SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE MIGRATION OF APOCALYPTIC FEATURES IN MUSLIM TRADITION

O. LIVNE-KAFRI

Department of Arabic Language and Literature, University of Haifa
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel
e -mail: livnek@research.haifa.ac.il

The most basic eschatological conceptions of Islam are found already in the Qur'ān. The expansion of the Qur'ānic picture in the *ḥadīth* includes new materials and conceptions and it reflects various religious, social and political processes in Muslim society in the first centuries to the *hijra*. This article offers explanations for some matters that seem to represent the migration of apocalyptic issues from non-Muslim sources into the *ḥadīth*. It seems that the interpretation of Muslim apocalyptic traditions often requires a search of the parallel Jewish and Christian literatures, and the issues chosen here might serve as a methodological model to demonstrate this. We see here (as in other studies) that the Muslim apocalyptic traditions and the Jewish and Christian apocalypses evince similarity in basic ideas, perceptions, attitudes, terminology, structures, and other features of the genre; still, the Arabic traditions already reflect the Islamic system of values; they were created against the background of social, religious and political settings of early Muslim society. This also attests to a certain similar cultural background of Jews, Christians and Muslims, to similar responses and interpretations they gave (in form and content) to their fears, agonies and hopes, in time of crisis, political disorder, military confrontations or civil wars.

Key words: Islam, Muslim apocalypses, apocalyptic literature, Muslim tradition, *ḥadīth*.

The most basic eschatological conceptions of Islam are found already in the Qur'ān. The expansion of the Qur'ānic picture in the *ḥadīth*, the Muslim tradition, includes new materials and conceptions (for example, different messianic theories), and it reflects, on different levels, various religious, social and political processes in Muslim society in the first centuries to the *hijra*. The fabrication of traditions in general (not necessarily apocalyptic), their attributions to earlier figures of great authority, the creation of tendentious changes, the inclusion of non-Muslim elements, etc., demand special efforts in ascertaining the date and place of their composition, the circles in which they originated, the audiences they were addressed to, or the purpose for which they were written, rewritten or copied. These matters which we relate to *ḥadīth* tradi-

tions in general (historical, cultural, religious, social, etc.) were among the preliminary questions that P. J. Alexander (in a Christian apocalyptic context) assumed that the historian needs to ask in order to separate two basic intertwined elements typical of all apocalypses: historical facts and eschatological prophecies (Alexander 1968, p. 998).[1] So a scholar of *ḥadīth* in general sometimes finds himself, when tackling apocalyptic traditions, in terrain familiar to him anyway. Unlike Alexander, I do not seek historical information hidden in apocalyptic texts. As in earlier studies of mine, my main concern is cultural: the inter-cultural connections reflected in Islamic, Jewish and Christian texts (Livne-Kafri 1998; 1999; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2006c; 2006d).[2] In this article I would like to offer explanations for some matters that seem to represent the migration of apocalyptic issues like contents or literary motifs (cf. Alexander 1971) from non-Muslim sources into the *ḥadīth*, thus becoming a part of the Muslim system of values. Because of preliminary stage of research in Muslim apocalyptic literature in general, I prefer to touch on specific problems as models, which later studies might use in broader perspectives, historical for instance. My interpretations are suggestions based on available materials and studies; they sometimes point to a research direction rather than giving final answers.

Al-qusṭanṭiniyya al-zāniya and the Great Whore Image

Different Muslim apocalyptic traditions emphasise the predicted final victory over the Byzantines and the conquest of Constantinople as extremely important in the apocalyptic scheme of history. For example, the conquest of Constantinople is perceived in some traditions as one of the eschatological signs before the Last Day (Livne-Kafri 1998, pp. 45–46). The general historical background for the composition of such traditions, namely the final fall of the Persian Empire during the Arab conquests, left the Byzantines the Muslims' most dangerous and persistent enemy on land and in seaborne invasions. Some of these traditions, which are not uniform in their literary form, might be very early (cf. Kister 1981).[3] One tradition foretells the conquest of Constantinople, calling it 'Constantinople the whore' (*al-qusṭanṭiniyya al-zāniya*), an expression to which he adds subsequently: "I find it in the book of God, may He be exalted as: 'the whore'" (Nu'aym 1997, p. 344, No. 1294). This is obviously not just a spontaneous insult to the enemy's most hated city and symbol of power. The image of Babylon, the Great Whore, in the Revelation of John, identified

[1] On 'tradition versus history' in the early church see Pelikan (1971, pp. 7–8). When certain apocalyptic traditions are not fulfilled they might be re-edited to match to new circumstances; see, e.g., Lewis (1950, p. 308) on the re-editing of earlier prophecies, attributed to great figures of antiquity. The entire article is an important demonstration of re-editing of Jewish apocalypses from the Arab period also in light of historical events.

