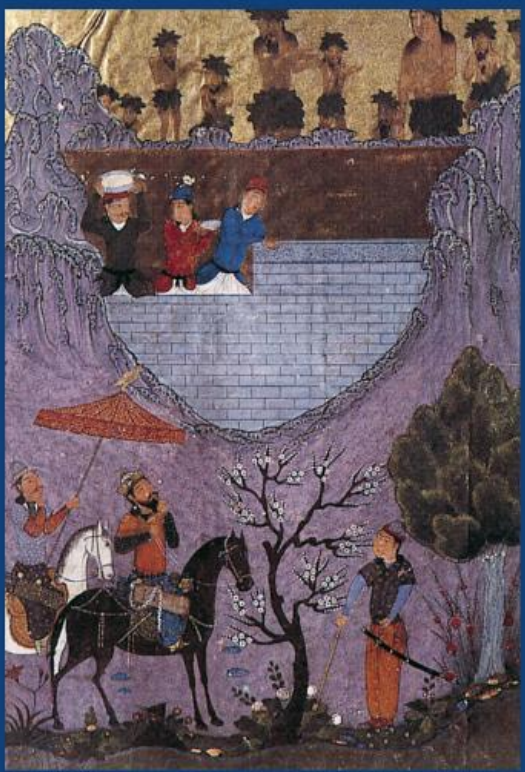
Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources

SALLAM'S QUEST FOR ALEXANDER'S WALL



BY

EMERI VAN DONZEL AND ANDREA SCHMIDT

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Gog and Magog in Early Syriac and Islamic Sources

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Gog and Magog in Early Syriac and Islamic Sources

Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall

Edited by

Emeri van Donzel
Andrea Schmidt

With a contribution by

Claudia Ott

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On the cover: King Alexander (Iskander) encloses the peoples of Gog and Magog.
© S. Okasha, *The Muslim painter and the divine. The Persian impact on Islamic painting*, London: Park Lane Press 1981, p. 104, pl. 19.

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Dedicated to the unjustly enclosed

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The first-named author may be permitted to add a personal note here. Only the unselfish dedication and support from my co-author Andrea Schmidt made it possible to complete this book. Not only did she contribute the first chapters which required her expertise in Syriac, Armenian and Georgian languages and literatures, she also inserted essential contributions in other chapters. Besides, she assumed the demanding task of editing the entire manuscript and of

proof-reading. Without her help the manuscript could not have been sent to the press.

Emeri van Donzel
Andrea Schmidt

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

For readability's sake, no diacritics are used in the text itself. In the footnotes, however, the transliteration of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition) is used for Arabic, Turkish and Persian words in order to facilitate the consultation of this work. The Syriac transliteration is that of Th. Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste Syrische Grammatik*, Leipzig 1898 (Repr. Darmstadt 1977). The Armenian transliteration is that of the *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, and the Georgian transliteration that of H. Fähnrich, *Grammatik der altgeorgischen Sprache*, Hamburg 1994.

In the transliteration of Chinese names, at the advice of the late Dr. Jin Jie (NINO, Leiden), the usual hyphens between the various elements of Chinese words have been left out. All other names are spelled according to the accepted English way both in text and in footnotes.

Note on Measures

1 arab/persian parasang/farsakh = ca. 6 km

1 chinese li = ca. 400-500 m

1 cubit/ell = ca. 46-53 cm

1 fathom = 6 feet = ca. 1.8 m

1 foot = ca. 0.4 m

1 inch = ca. 2.5 cm

1 mile = ca. 1.6 km

PREFACE

The biblical peoples Gog and Magog, known to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, were believed to live in the world's extreme north. Moreover, in late Jewish and Early Christian and Islamic tradition they were supposed to have been enclosed behind a barrier (gate, wall) by Alexander the Great—in Islam known as Iskandar 'the two-horned'—, until, prior to the Last Days, God would release these apocalyptic hordes to break out from behind their prison.

The combination of the joined theme of Alexander's barrier with the apocalyptic peoples Gog and Magog led to a story which became quite popular among Christians and Muslims. In a great variety of texts, Alexander is seen as an adventurer or even a saviour sent by God to protect humanity from Gog and Magog's wild armies. The origin of the narrative goes back to Late Jewish and Early Eastern Christian tradition. Later, the motif became an essential part of Islamic eschatology, as is evident from the relevant verses of the Koran, from Islamic Tradition (hadith) and from Early Arabic literature.

It is not our intention to present here an overall survey of the Gog and Magog lore. We rather concentrate on the Eastern Christian, more particularly the Syriac sources which, in our opinion, have exercised a decisive influence on the development of the theme in Early Islam (Chapters 1-6). The few Koranic verses and the numerous Islamic traditions on the motif, we are convinced, are directly related to Syriac Christian tradition. The data available do not seem to leave room for reasonable doubt in this respect.

In a second part (Chapters 7-12) we focus our research on the background of Sallam's quest for Alexander's wall instigated by the caliph's dream. The 'Abbasid Caliph al-Wathiq bi-llah saw in a dream that Alexander's barrier was breached. In 842 the caliph ordered Sallam, probably a Khazarian Jew from Samarra, to investigate the barrier. After his return in 844 to the court in Samarra, Sallam dictated his report for the caliph to the famous geographer Ibn Khurradadhbih (d. 912). The text of this dictation is preserved in Ibn Khurradadhbih's *Book of Itineraries and Kingdoms*. We reproduce here the editio princeps of the text (ed. by M.J. de Goeje, Leiden

1889), collated with other Arabic versions of the account, and provide it with a new English translation.

The analysis of the travel account necessarily required a survey of the political and topographical situation in the vast Asiatic regions Sallam travelled through in the first half of the 9th century. The report itself gives only two topographical data and no ethnological or political information at all. Therefore the question had to be answered whether Sallam's journey can really have taken place. In fact, some Muslim and non-Muslim authors have contested the authenticity of his account. Yet, we are of the opinion that his journey was not invented but historical indeed, and that he reached, in search for Alexander's barrier, the Chinese custom post at Yumenguan. It is the well-known Jade Gate in Western China, which Sallam considered to be the aim of his journey: Alexander's barrier against Gog and Magog. His Syriac-inspired description of the rampart may well be based on information received from Syrian Christians in Mesopotamia as well as from Syrians living along the Silk Road. While on his outward journey in search of the wall, he must have considered the Syriac traditions as a god-speed for his enterprise.

This book tries to reconstruct Sallam's journey from Iraq to the Caucasus and further along the great trade routes to the Gobi desert and Chinese Turkistan. It may contribute to a better understanding of the genuineness of one of the oldest travel accounts in Muslim literature. Next to so many other examples, the present work testifies the importance of Syriac tradition for Early Islam.

PART ONE

GOG AND MAGOG IN PRE-ISLAMIC, JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SOURCES

1. *Names and Identification of Gog and Magog*

Various historical and etymological interpretations have been brought forward concerning the name Gog. It has been brought in relation with Gyges (Gugu), king of Lydia in western Anatolia (around 676 B.C.) who was continually at war with the Cimmerians; with Gagu, a land north of Assyria which appears in the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (7th c. B.C.); or with a territory called Gaga which occurs in the Amarna Letters and indicates a country north of Syria. Gog was said to be an equivalent of 'gug', the Sumerian word for "darkness" The 'land of Gag' (Gog) has also put in relation with Carkhemish, in the 14th century B.C. the second city of the Hittites. Another explanation has been sought in the assonance with 'Jyrkai, Ugor', a Finno-Ugric tribe which, until the appearance of the Huns in East Russia, had settled in the region of the Volga. Finally, the name Gog was seen as an allusion to the ancient armeno-georgian region of Gogarene/Gugark' south-east of the Little Caucasus.[1] The etymology of Magog is even more uncertain. 'Ma-gog' may originally have been a derivation of Gog, meaning "from the land of Gog".[2]

According to J. Lust, the attempts to find a satisfying etymology of the two names do not stand up to serious criticism. Whether Gog is a derivation of Magog, or vice versa, or whether they are purely mythological figures or historical peoples can not be ascertained. In any case, both names became intimately connected in Judaic tradition as symbols of evil powers, hostile to God and his Elected, since

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[1] F. Lenormant, *Magog. Fragments d'une étude sur l'ethnographie du chapitre X de la Genèse*, in: *Le Muséon* 1 (1882), p. 42f.; for the location of Gogarene cf. R.H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhac'oyc'). The long and the short recensions. Introduction, translation and commentary*, (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients. Reihe B, 77), Wiesbaden 1992, p. 68 (map), and p. 200-204.

