a quite clear allusion to the Second Civil War (Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 38).

63. On this apocalyptic figure, see: Paul J. Alexander, 'Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works and Motifs: The Legend of the Last Roman Emperor', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 2 (1971), pp. 47–68; idem, 'The Medieval Legend of the Last Emperor and its Messianic Origin', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978), pp. 1–15; idem, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*; Gerrit J. Reinink, 'Die syrischen Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende vom römischen Endkaiser', in Martin Gosman and Jaap van Ost (eds.), *Non nova, sed nove. Mélanges de civilisation médiévale dédiés à Willem Noomen* (Mediaevalia Groningana 5; Groningen, 1984), pp. 195–209; idem, 'Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser', in Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst, and Andries Welkenhuysen (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the International Colloquium Organized by the Instituut voor Middeleeuwse Studies of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, May 14-16, 1984* (Leuven, 1988), pp. 82–111; Harald Suermann, 'Der byzantinische Endkaiser bei pseudo-Methodius', *OC* 71 (1987), pp. 140–55; András Kraft, 'The Last Roman Emperor Topos in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition', *Byz.* 82 (2012), pp. 213–57.

send them back to Yathrib, their homeland. The text stresses in particular their expulsion from the Promised Land, which is considered to be (temporarily) occupied by the Muslims.

The king of the Greeks will come out with great anger and pour desolation and destruction in the desert of Yathrib. ... The sons of the king of the Greeks will seize the regions of the desert and will finish by the sword any survivor left among them in the Promised Land. Fear will fall upon them from all sides. ... They will be given over to the sword, to destruction, captivity and slaughter.[64]

The apocalyptic texts envision perfect peace and tranquillity during the last kingdom of the king of the Greeks. The vision of perfect peace paints a radically contrasting image to the previous sufferings and tribulations imposed by the Muslims.

CONCLUSION

Our survey of apocalyptic writings in combination with a brief survey of more 'traditional' historical writings of that time period reveals their inter-relationship. The non-apocalyptic sources in many cases corroborate the evidence that is revealed or alluded to in the apocalyptic texts. In other words, the historical writings provide the hard facts, dates and places, names of rulers and decrees for historical events that in the apocalypses often appear hidden in symbols and allegories. However, historical writings of the time were also influenced by apocalyptic thinking in its theological interpretation of actual disasters. Accordingly, the distinction between apocalyptic writing and historiography becomes at times blurry.

Apocalyptic writings would have even perhaps functioned as history for the common people. Notably, these writings recounted familiar events and gave to them a convincing and above all a comforting interpretation. The people of Syria knew, of course, of the fall of Jerusalem, they knew about the Muslim rule from their everyday experience and have probably also personally experienced the hardships of taxation, slavery, etc. but thanks to popular writings, such as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, they would also learn that a Last Christian Emperor would arrive one day (perhaps not before long) and would ultimately vindicate the suppressed Christians and usher the final triumph of the

64. Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ch. XIII (trans. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 149).

Christian faith. Moreover, contemporary apocalyptic literature contributed to the procedure of re-constructing a communal identity in particular from the new position of the Christian communities as subjects to non-Christian rulers.

In many ways, historical apocalyptic writings filter specific crucial moments of the collective memory. Along these lines, we could also argue that they challenge the traditional genre of historiography. The apocalyptic texts remain the earliest and most immediate witnesses of that early time of Islam and they deal with real-life problems posed by taxation, conversion, a dramatic change of masters that brought with them a number of practical, ideological, social and personal challenges. These writings are to be treated with caution as alternative and certainly unconventional sources of historical knowledge. However, they undeniably form part of the contemporary cultural, literary and religious landscape and as such, they need to be studied as valuable sources for a better understanding of turbulent times and their *Zeitgeist*.

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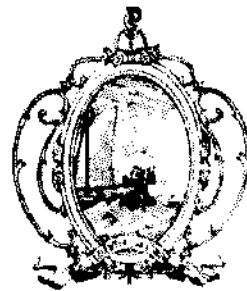   gel: 68

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This volume includes papers on ancient apocalypticism and eschatology in the crucial period prior to the advent of Islam in the Mediterranean basin, and through the period (the sixth to the eighth centuries) when this new religion took roots and established itself in the area. As these were important social, religious, and cultural phenomena, the contributors to this volume—specialists in Late Antique and Byzantine, Syriac, Jewish, and Arabic studies—have investigated them from a variety of angles and foci, rendering this volume unique in terms of its interdisciplinary approach and broad scope. In this regard, *Apocalypticism and Eschatology in Late Antiquity* should be read as complementary to the previous volume in the series, *New Themes, New Styles in the Eastern Mediterranean*, where similar goals were set and met, namely to understand not only how the Christian and Jewish populations responded to the dramatic political and military changes, but also how they expressed themselves in existing, reinvented, and new literary means at their disposal.