[2] Other works of mine also deal with the connection of Muslim texts to Jewish and Christian sources. See e.g. Livne-Kafri (1991; 1993; 1996; 2003).

[3] He connects the tradition on the conquest of Constantinople (cf. Livne-Kafri 1998, p. 45, n. 119, where the tradition is given in full) to the 70s of the first century AH.

with Rome (Revelation, 14:8) is transferred here to Constantinople, as were other anti-Roman elements.[4] The adoption of this image might express Jewish sentiments; but even more it is a reflection of the image in the church before the conversion of the Roman empire to Christianity, and even after. The man who transmitted this tradition was witness to a written source upon which he relied. Expressions like 'I find it in the book of God' usually refer to Jewish or Christian sources, real or fabricated (Livne-Kafri 1999, pp. 81–82).[5] The use of the expression *al-qusṭanṭiniyya al-zāniya* connected to the Great Whore motif shows that when Muslim apocalyptic wanted to express their world, their feelings, or their expectations in eschatological colors, they could chose to turn to non-Muslim sources. Here an image long rooted in the Christian tradition is used, but in Muslim framework and with an anti-Christian twist.[6]

Fighting the Turks: a Motive?

Important parts of Muslim apocalyptic compilations relate to external enemies that will attack the land of the Muslims in eschatological times, among them the Turks (Nuʻaym 1997, passim, e.g., pp. 195, 209, 281, 325–326, 329; see especially chapters on pp. 144–147; 458–463).[7] P. J. Alexander showed how a prophecy in the Apocalyptic of Pseudo-Methodius (7th century A.D.) on a final Byzantine victory over the Turks and the Avars was echoed in a later version in light of new historical events (Alexander 1968, pp. 1006–1007).[8] The role of the Turks seems to be very important in old layers of Muslim apocalyptic traditions, and repetitive use of the 'Turkish motif' might reflect historical events (or expectations) in specific periods

---

[4] Cf. Livne-Kafri (1999, pp. 93–94, n. 40) concerning the terms 'sons of Esau' and 'sons of Edom'.

[5] The traditions quoted in such 'books' or similar materials are sometimes wholly invented; sometimes they have some roots in Jewish or Christian traditions, and there are even paraphrased passages from the Bible. Cf. in the Early Christian tradition: Pelikan (1971, p. 20).

[6] Cf. Livne-Kafri (1991, p. 77) on the Muslim tradition "Jerusalem is a cup of gold filled with scorpions". My understanding was that the Jewish image of Babylon ("Babylon was a golden cup in God's hand…", Jeremiah 51:7) has been transferred to Jerusalem with an anti-Jewish twist. Cf. my article 'Muslim Apocalyptic Traditions: A Modest Model', section 'A dirge over Tyre' (to be published in *The Muslim World*).

[7] *Malḥamat al-turk* (the eschatological war against the Turks) is even described as one of the last important ones. See Nuʻaym (1997, p. 460, no. 1425; see also pp. 325–326, a battle against the Turks as a reflection of a prestigious battle of Muḥammad; p. 337, no. 1266, on the Muslim and Byzantines together attacking the Turks; p. 451, a prediction on the destruction of Egypt if it was attacked by enemies of Islam: the Turks, the Byzantines, the people of Andalus and the people of Ethiopia). The term *Malḥama* (pl. *malāḥim*) means generally war with an eschatological connotation. The *malāḥim* generally (but not exclusively) refer to Muslim-Byzantine wars, the most important being the greatest *Malḥama* that will precede the conquest of Constantinople; cf. Fahd (1995). The term *fitna* refers generally to schism and tribulations inside the Muslim community; see Gardet (1965).