[2] J. Lust, Art. *Gog, Magog*, in: *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden 1995, col. 1000; W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, ii, (Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament. 13), Neukirchen 1969, p. 940-942.

the prophecy of Ezekiel (6th c. B.C.) understood Gog and Magog as eschatological symbols of divine wrath. Their habitat was located in the uncivilised north, the land of darkness, in unexplored regions, and their forces were innumerable. It is these features of Gog and Magog which passed into Christianity and Islam.

The enemy, of course, could be replaced at any time by another adversary according to the actual threat: Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Scythians, Alans, Romans, Huns, Goths, Khazars, Arabs, Turks, Mongols and, in more recent times, Napoleon, the Nazis, the Communists, the Freemasons and al-Qaida. They all were seen as personifications of Gog and Magog.[3] The possibility of up to date variation made the enemy Gog and Magog appropriate for many epochs and cultures.

2. *Gog and Magog in the Bible*

Magog—Gog is yet not mentioned—first occurs in the so-called Peoples' Genealogy of Genesis X:2 (cf. Chron. I:5). The name here is a purely geographical concept and has no apocalyptic implications. Magog is one of the seven sons of Japheth, son of Noah. The fact that Magog is mentioned between his two brothers Gomer and Madai is seen as an indication that his habitat is between these two peoples. Gomer usually was identified with the Cimmerians who in the classical Greek texts are said to live north of the Black Sea between the Don and the Danube. Towards the end of the 8th century B.C. they moved southwards, crossed the Caucasus and clashed with the Assyrians. Later they settled in what is now Anatolia. The Madai usually were identified with the Medes, who lived in the region of present-day Azerbaijan. Magog, and later Gog, thus was believed to live in the most northern part of the then known world. As thus, the Biblical location of Magog made its way into the geographical world view of all the texts of the Antiquities and Late Antiquities.

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[3] For a summary of historical people associated with Gog-Magog cf. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 8-14; and in modern times: A. Jaber, *Is my firewall secure? Gog and Magog on the Internet*, in: A.A. Seyed-Gohrab–F.C.W. Doufikar-Aerts–A. McGlinn (ed.), *Gog and Magog. The Clans of Chaos in World Literature*, Amsterdam 2007, p. 69-79.

Already before the Babylonian exile of the Jews, apocalyptic events were depicted by the Biblical prophets Jesaia (XIII) and Jeremiah (I:14-16; IV-VI). They prophesied that an enemy from the north would bring great disaster upon Israel. The destructive adversary was identified with Assyria (Jes. XIV:25) and later with the kingdom of Babel (Jer. XIX). The Babylonian exile in the 6th century B.C. then formed the setting for the many eschatological and apocalyptic visions found in the Greater and Minor Prophets, most of them living in this period. The prophecies of Zachariah (Zach. XII-XIV) in particular, dated between 521 and 519 B.C., have contributed to keeping the eschatological visions alive. The same effect had the prophecies of Joel, a contemporary of Zachariah, who announced the coming of the final enemy from the north (Joel I:6 and II:20).

The real basis for all subsequent Jewish, Christian and ultimately also Islamic descriptions of Gog and Magog as eschatological figures is the frightful vision of the prophet Ezekiel during his Babylonian exile. In chapters XXXVIII and XXXIX Ezekiel describes the great invasion into Israel by the forces of the north and the final destruction. Gog is their chief impelled by God Himself:

> The word of Yahweh came to me: "Son of man, set your face towards Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say: Thus says Yahwe: Behold, I will come to you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and I will turn you about and put hooks in your jaws, and I will bring you forth, you and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them skilled swordsmen. Gomer and all his hordes, Beth-Togarma from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes, many peoples are with you. Be ready and keep ready, you and all your host that assembles about you, and be ready for me to call upon. After many years you will be mustered, in the latter end of the year you shall come to a land that is restored from the violence of the sword, where people are gathered from many nations, upon the mountains of Israel, which have been a waste, but now all its people dwell in security. And you will ascend like a storm; you will come like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many people with you" Thus says Yahweh: "On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme and say to yourself: I will go up against a land of unwalled villages, I will fall upon quiet people who dwell securely: all of them dwell without walls and have no bars or gates to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to lift up my hand against wasted places which are now inhabited and a people who are gathered up from the nations, who have gotten cattle

> and goods, who dwell at the navel of the earth" Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog: "Thus says Yahweh: You will be awakened on that day, when my people Israel are dwelling securely, and come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, and a mighty army" (XXXVIII:1-15).

The proto-apocalyptic dialogue between God and Gog in Ezekiel set the trend for the apocalyptic role Gog and Magog were to play in the eyes of Jews, Christians and Muslims. The book of Ezekiel already contains several of the essential features later important for Christian and Islamic traditions, such as: Gog (and Magog) are instruments of God's final judgement; their eschatological coming is inevitable; they are paramount chiefs of innumerable and mighty armies hostile to God and man; at the end of time they are summoned by God from the farthest north like a thunderstorm to attack mankind (they are not yet restrained by walls or ramparts); their design is mischievous, aggressive and inhuman. Their geographic habitat is in the north. It now was just one step to associate the vicious Gog and Magog with an actual real enemy in the north.

3. *Gog and Magog in Jewish Literature*

From the second century B.C. onwards Gog appears in Jewish tradition as the anti-messianic enemy. The idea is developed in Rabbinical literature, and to a lesser degree in Jewish apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic writings. Without going into detail, one Jewish apocryphal text should be singled out here as having had a considerable influence on the development of the motif. The so-called *Book of Jubilees* or *The Little Genesis* (170-150 B.C.) is a narrative version of the biblical history as found in Genesis up to Exodus xiv, and worked out by Midrashic and Targum traditions.[4] *Jubilees* chapter VIII:25-30, repeated in a shorter form in chapter IX:7-8, relates the division of the earth between the three sons of Noah and tells about Japheth's share:

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[4] The book in its entirety is only preserved in an Ethiopic translation. It had been rendered quite faithfully from a Palestine Greek text of the second c. B.C. which itself goes back to a Hebrew *Vorlage* written between 170 and 150 B.C., cf. *Book of Jubilees*, p. VIf.. Berger dates the text into 145/140 B.C. (*Buch der Jubiläen*, p. 288f., 299-300).

> For Japheth there emerged a third share on the other side of the Tina River toward the north of the mouth of its waters. It goes towards the north-east, toward the whole area of Gog and all that is east of them. It goes due north and goes toward the mountains of Qelt, to the north and toward the Mauq Sea. It comes to the east of Gadir as far as the edge of the sea waters. It goes until it reaches the west of Fara. Then it goes back toward Aferag and goes eastward toward the water of the Me'at Sea. It goes to the edge of the Tina (Tanais) River toward the north-east until it reaches the bank of its waters toward the mountain range of Rafa. It goes around the north. This is the land that emerged for Japheth and his children as his hereditary share which he would occupy for himself and his children throughout their generations forever: five large islands and a large land in the north.[5]

The story has no eschatological features but represents classical antique geography, also significant for the early Christian and Islamic tradition: The land inherited by Japheth borders on that of Gog and is described as having a cold climate. According to ancient geography, upheld since the 10th century B.C., the border between the lands of Japheth (Europe) and Sem (Asia) is formed by the Tanais River, the present-day Don, which empties itself into Lake Me'at/Maeotis (Sea of Azov).[6] The mountain Rafa/Rhipaen is the Caucasus, considered being the north-eastern border of the land of Japheth. According to Aristotle, these mountains are incredibly high and always snow-bound. The North wind (*boreas*) takes its origin in a cave, where the source of the Tanais is located. The Caucasus is believed to align to the Hindukush and to form a continuous giant chain of snow-capped mountains as far as India.[7] Surprisingly, *Jubilees* VIII:25 mentions only Gog's land, while Genesis, upon which it depends for its geography, speaks of Magog. This might probably point to the fact that at the second century B.C. Gog-Magog had already become an interchangeable pair of names.[8]

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[5] *Book of Jubilees*, p. 55-56. Cf. however *Jubilees* IX:7-8 in relation to Magog: "Japheth, too, divided the land among his sons as an inheritance. There emerged for Gomer a first share eastward from the north side as far as the Tina River. North of him there emerged as a share for Magog all the central parts of the north until it reaches the Me'at Sea" (*op. cit.*, p. 57).

[6] Art. *Tanais*, in: Pauly-Wissowa, iv A-2, Stuttgart 1932, col. 2162-66. For the same geographical view in Syriac and Syro-Arabic sources, cf. H. Takahashi, *Observations on Bar 'Ebroyo's Marine Geography*, in: Hugoye 6, 1 (2003), § 37f., 48f. [http://bethmardutho.cua.edu/hugoye/].

[7] Kolendo, *Caspiae Portae*, p. 142. For the ancient classical geography cf. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, p. 52ff, 176f.

[8] Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 157-159.

Although no complete rendering of the *Jubilees* into Syriac has been preserved, a great deal of quotations from this book is found in Syriac historical sources.[9] Thus the classical geographical view of the northern borders of the world could have passed from Greek, Jewish-Hellenistic and Syriac into Early Islamic geography.

In later Jewish eschatology the prophecies concerning Gog and Magog occur in particular in the Targumim. Gog and Magog are now commonly referred to as a pair, while Gog also may occur alone. In general the Targumim refer to Gog and Magog in a bewildering variety.[10] The relevance of Gog and Magog is mainly explained according to passages in Num. XI:26, Ezek. XXXVIII ff. and Psalms II and CXVIII. Although the two figures are considered as the great eschatological adversaries of Israel, there is no consensus concerning the time of their eschatological war[11] and the role of the Messiah in the defeat of them. Other references in the Targumim ascribe the defeat of Gog to some Messianic figure (the Messiah, or Messiah ben David, or Messiah ben Joseph), and numerous rabbinical texts in Talmud, Mishnah and Midrashim refer to Gog and Magog as evil enemies attacking the faithful in the messianic age. A uniform tradition about Gog and Magog, therefore, does not exist in post-biblical Jewish literature.[12]

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[9] A section almost identical with *Jubilees* VIII:25-30 is incorporated into the 13th c. anonymous Syriac chronicle *ad annum 1234*, probably by the intermediary of a Greek chronographer (I.-B. Chabot (ed./transl.), *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, vol. i, (CSCO. 81; Script. Syr. 36), Leuven 1920, p. 43/17-44/15; vol. ii, (CSCO. 109; Script. Syr. 56), Leuven 1937, p. 31/32-35/10. For other extracts of the *Jubilees* in Syriac, cf. E. Tisserant, *Fragments syriaques du livre des Jubilés*, in: *Revue Biblique* 30 (1921), p. 55-86, 206-232. For the discussion about the Vorlage (Hebrew or Greek) of the Syriac version cf. *Book of Jubilees*, p. xiv-xvi, and *Buch der Jubiläen*, p. 287f.

[10] An excellent survey of the complex source material is given by Vivian, *Gog e Magog*, p. 395-414, and Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 189-199.

[11] Cf. H.L. Strack–P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, iii: *Die Briefe des Neuen Testaments und die Offenbarung Johannis*, München 1926, p. 832-834. He records five different opinions concerning the time of the coming of Gog-Magog.

[12] The Targum of Jonathan on Ezek. XXXVIIIf. interprets Gog in a non-eschatological perspective: Gog is associated with Rome. The same Targum, on Genesis X, gives Magog a place in the table of the nations without referring to Ezekiel's eschatological visions. Several Targumim interpret the prophecies of Eldad and Modad in Num. XI:26-27 as referring to Gog-Magog or to a king from the land Magog. On the other hand, in its commentary on the well-known "star and sceptre rising from Israel" (Num. XXIV:17) the same Targum places Gog's defeat in a messianic context and says that the Messiah will conquer Gog. For the rabbinical material illustrating

Alexander the Great is referred to in the Talmud and Midrash. He is generally portrayed as a great king and judge and favourable to the Jews. The various themes around Alexander found in the rabbinical literature, reflect indeed a long oral and written tradition. The story of Alexander's gate combined with the enclosure of Gog and Magog or other hostile nations, however, was unknown to the rabbis until it reached them by the way of the popular Greek *Alexander Romance.*[13]

4. *Gog and Magog in the Sibylline Oracles*

The Gog and Magog tradition is also found in the *Sibylline Oracles*, a Greek collection of various prophesies in which Jewish and Christian ideas allegedly are confirmed by a prophetess. The oracles, held in high esteem in pagan Roman as well as in Jewish and Christian circles, were compiled by Jewish and Christian writers between 160 B.C. and the 5th century.[14] The third book of the oracles contains two sayings against Gog and Magog. They are considered as the oldest section of the heterogeneous *Sibylline* collection. The names of Gog and Magog are explicitly combined here as a pair:

> Woe unto thee, land of Gog and Magog, that art in the midst of the rivers of Ethiopia; what an outpouring of blood shalt you receive, and you shalt be called among men the habitation of judgement, and the drenched earth shall drink thy life blood [...]
>
> Woe unto thee, Gog and Magog, and to all the several tribes, how many evils fate brings near to you! But why should I proclaim the fate of each severally? For upon all nations who dwell on the earth, the Most High shall send a grievous scourge.[15]

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a considerable variety in opinions, cf. Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 199-207; J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*, London 1956, p. 497-500; W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, Tübingen, ^{3}1926, p. 220f.

[13] Van Bekkum, *A Hebrew Alexander Romance*, p. 3, 7-13; Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 192.

[14] R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ii, Oxford 1973, p. 368; Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 141.

[15] Charles, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 384, 388 (cf. *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 319-322, 512, 517-519).

However, the two oracles, which do not express a curse, have no apocalyptic connotation. The land of Gog and Magog[16] is treated here as an ordinary historical name.

5. *Gog and Magog in Flavius Josephus*

The link between the apocalyptic peoples Gog and Magog on the one hand, and Alexander and the wall he is said to have built on the other, apparently took origin in Jewish Hellenistic circles in Alexandria at the beginning of the Christian era.[17] It is Flavius Josephus (d. around 100) who witnesses at first to the trend. In his *Antiquities* he equates Magog with what was, or was considered to be, the most dangerous enemy of his days, namely the Scythians.[18] The Scythian tribes, originally from Central Asia, had established an empire north of the Black Sea. It lasted from the 8th/7th century till the 2nd century B.C. Through the narrow gap between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, they entered Derbent, reached Lake Urmia in 720 and invaded Syria about 625 B.C. The sudden attacks of these equestrian fighters had added to the fear they spread. The name "Scythian", however, did not always stand for a distinct ethnical group. In antiquity the name was generally used for people living north of the Roman limes at the Black Sea. For Josephus the Scythians are not really associated with an apocalyptic event. Like the *Book of Jubilees*—well-known to Josephus—he associates Magog in his *Antiquities* with a contemporary enemy in the north, but he does not really expect the Scythians to play a role in an eschatological war.

It is in his *Jewish War*, that Josephus links the biblical Gog and Magog with the popular Hellenistic Alexander-tradition. He says

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[16] The land is not located in the north, but amidst Ethiopian rivers, which are not found in Genesis and Ezekiel. The discrepancy is easily explained through the context in the *Sibylline Oracles*. Gog and Magog are listed together with other nations such as Babylon, Egypt, Libya, Asia, Greece and Rome in a historical or topographical order from east to west, cf. Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 143-146.

[17] Pfister, *Alexander der Grosse*, p. 319-327; Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 233-235. For the Egyptian Alexander-tradition in the second half of the 3rd c., reflected in the Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah*, cf. Frankfurter, *Elijah*, p. 212-214 and 216.