[8] "Thus did a later editor safeguard the prophetic prestige of Pseudo-Methodius", or as he put it earlier: "Whenever later events seemed to fulfill an apocalyptic prophecy, the text of the apocalypse tended to be brought in harmony with its alleged fulfillment".

even when it appears in a pure apocalyptic setting (see e.g., Nuʿaym 1997, p. 144, no. 593; p. 195). Still it seems to me that the importance attached to the Turks sometimes far exceeds their real potential treat to the Muslim empire. One explanation might be reliance on older non-Muslim apocalyptic traditions (such as Pseudo-Methodius) and the borrowing of older themes and motifs from them. The portrayal of the Turks as the most ancient element of 'the people of the North', or their being like Gog and Magog, might be a borrowing from Christian (or even Jewish) apocalypses. One example is a tradition attributed to Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, a convert from Judaism: "The Turks will come to the Jazīra until they will water their horses from the Euphrates. And God will sent on them a plague (al-ṭāʿūn), and He will kill them; only one person will escape" (Nuʿaym 1997, p. 145; cf. p. 458, no. 1422).[9] The destruction of Gog and Magog by God Himself fighting for his people, basically taken from Ezekiel, is well developed in Jewish and the Christian apocalyptic thinking (van Donzel – Otti 2002).[10] The Qurʾānic peoples of Gog and Magog appear also in the ḥadīth and commentaries to the Qurʾān as fighting Heaven and destroyed by God, not humans.[11] Another tradition of the absolute destruction of the Turks by God, connected with their experiencing terrible snow, freezing and cold winds while fighting the Muslims in the Jazīra, might allude to a particular historical situation (Nuʿaym 1997, p. 154; cf. p. 458). The vast number of dead bodies of Gog and Magog eaten by animals in other Muslim traditions (al-Ṭabarī 1995, vol. 9, part 2, p. 29) might be reflected in a tradition on al-sufyānī who will fight the Turks and the Byzantines (al-turk wa-l-rūm) in Qarqīsiyyāʾ, until the beasts of the earth (sibāʿ al-arḍ) are sated with their flesh. Note that in such traditions al-sufyānī, a similar, but not identical with the daj-jāl (the Antichrist in the Muslim tradition), appears not only as an enemy of the right party in Islam, he also has a role against the external enemies of Islam (Nuʿaym 1997, p. 195).[12] The origin of Gog and Magog from the north, from places like Armenia or Adharbāyjān according to certain Qurʾānic interpretations of the barrier built by Dhū al-Qarnayn, identified with Alexander (van Donzel – Otti 2002, p. 232, col. 2) is also the place of origin of the Turks. One tradition built on the 'black banners' (rāyāt sūd) model, says: "The black banners [identified with the Abbāsids] will not cease to overcome those who will rise against them, until the Turks will come from the gate

---

[9] These traditions are quoted by Madelung (1986b, pp. 175–176) among other traditions on the Turks. On Kaʿb see Schmitz (1978).

[10] The coming out of Gog and Magog is frequently called khurūj ('bursting-out'; see van Donzel – Otti (2002, p. 233, col. 1, line 19), and they are sometimes connected or identified with the khazar (ibid.); cf. Nuʿaym (1997, pp. 146–147, no. 604). On the eschatological role of Gog and Magog in parallels in Jewish and Christian traditions see van Donzel – Otti (2002, p. 232, col. 2, line 4); cf. Mcginn (1979, pp. 56–59; 72–73); 'Gog and Magog', The Hebrew Encyclopedia (1965, vol. 10, pp. 298–299).

[11] It also seems to be a very old element of the Muslim ashrāṭ al-sāʿa 'the signs of the Hour' (of the resurrection) that must precede the last judgment. See e.g., van Donzel – Otti (2002, p. 232, col. 2).

[12] Cf. Nuʿaym (1997, p. 208, no. 838) in a different situation. The Turks having a role in the sufyānī legend appear also ibid., pp. 147, 209. On the sufyānī see Madelung (1986a; 2004). This conception probably emerged in the struggle for power inside the Umayyad family. Cf. Nuʿaym (1997, p. 197): he will first defeat the Marwānids, then the people of the east and the ʿAbbāsids.