[18] "Magog founded those who were called the Magogians by himself but who are called Scythians by them [the Greeks]" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, I:6, cf. Feldmann (transl.), *Judean Antiquities*, p. 43).

that Alexander closed a mountain pass by erecting iron gates south of the Caspian Sea:

> The Alans—a race of Scythians, as we have somewhere previously remarked, inhabiting the banks of the river Tanais and the lake Maeotis—contemplating at this period a predatory incursion into Media and beyond, entered into negotiations with the king of the Hyrcanians, who was master of the pass which king Alexander had closed with iron gates. Being granted admission by him, masses of them fell upon the Medes, who suspected nothing, and plundered a populous country, filled with all manner of livestock, non-venturing to oppose them.[19]

It is not clear where exactly Josephus locates these iron gates. He may have thought of the Caspian Gates[20] near today's Derbent, where ancient Media, Parthia and Hyrcania met. But he may also have thought of the Caucasian Gates in the central Caucasus, namely the narrow Darial Pass, or of the passes in the Persian Taurus range, namely south-east of Rhagae.[21] The names of these passes have often caused confusion among ancient authors.[22] However, Josephus does not attach any apocalyptic meaning to the gates through which the Scythians or the Alans have swept down. For him, the fortified passes have a purely military function: to hold back northern tribes living beyond the Caucasus in the steppes around the Sea of Azov.

Josephus is the first to bear witness to an older tradition according to which Alexander the Great had erected iron gates in the north through which barbarous peoples might pass. However Josephus still does not see these northern peoples to be apocalyptical. Josephus thus reflects an early stage of the later fusion of two motives originating from two distinct traditions: the biblical motif of Gog (Magog) as a northern and hostile nation, and the Jewish Hellenistic tradition

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[19] Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, VII:7, 4, cf. Thackeray, *The Jewish War*, p. 575.

[20] Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, XVIII:4, 4 (*thyrai kaspiai*). Pliny in his *Natural History*, V:27 and VI:15 applied the name to the pass of Rhagae, cf. Anderson, *Alexander at the Caspian Gates*, p. 145.

In his *Antiquities* Josephus gives other accounts around Alexander, historical as well as legendary, cf. R. Marcus, *Alexander the Great and the Jews*, in: Thackeray, *The Jewish War*, vi, p. 512-532; Pfister, *Alexander der Grosse*, p. 320, 322.

[21] G. Wirth, *Der Weg in die Vergessenheit. Zum Schicksal des antiken Alexanderbildes*, (Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl. 605), Wien 1993, p. 26, suggests that Alexander's historical sojourn in Hyrcania after the defeat of Darius could be the matrix for Josephus' episode. Anderson, *Alexander at the Caspian Gates*, p. 147f., suggests the pass of Darial.

[22] Pliny, *Natural History*, V:27, VI:15 was already complaining about the confusion of the names.

of Alexander erecting gates in the north. Even if it is no more possible to trace back how the final fusion of these ideas into one came about, it is evident that Gog and Magog and Alexander by the first century A.D. had definitely entered the literary scene, from where the motif was to develop further.[23]

6. *Gog and Magog in Early Christian Literature*

In the Old Testament, Magog is said to be a son of Japheth (Gen. x:2). Gog and Magog are mentioned together in Ezekiel (Ezek. xxxviiif.) as symbols of evil at the end of time. Ezekiel is the first associating them with eschatology. In the New Testament they are only found in the *Apocalypse of St. John*, perhaps to be dated at the end of the first century. This apocalypse is undoubtedly the most important testimony of early Christianity regarding Gog and Magog. It stands close to rabbinical ideas developed during the first and second centuries. St. John probably knew the *Sibylline Oracles* and the *Book of Jubilees*, indeed very influential in Late Antiquity.[24] St. John combines rabbinical traditions with the new theme of the messianic kingdom of Thousand Years. While Ezekiel portrayed the eschatological prophecy on Gog and Magog as a reality, St. John's vision has all the elements of a mythical experience: Gog and Magog are satanic forces, "numerous as the sand of the sea" After the messianic age, God will unbind Gog and Magog, and they will wage a final war against God's Elected people. But God will destroy them with fire and brimstone, after which the final judgement will come:

> And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.
>
> And he laid hand on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.
>
> And he cast him in the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should no more seduce the nations, till the thousand years be finished. And after that, he must be loosed a little time

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[23] Pfister, *Alexander der Grosse*, p. 322, as well as Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 233, 236f., claim that the origin of the fusion is to be found in the Jewish Hellenistic milieu of Alexandria in the first century. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 19-20, on the other hand, sees three stages of development, which did not take place before the invasion of the Huns in 395s or even later.

[24] Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 150, 159.

> And when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go forth, and seduce the nations, which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
>
> And they come upon the breadth of the earth, and encompass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city.
>
> And there comes down fire from God out of heaven, and devours them; and the devil who seduced them is cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, where both the beast.
>
> And the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Apoc. XX:1-3, 7-10).

The most important transmitters and interpreters of the Gog and Magog motif, especially as it is found in Ezekiel and Josephus, were, from the 5th century onwards, the Greek and Latin Fathers. In his commentary on Ezekiel, St. Jerome (d. 420) explicitly refers to Jewish tradition when he combines it with the messianic age of St. John's *Apocalypse*. Like Josephus, he considers the "Scythians" beyond the Caucasus as descendants of Gog. After having reigned for a thousand years they will be stirred up by the devil, gather many peoples and come to Palestine in order to fight against the saints.[25] Jerome himself was forced to flee to Palestine from the incursions of the Huns. It thus was but natural for him to equal the terror inspired by that caused by Gog and Magog. When St. Jerome speaks of the invasions of the Huns across the Caucasus, he also alludes to their being enclosed by Alexander the Great.[26]

Like St. Jerome, ancient Greek and Latin ethnography in general used the name "Scythian" for equestrian nomads who settled in the Asiatic steppes outside the Roman sphere of influence. The reputation of the Scythians (or Huns) led to their being identified with Gog and Magog, who also were believed to rush about from the north.

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[25] Chap. XXXVIII: "Judaei et nostri judaizantes putant Gog gentes esse Scythicas, immanes et innumerabiles, quae trans Caucasum montem et Maeotim paludem et propter Caspium mare ad Indiam usque tendantur" (*Comm. Ezech.*, ed. F. Glorie, [Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. 75], Turnhout 1964, p. 525).

[26] Epistula 77, 6-8: "Ecce subito discurrentibus nuntiis oriens totus intremuit, ab ultima Maeotide inter glacialem Tanain et Massagetarum inmanes populos, ubi Caucasi rupibus feras gentes Alexandri claustra cohibent, erupisse Hunnorum examina, quae pernicibus equis huc illucque volitantia caedis pariter ac terroris cuncta conplerent" (*Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, ed. I. Hilberg, Pars ii, [Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. 55], Wien ²1996, p. 45).

The common trend to consider Gog and Magog as personifications of political enemies was generally accepted.[27] It was the period in which the Goths brought the Western Roman Empire to an end, and in their turn became personifications of Gog and Magog. A phonetical assonance of the word "Goths" with the name of Gog led to this identification.[28] Isidore of Seville (d. 636), for his part, saw the feared Gothic tribes as personifications of Ezekiel's vision:

> It is certain that the Goths are a very old nation. Some conjecture from the similarity of the last syllable that the origin of their name comes from Magog, son of Japheth, and they deduce this mostly from the work of the prophet Ezekiel. Formerly, however, the learned were accustomed to call them Getae rather than Gog and Magog. The interpretation of their name in our language is 'tecti' (protected), which connotes strength; and with truth, for there has not been any nation in the world that has harassed Roman power so much. For these are the people who even Alexander declared should be avoided.[29]

Isidore's description of the Gothic incursions bring to mind the vivid pictures with which both Greek and Syriac authors paint the invasions into the Roman Empire of the "barbarians" symbolized by Gog and Magog: human flesh devoured by folks in the grip of hunger; mothers eating their own children; animals accustomed to devour corpses; people dying from the sword, from famine and pestilence

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[27] St. Augustine was the exception. In Chap. xx:11 of his *De civitate Dei*, he advocates the mythological character of Gog and Magog: "For these nations which he [Ezekiel] names Gog and Magog are not to be understood as of some barbarous nations in some part of the world, whether the Getae and Massagetae, as some conclude from the initial letters [of their names], or some other foreign nations not under the Roman government" (M. Dods (transl.), *St. Augustin's City of God*, in: Ph. Schaft (ed.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. ii, Michigan 1886 (Reprint: 1973), p. 432).

[28] Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 9-11; Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, p. 216f. For Gog-Magog as Goths in the Targumim (Ps.-Jonatan, Neophyti), cf. Vivian, *Gog e Magog*, p. 402.

[29] G. Donin–G.B. Ford (transl.), *Isidore of Seville's History of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi*, Leiden 1970, p. 3.

Cf. Jerome's commentary on Genesis x:2 where he writes about the habitat of the sons of Japheth: "Sunt autem Magog Scythae ... Scio quondam Gog et Magog tam de praesenti loco quam de Ezechiel ad Gothorum nuper in terra nostra vagantium historiam rettulisse quod utrum verum sit, proelii ipsius fine monstratur. Et certe Gothos omnes retro eruditi magis Getas quam Gog et Magog appellare conseverant" (*Quaestiones in Libro Geneseos*, ed. P. Antin, [Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina. 72], Turnhout 1959, p. 11).

were led to devour living people.[30] Isidore seems to have had some knowledge of Alexander holding these dangerous people at bay, for by his time the "iron gates" of the Macedonian had become a central part of the military defence system along the northern border of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Up to the 7th century, Josephus, St. Jerome and Isidore can be considered to be the principal authors to have made the Western Roman Empire familiar with the idea of a barrier-gate built by Alexander at the Caspian or Caucasian Gates.[31] From the 7th century onwards, ideas in the West about Alexander's gates were inspired by Syriac traditions translated into Latin. The same Syriac tradition played an important role in passing the Gog-Magog and Alexander motif on to the world of Islam. The next chapters therefore deal with the motif as it was developed in Eastern Christianity and Islam.

[30] Cf. Pliny, who in his *Natural History*, VII:2, already declared the Scythians to be cannibals feeding on human bodies.

[31] For Gog and Magog in the eyes of the early Latin Fathers, cf. the summary of R. Manselli, *I populi immaginari: Gog e Magog*, in: *Popoli e paesi nella cultura altomedievale*, (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo. 29), ii, Spoleto 1983, p. 489-498.

ALEXANDER AND GOG AND MAGOG IN EASTERN CHRISTIAN SOURCES

In the Eastern part of the Roman Empire Gog and Magog continued to haunt the Christian communities. Eastern Christianity witnessed so many upheavals that the apocalyptic figures of Gog and Magog were continuously evocated in the minds of the people. The tendency of associating actual events with alleged activities of barbarians became concrete when the Huns in 395 and 396 passed through the Darial defile and invaded Northern Mesopotamia and Syria. The regions suffered much from the horse-riding attackers from the north similar to the Biblical figures of Gog and Magog. A new element came to be attached to the Gog and Magog tradition, namely that of a superhuman protector of civilisation. It was found in the overpowering figure of Alexander the Great. With God's help he was to build a barrier that should shut off the apocalyptic nations until the time fixed by God Himself. Only at God's signal could they get loose and ravage the earth before they would be finally destroyed.

Apocalyptic expectations and the biblical motif merged into a new concept in which Alexander occupies the central place. Already in the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, Alexander had become an almost mythical hero performing numerous deeds which brought him to the farthest ends of the world. It is this portrayal of Alexander, which is now grafting upon the apocalyptic ideas about Gog and Magog. The historical figure of Alexander and the Gog and Magog motif began probably to be combined in apocalyptic expectations of Syrian Christians in Northern Mesopotamia in the late 4th or early 5th century.

1. *The Syriac Alexander Romance*

The famous Greek *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, an eminent piece of classical popular fiction, was decisive in transforming the historic conqueror into a superhuman being. The Romance is of no historical value, but its exotic tales of Alexander's exploits

which supplemented much the imagination made it a most popular book in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages.

The Greek version of the *Romance* seems to have received its literary form in Alexandria at the end of the 3rd century.[1] The text became soon very popular and was rewritten and adapted to the different readers' cultural or national environment. The *Romance* was spread in numerous versions and languages to the East and to the West.[2] The oldest testimonies of the *Romance* are the Latin (4th c.) and Armenian version (5th c.). The Syriac tradition[3] is one of the most interesting versions of the many existing oriental redactions of the *Romance*. It dates from the 7th century and goes back on a quite similar *Vorlage* of the Greek *recensio vetusta* (α).[4] The Syrian redactor, probably an East Syrian Christian, added a certain number of until then unknown episodes to the text. The episode of Alexander's building a wall against Gog and Magog, however, is not found in the oldest Greek, Latin, Armenian and Syriac versions of the *Romance*. Though the *Alexander Romance* was decisive for the spreading of the new and supernatural image of Alexander the king in East and West, the barrier episode has not its origin in this text. The fusion of the motif of Alexander's barrier with the Biblical tradition of the apocalyptic peoples Gog and Magog appears in fact for the first time in the so called *Syriac Alexander Legend*. This text is a short appendix attached to Syriac manuscripts[5] of the *Alexander Romance*.

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[1] For the sources of the Greek Alexander Romance, cf. the fundamental monograph of R. Merkelbach–J. Trumpff, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans*, (Zetemata. 9), München ²1977.

[2] For the more than 80 versions of the Romance in various languages cf. D.J.A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus. A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature*, (Athenäum Monographien Altertumswissenschaft. Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie. 186), Frankfurt ²1988.

[3] Budge, *History of Alexander the Great*, p. 1-254 (ed.), p. 1-143 (transl.); V. Ryssel, *Die Syrische Übersetzung des Pseudo-Callisthenes ins Deutsche übertragen*, in: *Archiv für das Studium der neuere Sprachen und Litteraturen*, Braunschweig 90 (1893), p. 83-134, 269-288, 353-402.

[4] The long-standing theory of Th. Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, (Denkschriften d. Kaiserl. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Wien, Phil.-hist. Kl. 38,5), Wien 1890, p. 13-17, about a lost Pehlevi Vorlage of the Syriac version is definitely refuted by Ciancaglini, *Gli antecedenti*, p. 62-68, 72-78, 85, 89-90, and id., *Syriac Version*, p. 135-136. On philological and cultural-historical grounds Ciancaglini argues for a Greek model. Similar arguments were propounded earlier by R.N. Frye, *Two Iranian Notes*, in: *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, i, (Acta Iranica. 24), Leiden 1985, p. 185-188.

[5] For the quite late manuscript tradition of the Syriac version of the *Alexander Romance*, cf. Ciancaglini, *Syriac Version*, p. 121.

2. *The Syriac Alexander Legend*

The *Alexander Legend* was composed by a Mesopotamian Christian probably in Amid or Edessa.[6] It was written down in 629-30 after the glorious victory of Emperor Heraclius over the Sasanian king Khusrau Parvez.[7] Already the title of the *Legend* gives special attention to Alexander's barrier against Gog and Magog. In Syriac tradition it is understood as a colossal gate: "An exploit of Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian, how he went forth to the ends of the world, and made a gate of iron, and shut it in the face of the North wind, that the Huns might not come forth to spoil the countries".[8] The anonymous author used both oral and written traditions on Alexander. The *Alexander Romance* was certainly known to him. G. Reinink underlines the political setting of the *Legend* which clearly shows a pro-Byzantine propaganda. The purpose of the *Legend* probably was to win the separated Syrian Christians back to a union with the imperial church of Constantinople. The *Legend* thus propagates Heraclius' military victory over the old enemies, namely the Huns, Khazars and Persians, as part of a divine plan. A special role is deliberately attributed to the orthodox emperor Heraclius in the realization of this divine plan. He is depicted as an ideal Christian emperor, a truly 'Alexandros Neos', who announces the advent of a final Christian empire. The 'new Alexander' is commissioned by God to overthrow the enemies. His victorious kingdom, alias the Byzantine Empire, is the leitmotiv of the *Legend*. Alexander's kingdom is the last Christian kingdom on earth before God, in the final period, will open the gates of wrath and make use of eschatological peoples to bring everything to an end.[9]

In its pro-Byzantine perspective the *Legend* presents Alexander as a conqueror who explores the secrets of the world and reaches its farthest ends. The episode how Alexander constructs iron gates at the northern border of the world starts with his exodus from Egypt.

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[6] Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 245, 249; Reinink, *Alexanderlegende*, p. 266.

[7] For other dates of the text (514, 626, 629), cf. the comprehensive resume of Reinink in his *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 8-10.

[8] *Alexander Legend*, p. 144 (transl.).