[*bāb*; this might be connected to Alexander's gates] of Armenia" (Nu'aym 1997, p. 144, no. 593). Other tradition mentions their origin also as Adharbāyjān (Nu'aym 1997, pp. 146–147). Another element in the story of Gog and Magog in the Muslim tradition is that they will drink all the water in the world, including that of the Euphrates and the Tigris (van Donzel–Otti 2002, p. 232, col. 1). I wonder if the apocalyptic descriptions of the Turks drinking the water of these rivers are not an echo of this, because some traditions identify the Turks with Gog and Magog (van Donzel–Otti 2002, p. 232, col. 2, bottom).[13] This leads me to another apocalyptic invader: the Berber (*barbar*), to whom are dedicated many traditions, including special chapters, among them traditions on their attack against Syria (including Ḥimṣ, which will suffer greatly) and Egypt (Nu'aym 1997, pp. 175–187). Like the Turks, many of their traditions are connected to the *sufyānī* (Nu'aym 1997, p. 208) or the *ṣakhrī*, another 'evil representative' of the *sufyānīd* branch of the Umayyad dynasty (Nu'aym 1997, p. 186, no. 761; cf. Ibn al-Murajjā (1995, p. 223, no. 327).[14] Here the usual sense of North African Berbers is mostly understood (Nu'aym 1997, pp. 175–176; cf. Madelung 1986b, pp. 176–177). Some traditions on the Berbers, or people coming from the West (*ahl al-maghrib*; Nu'aym 1997, p. 177) seem to me as if reflecting fear of other enemies, closer to the scene, especially when they concern Ḥimṣ (Nu'aym 1997, p. 178), a town in Northern Syria, but this is not conclusive. Madelung lays stress on the role of scholars from Ḥimṣ among them Arṭā b. al-Mundhir al-Alhānī (d. 162–163 AH/779–780 A.D., cf. note 26 below). That the term 'Barbarians' (an old expression attached to uncivilised peoples, basically enemies of the Greeks), in Byzantine apocalypses, referring to the enemies of the Christian empire, had some influence on the Muslim apocalypse should not be excluded. Pelikan, speaking of "imperial theology adopting Old Testament themes, says that the "fourth kingdom" in Daniel 2:40 was taken to the Roman Empire, which had now become Christian. Other kingdoms had fallen, including the kingdom of Israel, some of them conquered "by these barbarians Turks", yet "the kingdom of the Romans, or rather of the Christians, whose coregent is our Lord Jesus Christ, will not be dissolved until the end of the world" (Pelikan 1977, p. 210). This conception appears reversed in some of the Muslim traditions.[15] The Arabic *al-maghrib* means North Africa, and also: the west. A passage in a Jewish apocalypse speaks about the sons of the west (*ma'arav* in Hebrew) who will seize power, the 'kingdom' (*malkhut*); they will come to Egypt and take many captives. In those days 'a king of grim aspect' (*melekh 'az-panim*, according to Daniel 8:23) will arise against a 'lowly and poor people' [cf. Zephaniah 3:12; the other identifications of biblical verses are by the apocalypse's editor] and

---

[13] For a semantic hint concerning the name 'Turks' see (van Donzel–Otti 2002, p. 232, col. 2), and Nu'aym (1997, p. 145, no. 597).

[14] Note that the name of Abū Sufyān, the forefather of the *Sufyānīd* branch in the Umayyad family, was *ṣakhrī*.

[15] Cf. Nu'aym (1997, pp. 281, 326): the wars of the Muslims against their enemies, including those against the Turks, will leave the Muslims victorious at the final stage of this world. Cf. a reflection of similar idea: "… I am the last prophet, and you are the last among the nations and he [the *dajjāl*, the Antichrist of the Muslim tradition] will certainly appear among you": Ibn Māja (1952–1953, Vol. 2, p. 1359); cf. Al-Iṣbahānī (1931–1934, Vol. 1, p. 281).

will 'seize the kingdom by smooth dissimulation' (Daniel 11:21). The people of Israel are then advised according to Isaiah 26:20 to "withdraw for a little while, until the Lord's wrath has passed". The editor of this Jewish apocalypse believed that the sons of the west refer to 'Edom, Byzantine-Rome' according to the vision of Daniel 8:5: "a he-goat came from the west skimming over the whole earth…" and the significance of verse 21, "the he-goat is the king of Greece" (presumably identified with Byzantium). The sons of the west are portrayed in the apocalypse as taking the kingdom (*malkhut*) without wrath (i.e., without fighting, *b-lo apayim*). The editor connects this to Daniel 11:20. We might connect this to the king of the north (verse 15) who will invade the land of the south. Bear in mind that north in Syriac, *garbayā*, is similar sounding to *maghrib* (and *gharb*, west) in Arabic and to *ma'arav* (west) in Hebrew ('sons of the west', *bney ma'arav*), and this creates two possibilities. Either the Hebrew apocalypse was influenced by Arabic apocalyptic or: the Hebrew apocalypse, and some of the Arabic traditions on people from the west, were influenced at least partly by Christian or Jewish sources based on the Book of Daniel (Even Shmuel 1954, p. 102).[16] Another instance of apocalyptic invaders of the Muslim lands are the Ethiopians. My theory is that the eschatological invasions from Ethiopia of the Muslim traditions, might be explained in light of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (Livne-Kafri 2006a).