[9] Cf. Reinink, *Alexanderlegende*, p. 266, 274, 280; id., *Heraclius, the New Alexander. Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius*, in: G.J. Reinink–B.H. Stolte (ed.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation*, Leuven 2002, p. 81-94.

God has caused iron horns[10] to grow on his head as a symbol of the conquest he will bring upon the kingdoms of the world. Alexander leaves Alexandria with his troops. The Egyptian king gives him seven thousand iron- and coppersmiths to accompany him. Sailing four months and twelve days on bright seas, he reaches a land which is confined by a stinking sea, where no life is possible. Alexander is obliged to return and comes to a place where the sun enters the window of heaven. When it rises, people hide in holes in order not to be burned. He then proceeds to the confines of the north; he crosses Armenia and approaches a high mountain called the "Great Musas".[11] He climbs over it, enters a plain called "Bahi-Lebta"[12] and establishes his camp on the slopes of another large mountain range. This mountain, which is the Caucasus, extends according to ancient geographical ideas from the Black Sea to outer Persia and towards India.[13] On the other side of the mountain live Gog and Magog. They are identified with the Huns. Wild animals are threatened away by a small bell. A narrow path leads over the mountain, but it can only be taken on horse-back. Local elders tell Alexander that God has set the mountain as a border between the people on both sides.

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[10] The Syriac *Legend* is apparently one of the oldest texts to mention Alexander's famous epithet 'the horned-one'. This symbol of power is of ancient Egyptian origin. Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, p. 25 n. 1, 214 n. 1, gives a plausible explanation for the epithet: Egyptian kings and gods were declared to be "septābuī" i.e. "ready with, or provided with, two horns", an allusion to the bull ever ready to strike and gore with its horns. The Egyptian veneration of the horned God Ammon was applied to Alexander, who was considered to be a son of the god. On Hellenistic coins Alexander is represented in profile as Jupiter Ammon with a horn, cf. R. Macuch, *Egyptian Sources and Versions of Pseudo-Callisthenes*, in: L. Criscuolo–L. Geraci (ed.), *Egitto e storia antica dall'ellenismo all' età araba. Bilancio di un confronto*, Bologna 1989, p. 506-508. For the title 'the two-horned-one' in Sura XVIII, cf. Chapter 3.

[11] Scholars give contradictory explanations for the name Musas which can also be read as Masis. Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 242 thinks of the mountain Mashu in the Gilgamesh Epic, but according to Reinink, *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 39 n. 64 this identification is quite speculative. C. Hunnius, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, (Diss.) Göttingen 1904, distinguishes between the mountain range of Masios in Tur Abdin and the Masis (Ararat) in Armenia (cf. Reinink, *op. cit.*). The Armenian historian P'awstos (5th c.), however, does not name the Ararat as Masis but another mountain north of lake Van (Süphan dağı) which is also mentioned in the famous *Geography* of Pseudo-Moses Khorenatsi, cf. N.G. Garsoïan, *The epic histories attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, Cambridge, Mass. 1989, p. 479.

[12] The Georgian geography of Wakhushti Batonishvili mentions a valley of Bazalethi at the southern end of the Darial Pass in the Caucasus (Brosset, *Description géographique de la Géorgie*, p. 221).

[13] Cf. Pliny, *Natural History*, v:98-99.

Alexander wants to make enquiries, but they warn him and describe the dreadful practices of the Huns, alias Gog and Magog, beyond the border. Alexander thus calls three thousand blacksmiths and the same number of brass workers and decides to build a barrier to hold them back. The barrier is an enormous gate. Its exact measures are given:

> Alexander said: "Let us make a gate [tar'a] of copper and close up this breach" Then they made a gate, the length of it was 12 cubits and its breadth 8 cubits. And he made a lower threshold from mountain to mountain, the length if which was 12 cubits. And he hammered it into the rocks of the mountains, and it was fixed in with brass and iron. The height of the lower threshold was 3 cubits. And he made an upper threshold from mountain to mountain, 12 cubits in length, and he hammered it into the rocks of the mountain, and fixed in it two bolts of iron, each bolt being 12 cubits long; and the bolts went into the rocks 2 cubits; and he made two bolts of iron from rock to rock behind the gate and fixed the heads of the bolts into the rocks. He fixed the gate and the bolts, and he placed nails of iron and beat them down one by the other, so that if the Huns came and dug out the rock which was under the threshold of iron a horse with its rider would be unable to pass and the men brought and kneaded iron and copper and covered therewith the gate and its posts one by one, like a man when he mould clay. And he made a bolt of iron in the rocks and hammered out an iron key 12 cubits long, and made locks of copper turn therewith.[14]

Having accomplished this work, Alexander then hews a long inscription in the giant door. It contains two prophecies: the Huns will break through a narrow pass in 826 years, and Gog and Magog, chiefs of 24 kingdoms, will subjugate the empires of the Persians and Romans and enslave the nations of the world. Gog and Magog will obstruct the roads, and the earth will resound with the noise of their march. After 940 years the last Christian emperor will appear and then the world will come to an end by the will of God. In this final period God will assemble the kings and their hosts beyond the gate and open it for them. The Huns will fight with the civilised nations so that their blood covers the earth. Afterwards Alexander will erect his final kingdom over the whole earth.[15]

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[14] *Alexander Legend*, p. 267 (ed.), p. 153 (transl.).

[15] *Alexander Legend*, p. 154-156 (transl.). These two *vaticinia ex eventu* in the inscription on the gate, crucial for the datation of the *Legend*, are interpreted according to the era of the Seleucids. According to that calendar the year 826 indicates the

The narration of Alexander's Iron Gate as told in the Syriac *Legend* is quite probably the oldest version which puts Alexander's enclosure of the impure nations Gog and Magog behind iron gates in an apocalyptic setting. The *Legend* became significant especially for Syriac apocalyptic writings from the 7th c. onwards.[16] The text has been more influential than any other, even more than the Syriac *Alexander Romance* for the development of the motif.

Still missing in the *Legend*, however, is an idea which later becomes important in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. It says that, on Alexander's request, the mountains moved towards each other so that they leave a narrow gap in which Alexander is to build the gate. This motif is found in the later Greek versions of the *Alexander Romance* (influenced by the text of *Pseudo-Methodius*), and also in the Koran.

From the midst of the 7th century onward the political situation in Northern Mesopotamia changed dramatically. On the one hand the frequent invasions of the Huns continued to be a threat for the Christian population. On the other hand the new confrontation with Islam provoked a political crisis and led to a plethora of Syriac apocalyptic writings.[17] Northern Mesopotamia became indeed the centre of apocalyptic literary activity during the 7th and 8th centuries. All the Syriac texts that were to follow concerning the motif of Alexander's gate-barrier took their origin here. Even if not all apocalyptic visions in Syriac literature included the episode of the construction of

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invasion of the Sabir Huns in 515, who indeed forced their way through the middle pass of the Caucasus into Armenia, Cappadocia and Northern Mesopotamia. The year 940 indicates the (second) invasion of the Khazars in 629. See the discussion of the historical implications of the inscription in Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 245-247; Reinink, *Alexanderlegende*, p. 268-271. For the written reaction on the invasions of the Huns in Syriac sources, cf. Luther, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites*, p. 115-116.

[16] The history of Pseudo-Dionysius of Telmaḥrē (the *Zuqnin Chronicle*, 775 A.D.) contains a much reduced and altered version of the *Legend* in which the apocalyptic features are not accentuated. Alexander's gate has here no eschatological connotation, cf. I-B. Chabot, *Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, i, (CSCO. 91; Script. Syr. 3 [= 43]), Paris 1927, p. 41-44 (ed.), ii, (CSCO 121; Script. Syr. 66), Louvain 1949, p. 33-36 (transl.). W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē. A Study in the History of Historiography*, (Studia Semitica Upsaliensia. 9), Uppsala 1987, p. 128f. suggests that Pseudo-Dionysius used a lost version of the Syriac *Alexander Legend*.

[17] Cf. F.J. Martinez, *The Apocalyptic Genre in Syriac: The World of Pseudo-Methodius*, in: H.J.W. Drijvers–R. Lavenant (ed.), *IV. Symposium Syriacum. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, (OCA. 229), Rome 1987, p. 337-352; G.J. Reinink, *The Beginning of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Reponse to Islam*, in: *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993) p. 165-187; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 116-122, 135-149.