On Some Place-names

As mentioned by Alexander, place-names might be an important clue to the understanding of certain apocalyptic matters (Alexander 1968, p. 1004). Certain names in the Muslim traditions assume special importance because of historical events or their religious and political significance for the Muslim community. Sometimes we can explain their eschatological importance by a comparison with the Jewish and Christian heritage.[17] In an earlier study I highlighted the apocalyptic significance of some places such as Lod, Antioch, Tiberias or Acre in the Muslim tradition in light of Jewish and Christian traditions (Some Notes on Muslim Apocalyptic Literature in Light of the Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Traditions [accepted for publication in *Studia Islamica*], *passim*). A few words with connection with other places: We mentioned before Gog and Magog; an interesting passage in Pseudo-Methodius says that the nations that Alexander shut up behind "the gates of the North" will go forth, and

---

[16] This apocalypse is called 'The Legend of the Messiah'. The term *malkhūt* (kindom; like a similar term in the Syriac version of Daniel, e.g., 11:21) attributed to the sons of the west in the Jewish apocalypse, might be connected to the verb *malaka* (to rule; cf. Goldziher 1971, p. 40). Concerning *mulk*, kingdom, see Nu'aym (1997, p. 177), and *dawla* (*ibid.*, in a similar sense). That might be understood also as having a connection with Daniel's vision on the Kingdoms (also considering Egypt as 'the land of the south'). Cf. Livne-Kafri (2005). The translations of Biblical verses were done according to *The Revised English Bible* (1989).

[17] An important example is Jerusalem and some of its foremost sites like the Mount of Olives. Cf. Livne-Kafri (1993, *passim*); Hirschberg (1951–1952).

they will finally be destroyed after capturing the city of Joppa (see the translation in Mcginn 1979, pp. 75–76; Martinez 1985, p. 151). Martinez, the editor of the Syriac version, wonders if the author did not misread here the "valley of Josafath" in Jerusalem where it is said that the Lord will gather all the nations to the final judgment (Martinez 1985, p. 197, note 33, with regard to Joel 4:2, 12). This was probably not without reason because of the role of Jerusalem in similar traditions (van Donzel–Otti 2002, p. 232, col. 1, middle) and because Joppa (Jaffa in Palestine) did not seem to carry any meaningful apocalyptic importance. In Livne-Kafri (2005) I compared a Muslim apocalyptic tradition containing Jaffa (attacked by the Byzantines) to the Jewish apocalypse *Sefer Eliyahu* (Book of Elijah) that was composed a little while before the Arab conquests. Among my conclusions were that the Muslim traditions was composed in the Umayyad period, that it shows a great likeness to that Jewish source, and that it might have based on it, or on another similar unknown Jewish source, or even on a Christian source. The Muslim tradition was built according to Daniel's vision of the four kingdoms; like in the Jewish source it reflects its author's tensions, agonies and hopes in eschatological hue (the background of the Jewish tradition was the warfare between the Persians and the Byzantines; the Arabic tradition reflects the Muslims' clashes with the Byzantines, especially along the coasts) (cf., e.g., Nu'aym 1997, p. 340). I believe that Joppa in Pseudo-Methodius is in the same context. Here Pseudo-Methodius seems to have used an earlier apocalyptic element concerning that town, and (although this is hard to prove definitively) is not necessarily a reflection of historical events concerning Jaffa in his day.[18] The role of Beth Shan (*baysān*) in the Muslim tradition puzzled me as well. In one tradition it was to be the place in which *al-dajjāl* would be born, and he would be from the tribe of Levi, son of Jacob (Nu'aym 1997, p. 340).[19] *Al-dajjāl*, a parallel figure to the Antichrist, is largely influenced by the Christian legend of the Antichrist it its ahistorical dimensions and its historical and political implications. This is an important issue, because crises in Muslim society, political disorder, power struggles, military confrontations, civil wars, and major social problems were reflected also in the legend of the *dajjāl* (like those of its parallels *al-sufyānī* and *al-ṣakhrī* (Abel 1965; Madelung 2004). This tradition also reflects the anti-Jewish tone of the Christian Antichrist legend.[20] It might be that Beth Shan was related somehow to a certain unknown event connected with a power struggle in the Umayyad period between the most influential tribes: Beth Shan is mentioned as the eschatological setting of a tribal gathering (of *kalb*) around the *ṣakhrī* (a Muslim being parallel to the *dajjāl*), in rebellion against the *mahdī*, the Messiah (Al-Suyūṭī 1351, p. 234). If this is the case, we might