Alexander's iron gates, the texts are all familiar with the idea according to which Gog and Magog are enclosed behind a barrier and that they would once burst through the Northern *limes*.

3. *The Syriac Alexander Poem*

The *Alexander Legend* was the source for a metrical homily (*memra*) entitled "Poem on the pious king Alexander and on the gate which he built against Gog and Magog".[18] The *Poem* was composed by an anonymous Christian author[19] in Northern Mesopotamia, probably in the neighbourhood of Amid.[20] G. Reinink, who edited the text, believes that the *Poem* was written between 629 and 636. In 627 and 629 the Khazars, who were identified with Gog and Magog, invaded large parts of Armenia and Northern Mesopotamia, leaving behind terrible destructions and famine. The *terminus ante quem* of the text must be 636, the year in which the Muslim armies conquered Mesopotamia.[21] Divergent opinions have been brought forward about the influence of the *Legend* on the *Poem*. The Syriac author of the *Poem* undoubtedly knew the *Alexander Legend*, but he reworked and expanded the latter with other motifs of the traditional lore. The hero Alexander appears in a new light. He no more decides on his own as a military commander that Gog and Magog be enclosed. Here he is only God's instrument in God's divine plan. Presented as a wise and pious king, Alexander knows that the Christian Empire will not survive. Like the other mighty powers on earth it will perish and finally be overrun by Gog and Magog. It is God Himself who will create a new kingdom, i.e. the kingdom of heaven. Alexander is God's wise herald[22] who proclaims the end of the Christian empire and executes God's will. The gate, built at God's order in the

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[18] *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 20 (version I); cf. Budge's translation, in: id., *History of Alexander the Great*, p. 163ff. It is based on an inadequate manuscript tradition and has to be considered as obsolete since Reinink's new edition.

[19] The authorship of Jacob of Sarug (d. 521), to whom the text is ascribed by the majority of the Syriac manuscripts, is definitely out of the question, cf. Reinink in his *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 1, 10.

[20] Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 249.

[21] Czeglédy, *Syriac Legend*, p. 246; *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 12. For a resume of the previous studies and the various datations (515 or 628-637), cf. Reinink in *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 1-10.

[22] Reinink, *Alexanderlegende*, p. 281; id., *Alexander der Grosse und die Lebensquelle im syrischen Alexanderlied*, in: *Studia Patristica* 8, 4 (1990), p. 285-287.

Northern mountains, will hold back the apocalyptic peoples until the moment when God decides that the gate be opened.

The *Poem* is marked profoundly by a biblical apocalyptic background. But unlike the *Legend*, the text does not identify Gog and Magog with specific nations, nor does it contain any allusion to the new political power in Mesopotamia.

The *Alexander Poem* has come down to us in three versions,[23] neither of them being the true original. Forty-four double verses describe in detail how Alexander constructed the gate against Gog and Magog. They are quoted below according to the first version:[24] Alexander arrives at a stinking sea and climbs the mountain Masis. After that he proceeds to the north in search of the "source of immortal life" which is in the "land of darkness" After an unsuccessful attempt to find it, he comes to a great mountain range. Wise men inform him about the behaviour of Gog and Magog and their terrible appearance. The impure people dwell behind the mountain. In the middle of the mountain range is a narrow path filled with blood. This is the way out for Gog and Magog. Alexander feels disgusted and decides to shut them up. Being aware of the task God has assigned to him, he requests twelve thousand experienced Egyptian smiths[25] to help him with the construction of the gate. Alexander tells them how to construct it and he personally measures the passage between the mountains. The dimensions of the giant door are again given special attention:

> Then he courageously took pains and made a door against Agog [sic] and the family of Magog, and bound them inside.
> He took iron and copper, a great quantity, and made it ready for the making of the door that he might shut it in the face of the people.
> He gave his commands to 12000 skilled, ready workmen whom Surik the king of Egypt had given to him from his dominion.
> He, the wise man, called the workmen and taught them, how they should make the length and breadth [of the door] with great strength.
> He measured the ground of the narrow pass between the mountains,

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[23] Version I has 698 verses, version II 726 and version III 848 verses. Version I is probably the nearest to the lost original text (*Alexander Poem*, i, p. 11, 15).

[24] Budge, *History of Alexander the Great*, p. 182-185. Reinink's translation of version I (*Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 90, 92, 94, and 96) generally agrees with Budge except for some minor additions put here in brackets.

[25] Version II speaks of 22 000 craftsmen (*Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 34-35).

that he might shut in the peoples of the house of Magog until the end.
The king in his wisdom measured from mountain to mountain, 12 cubits[26] in the strength of his power.
The king said, "Make ye a threshold for the whole pass, and let it be sunk in the mountain on this side and on that"
He made it [the thickness] of great height and breadth, 4 cubits, its length and extent 12 cubits of a giant man.
On each side of the mountain he sunk the head of the threshold, on both sides 2 cubits of a giant man.
He made a lintel over the door over the pass, and sunk it in the mountains on both sides for the whole [width of the] door.
He made [it] 6 cubits wide and 6 cubits high with skill, of iron and brass, a marvellous work, the like of which there is not.
The hosts erected and fixed the door there in all the threshold, above and below, as in clay.
He put bolts into the threshold and into the door, and sunk them in so that no man knows where they fitted together.
For all the lintel over the door against the wind the king made strong posts of brass and iron.
On the side of these he made belts of great strength, 12 cubits was its length and 2 cubits its breadth,
A cubit and a half was the thickness of the bolt with cunning work,
And it [the bolt] held fast the posts and the bolts and the door and the two sides of the mountain that they might not be unloosed.
The king threw doors and beams and bolts in the two sides of the mountain, and another bolt of brass and iron, in his wisdom.
He threw the door,
And wonder and quietness and rest and silence [came] over the peoples of the house of Magog who[27] had not perceived the building.
King Alexander made haste and made the door against the North, and against the [robbers] and the offspring of Magog.
In the sixth month he finished the building of the whole door.
And the king and all his army marvelled and their hearts rejoiced, that the whole work of the royal building had been built,
A work of which wisdom and intelligence has laid the foundations.
Ambassadors went forth into the countries and lands and proclaimed the great work of the terrible door which the king had made.

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[26] Version II has 22 giant cubits, version III 12 giant cubits (*Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 92).

[27] Version II. In version III the subject is not "Magog", but "the Lord", and in version I it is "the door" (*Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 96).

4. *A Syriac Sermon On the Last Days*

Another testimonial of the strong eschatological fears in Northern Mesopotamia in the 7th century is a homily (*memra*) entitled "On the Last Days and the accomplishment and the judgement and the revenge, and on Agog [sic] and Magog and about the false Messiah".[28] The sermon is falsely ascribed to Ephrem the Syrian, but it is not of the eminent Syrian poet for it dates from the early Islamic period, and it must have been composed between 642 and 683.[29] The anonymous author originates perhaps from Edessa.[30] He sees the current political events as eschatological signs of the coming end. In three terrible visions he depicts the invasion of the Huns, the Persian war of Emperor Heraclius, and in particular the military attacks of the Arabs. Next to popular apocalyptic traditions current in Mesopotamian culture the author primarily makes use of the prophesies of Ezekiel, the visions of the *Apocalypse of St. John* and of the *Alexander Legend*. The influence of the *Legend* on his text is particularly obvious in the description of the Huns as chiefs of thirty eschatological nations. They force their way through Alexander's gate in the Last Roman

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[28] *Sermon on the Last Days*, i, p. 60-71; ii, p. 79-94. The edition of Beck replaces the editio princeps of Th.J. Lamy, *Sancti Ephrem Syri Hymni et Sermones*, iii, Mechelen 1889, p. 187-212 ("Mar Ephraemi de fine extremo"). The homily should not be confused with a similar eschatological homily "De fine mundi et consumatione saeculi et conturbatione gentium" (CPG 4130), extant in Latin and attributed by many scholars to a Greek author drawing inspiration from the Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, cf. D. Verhelst (ed.), *Scarpsum de dictis sancti Efrem prope fine mundi*, in: *Pascua Mediaevalia*, (Historica Lovaniensia. 155), Leuven 1983, p. 518-528; G.J. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius and the Pseudo-Ephremian « Sermo de Finde Mundi »*, in: R.I.A. Nip–H. van Dijk (ed.), *Media Latinitas*, (Instrumenta Patristica. 28), Turnhout 1996, p. 317-322. A Syriac origin (cf. J. Draeseke, *Zu der eschatologischen Predigt Pseudo-Ephräm's*, in: *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 35 (1892), p. 177-184; Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 136-147), and even a Latin Merowingian provenance have been as well discussed (Verhelst, *op. cit.*, p. 519) but are no longer maintained (Reinink, *op. cit.*, p. 321f.).