---

[18] I did not find historical evidences of the role of Jaffa in the fighting with the Byzantines. Cf. Buhl–Bosworth (2002). An influence of the Muslim tradition on Pseudo-Methodius seems less reasonable.

[19] According to a Christian tradition the antichrist belongs to the tribe of Dan; see e.g., McGinn (1979, p. 49). On the Antichrist see e.g., Limor (1978, p. 136). On Beth Shan see Sourdel-Thomine (1960).

[20] On Armilus, the Jewish parallel of the Antichrist, see Klausner (1961).

have here an important clue to an even not known otherwise from the chronicles.[21]
A tradition in Nu'aym's book refers to a man who will come to power (*yamliku*),
whose name is 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd, the son of Kalbite women (*ibn al-kalbiyya)* who
will be *al-sufyānī* (Nu'aym 1997, p. 189).[22] This reflects a historical background that
might also suit the Beth Shan tradition, because the mother of the Umayyad caliph
Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya and the mother of his son Mu'āwiya b. Yazīd were Kalbite women
(cf. e.g., Livne-Kafri 1998, p. 54). In another tradition (Nu'aym 1997, p. 189; cf.
p. 202) the *sufyānī* will come from *al-mandarūn*, east of Beth Shan, wearing a crown,
a symbol of kings, which might be connected with earthly rule, kingdom (*mulk*) at-
tributed negatively to the Umayyads (Goldziher 1971, p. 40; cf. our note 16). This
tradition might refer to the first 'Abbāsid period because its *sufyānī* will fight the
Black Banners (the symbol of the 'Abbāsid uprising against the Umayyads), and
even to revolts of *sufyānīs*, having pro-Umayyad sentiments (cf. Livne-Kafri 1999, p.
89).[23] If so, this suggests more than one historical setting, when an element of an
older apocalypse is used in a later apocalyptic tradition.[24] The *sufyānī* in the Beth
Shan tradition (Nu'aym 1997, pp. 189, 202) alludes to his internal wars but also to
those against the Byzantine (in case my interpretation is correct; see Nu'aym 1997,
p. 189, no. 775: he will fight *al-rāyāt al-ṣufr*, the yellow banners).[25] The traditions
mentioned above are attributed to Ka'b al-Aḥbār, and Arṭā b. al-Mundhir, both ex-
perts on apocalyptic matters, and both inhabitants of the town Ḥimṣ. Important apoca-
lyptic traditions that reflect the struggle against the *rūm*, the Byzantines, are attrib-
uted to them (sometimes with an important role for their home town Ḥimṣ (Made-
lung 1986a, pp. 20−21; 1986b, p. 144).[26] Another explanation for the Beth Shan
apocalyptic traditions might be a memory from the time of the Arab conquests, the
decisive defeat of the Byzantines by the Muslims in the battle of Yarmūk (636 A.D.),
not far from Beth Shan (see Kagel 2002), giving hopes in later, harder situations.[27]

---

[21] In fact, one of the problems raised by Alexander (1968, p. 997), was whether ancient
apocalypses may contain information not known from other historical sources.

[22] The same tradition is quoted again on p. 202. Note a tradition on p. 188, according to
which the *sufyānī* will rule for three and a half years, an apocalyptic number in Jewish, Christian
and Muslim traditions. On the motif of three and a half years, cf. e.g., Lewis (1950, pp. 315, 332−
333); Mcginn (1979, p. 54).

[23] On pro-Umayyad revolts against the first 'Abbāsids, having a *sufyānī*-messianic charac-
ter, see Madelung (2004).

[24] Another place named *baysān* is mentioned also in Yāqūt (1955, vol. 1, p. 527); it was
said to be in al-Yamāma, which was one of the centres of the apostasy, headed by the 'pretended-
prophet' Musaylima (Smith 2002). This might be the older layer of the Beth Shan traditions, but it
still needs much more solid documentation.

[25] On the Greeks (*al-rūm*, Byzantines) called *banū al-aṣfar,* see Lane (1865−1893, vol. 4,
p. 1699).

[26] According to one account Arṭā was even considered one of the *abdāl* saints; see Livne-
Kafri (1996, p. 123). On the halo of sanctity endowed on the warriors from Ḥimṣ, see Ibn al-Muraj-
jā (1995, p. 313, no. 512).

[27] According to Alexander (1968, p. 1008) the first Greek version of Pseudo-Methodius
apocalypse furnished details on the Arab victory over the Byzantines in the battle of the Yarmūk in
636, and this might be connected (though not necessarily) to the Muslim apocalypse.

Indeed, the battle of Yarmūk appears in an apocalyptic tradition relating to the major battles with the the *rūm* (both historical, and invented; Ḥimṣ is mentioned as one of the decisive apocalyptic victories against them; Nuʿaym 1997, p. 340).[28] The role of Beth Shan in Muslim apocalyptic is not yet known conclusively, but the above suggestions might serve as a basic background. Additional search for a connection to Jewish or Christian materials might contribute as well. As for the identification of the place *al-mandarūn* (real, invented, or borrowed) I still have no idea.

These were some additional examples of the role of places and place-names in apocalyptic texts found in the initial stages of a research project like this.

Summary

I have suggested here some interpretations of certain apocalyptic issues found in Muslim sources. As an extension of other studies of mine, I try to show that the interpretation of Muslim apocalyptic traditions often requires a search of the parallel Jewish and Christian literatures. The issues chosen might serve as a methodological model to demonstrate this. Still, the preliminary stages of research of Muslim apocalyptic literature in general do not always yield definite conclusions, and the matters presented above should be understood in that light. Although this is a somewhat schematic presentation, we see that there here (as in the other studies) the Muslim apocalyptic traditions and the Jewish and Christian apocalypses evince similarity in basic ideas, perceptions, attitudes, terminology, structures and other features of the genre; still, the Arabic traditions already reflect the Islamic system of values; they were created against the background of social, religious and political settings of early Muslim society. This also attests to a certain similar cultural background of Jews, Christians and Muslims, to similar responses and interpretations they gave (in form and content) to their fears, agonies and hopes in time of crisis, political disorder, military confrontations or civil wars.[29]

Bibliography

Abel, A. (1965): al-Dadjdjāl. *EI*[2] Vol. 2, pp. 76–77.

Alexander, P. J. (1968): Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources. *The American Historical Review* Vol. 73, No. 4, pp. 997–1018.

Alexander, P. J. (1971): Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works and Motifs: The Legend of the Last Roman Emperor. *Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series, Vol. 2, pp. 47–68.

Buhl, F. – Bosworth, C. E. (2002): Yāfā. *EI*[2] Vol. 11, pp. 234–235.

---

[28] An interesting tradition relates that on the day of that battle important apocalyptic information concerning the future rulers of Islam was found (Nuʿaym 1997, p. 71).

[29] This article in its original form was written before I was acquainted with the most important contribution of Cook (2002). Additional important materials and interpretations might be found there.

Cook, D. (2002): Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic. In: *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*. Princeton.

Donzel (van), E. – Otti, C. (2002): Yā<u>dj</u>ū<u>dj</u> wa-Mā<u>dj</u>ū<u>dj</u>. *EI²* Vol. 11, pp. 231–234.

Even Shmuel, Y. (1954): *Midreshei Geula* [in Hebrew]. Jerusalem.

Fahd, T. (1995). Malḥama. *EI²* Vol. 6. p. 247.

Gardet, L. (1965): Fitna. *EI²* Vol. 2, pp. 930–931.

Goldziher, I. (1971). *Muslim Studies*. Ed. and trans. S. M. Stern. London.

Hirschberg J. W. (1951–1952): The Sources of Muslim Traditions concerning Jerusalem. *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* Vol. 17, pp. 314–350.

Ibn Majā, Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Qazwīnī (1952–1953): *Sunan*. Cairo.

Ibn al-Murajjā, Abū al-Maʿālī, al-Musharraf b. Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī (1995): *Faḍāʾil Bayt al-Maqdis wa-al-Khalīl wa- Faḍāʾil al-Shām*. Ed. O. Livne-Kafri. Shfaram.

Al-Iṣbahānī, Abū Nuʿaym (1931–1934): *Akhbār Iṣbahān*. Leiden.

Kagel, W. E. (2002): Yarmūk. *EI²* Vol. 11, pp. 290–292.

Kister, M. J. (1981): A Comment on the Antiquity of Traditions Praising Jerusalem. *The Jerusalem Cathedra* Vol. 1, pp. 185–186.

Klausner, J. (1961): Armilus Ha-Rasha. *The Hebrew Encyclopedia* Vol. 5, cols 954–957.

Lane, E. W. (1865–1893): *An Arabic–English Lexicon*. London.

Lewis, B. (1950): An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History. *BSOAS* Vol. 13, pp. 308–338.

Limor, O. (1978): *Christian Tradition of the Mount of Olives in the Byzantine and Arab Period*. M.A. Thesis, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem (in Hebrew).

Livne-Kafri, O. (1991): A Note on Some Traditions of Faḍāʾil al-Quds. *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* Vol. 14, pp. 71–83.

Livne-Kafri, O. (1993): Jerusalem, the Navel of the World in Muslim Tradition. *Cathedra* Vol. 69, pp. 79–104 (in Hebrew). English version will be published in *Der Islam*.

Livne-Kafri, O. (1996): Muslim Ascetics and the World of Christian Monasticism. *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* vol. 20, pp. 105–129.

Livne-Kafri, O. (1998): Jerusalem in the Muslim Traditions of the End of Days. *Cathedra* Vol. 86, pp. 23–56 (in Hebrew).

Livne-Kafri, O. (1999): Some Notes Concerning Muslim Apocalyptic Traditions. *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* Vol. 17, pp. 71–94.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2003): Burial in the Holy Land and Jerusalem according to Muslim Tradition. *Liber Anuus* Vol. 53, pp. 417–425.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2004): Christian Attitudes Reflected in the Muslim Traditions in Praise of Jerusalem. *Proche-Orient Chrétien* Vol. 54, pp. 108–119.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2005): A Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition Attributed to Daniel (in Light of a Jewish Tradition). *The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalist (al-ʿUsur al-Wusta)* Vol. 17, pp. 7–9.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2006a): Is There a Reflection of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius in Muslim Tradition? *Proche-Orient Chrétien* Vol. 56, pp. 108–119.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2006b): Jerusalem in Early Islam: the Eschatological Aspect. *Arabica* Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 203–216.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2006c): A Note on Lukaʿ b. Lukaʿ in Muslim Apocalyptic Traditions. *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, Nova Serie 1, pp. 49–53.

Livne-Kafri, O. (2006d): Jerusalem in Early Islam: The Eschatological Aspect. *Arabica* Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 382–403.

Livne-Kafri, O. (forthcoming): Muslim Apocalyptic Traditions: A Modest Model (accepted for publication in *The Muslim World*).

Livne-Kafri, O. (forthcoming): Some Notes on Muslim Apocalyptic Literature in Light of the Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Traditions (accepted for publication in *Studia Islamica*).

Madelung, W. (1986a): The *Sufyānī* between Tradition and History. *Studia Islamica* Vol. 63, pp. 5–48.

Madelung, W. (1986b): Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ in the Umayyad Age. *Journal of Semitic Studies* Vol. 31, pp. 141–185.

Madelung, W. (2004): al-Sufyānī. *EI*² Vol. 12, pp. 754–756.

Martinez, F. J. (1985): Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius. Ph.D. Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, Washington.

Mcginn, B. (1979): *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*. New York.

Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, al-Marwazī (1997*)*: *Kitāb al-Fitan wa-l-Malāḥim*. Ed. Majdī b. Manṣūr b. Sayyid al-Shūrā. Beirut.

Pelikan, J. (1971): *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. Vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*. London.

Pelikan, J. (1977): *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. Vol. 2: The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600–1700)*. Chicago and London.

The Revised English Bible (1989): Oxford and Cambridge.

Schmitz, M. (1978): Kaʿb al-Aḥbār. *EI*² Vol. 4, pp. 316–317.

Smith, G. R. (2002): al-Yamāma. *EI*² Vol. 11, pp. 1138–1139.

Sourdel-Thomine, J. (1960): Baysān. *EI*² Vol. 1, p. 269.

Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn (1351 AH): *al-ʿUrf al-Wardī fī-Akhbār al-Mahdī*. In: *al-Ḥāwī li-l-Fatāwā*. Cairo.

al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr (1995): *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*. Cairo.

Yāqūt, al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī (1955–1957): *Muʿjam al-Buldān*. Beirut.