For other apocalyptic sermons of Pseudo-Ephrem (CPG 3944–3946, 4012), whose origin have as yet not been studied, cf. M. Aubineau, *Le Cod. Dublin, Trinity Coll. 185. Textes de Christophe d'Alexandrie, d'Ephrem et de Chrysostome*, in: *Le Muséon* 88 (1975), p. 117-118, 122; Verhelst, *op. cit.*, p. 518.

[29] Reinink, *Pseudo-Ephraems Rede*, p. 439, 441, and 455-462.

Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 16, and Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 147 credited Pseudo-Ephrem's sermon with being one of the earliest examples of the fusion of Alexander's gate with the legend of Gog and Magog. This opinion can no longer be maintained.

[30] *Sermon on the Last Days*, ii, p. X-XI; Reinink, *Pseudo-Ephraems Rede*, p. 442.

Empire. A common feature with the other apocalyptic texts is the impurity of the invading peoples. The author identifies them with the Huns and calls them sorcerers,[31] as *Pseudo-Methodius* will describe them later too. Even if the construction of Alexander's barrier is not described as such, the *Sermon* depicts in highly pictorial style how the nations behind the gate, at God's signal, destroy the barricade with their spears. Innumerable like sand they rush forward into the world:

> then divine justice will call kings and strong armies, which are found in the inner side of the gates made by Alexander; behind these gates kings and many peoples will arise, look at the sky and invoke God's name. Then the Lord will give His sign from His glorious heaven, and His divine voice will resound in those gates, and they will be destroyed and crumble immediately upon His divine order. The armies will go out, innumerable as the stars, numerous as the sand of the sea, indeed more numerous than the stars of the sky. From the lower threshold will be drawn away a full span and from the upper lintel will be consumed a full span and equally from the mass of their sharp spears scratching and penetrating it.[32]

5. *The Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*

Even more than in the texts given above, Alexander becomes the pivotal figure of the Gog and Magog episode in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. This most prominent witness to Syriac apocalyptic thinking carries a profound political and religious message. The *Apocalypse* is entitled "Discourse concerning the succession of the kings and the end of times".[33] Though the treatise is attributed to the martyr bishop Methodius of Patara (d. 312), it was most probably composed in the last decade of the 7th century.[34] The pseudonymous author was perhaps a monk living in the region of Sindjar in the

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[31] *Sermon on the Last Days*, ii, p. 86, 87.

[32] *Sermon on the Last Days*, ii, p. 84-85.

[33] The text tradition of the Apocalypse is quite complicated. The very original is not preserved. The text must be reconstructed by comparison with two Syriac recensions (V and M) and the Greek and Latin versions, cf. *Pseudo-Methodius*, i, p. XIV, XXIX; G.J. Reinink, *Neue Erkenntnisse zur Syrischen Textgeschichte des 'Pseudo-Methodius'*, in: H. Hokwerda (ed.), *Polyphonia Byzantina*, Groningen 1990, p. 85-96.

[34] *Pseudo-Methodios*, ii, p. XXIIf.; cf. S. Brock, *Syriac Views of Emergent Islam*, in: G.H.A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, (Papers on Islamic History. 5), Carbondale–Edwardsville 1982, p. 18f.

mountainous regions of North Iraq about 115 km west of Mossul.[35] He witnessed the rapid and irresistible advance of the Arab armies in Mesopotamia, and was shocked by 'Abd al-Malik's erection of the Dome of the Rock in 691 on the temple site in Jerusalem. In his days an important number of Christians were converted to Islam.[36] The rise of Muslim power was the challenge for his eschatological stance. Methodius' eschatological visions, written in a vivid style, are thus devoted to an eschatological interpretation of the Arab conquest in Mesopotamia. They contain a biblical historical section (chap. I-X) and a prophetical section (chap. XI-XIV). The Christian empires of Ethiopia, Greece and Rome—according to the biblical pattern of the four successive world empires known from the book of Daniel—are linked to the figure of Alexander the Great. Their succession is associated with the millenarian idea of the *septimana mundi*, which is frequently used by Syriac authors for their eschatological speculations.[37] Pseudo-Methodius draws heavily from Biblical tradition and "reconciles the evident fact of Islamic conquest with earlier Christian eschatological expectation".[38] He wants to prove that, as time and kingdoms go, the rule of the Arabs will become ephemeral. Alexander is seen as an eschatological figure, personifying the Last Christian Emperor[39] who is confronted with the new religious claims of the

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[35] It cannot be decided whether Pseudo-Methodius was a "Jacobite" or a "Nestorian" author. His Apocalypse was read in both church communities, but it is not unlikely that he was a monk who addressed his apocalyptic ideas primarily to West Syrian ("Jacobite") circles. For the various opinions on the origin of the author, cf. *Pseudo-Methodios*, ii, p. IX-X, XXVIf.

[36] Cf. S.H. Griffith, *Michael, the Martyr and Monk of Mar Sabas Monastery, at the Court of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik; Christian Apologetics and Martyrology in the Early Islamic Period*, in: *Aram* 6 (1994), p. 115-148.

[37] Cf. e.g. W. Witakowski, *The Idea of Septimana Mundi and the Millenarian Typology of the Creation Week in Syriac Tradition*, in: R. Lavenant (ed.), *V. Symposium Syriacum*, (Orientalia Christiana Analecta. 236), Rome 1990, p. 93-109. As to the sources of the *Apocalypse*, especially the *Julian Romance* and the *Cave of Treasures*, cf. *Pseudo-Methodios*, ii, p. XX, XXXVff. Methodius was even considered to be the author of the *Cave of Treasures*, cf. Reinink, *Der Verfassername 'Modios' der syrischen Schatzhöhle und die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodios*, in: *Oriens Christianus* 67 (1983), p. 46f., 59f.

[38] S.H. Griffith, *The Church in the shadow of the mosque. Christians and Muslims in the world of Islam*, Princeton 2008, p. 34.

[39] As for this important motif in the Syriac Alexander tradition which, however, is not directly linked to our motif of the Northern « apocalyptical » gate, cf. G.J. Reinink, *Alexandre et le dernier empereur du monde: les développements du concept de la royauté chrétienne dans les sources syriaques du septième siècle*, in : L. Harf-Lancner *et al.* (ed.), *Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales*, Paris 1999, p. 149-159; id., *Die syrischen Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*, in: M: Gosman–

Muslim caliph, now reigning. The coming outburst of Gog and Magog through the gates of the North will take place in the last of the seven millennia during his reign. The earth will shake before their mighty armies and men will be terrified and hide themselves in mountains, caves and graves. After many calamities Gog and Magog will be defeated by God's angels in the plain of Jaffa. After a time of confusion Alexander will finally destroy these enemies (the Arabs) and hand over his suzerainty to God. As the Last Christian Emperor he will deposit his crown and symbols of power on Golgotha in Jerusalem.

Imbued with popular apocalyptic ideas, Pseudo-Methodius' account of Alexander enclosing Gog and Magog (the Arabs) develops some peculiarities of his own next to what he borrows from the earlier *Alexander Legend* and the *Alexander Poem.* According to Pseudo-Methodius, it is not in the north but in the east that Alexander meets with these impure people of Gog and Magog in a land called "Fire of the sun"[40] and he is disgusted by the misshapen descendants of Japheth. Pseudo-Methodius shows a dramatic picture indeed of their ugly behaviour which is given even more attention here than the one given in the *Alexander Legend* and the *Poem.* Gog and Magog, chiefs of twenty-two nations, are filthy and ugly and perform abominable acts. They lacerate vermin, dogs, mice, flies, cats, serpents, eat aborted human embryos as a delicacy and all sorts of corpses and do not bury their dead. Alexander, fearing that they enter the Holy Land, banishes them to the far north, behind the pass of the Northern border. He prays to God who fulfils his wishes and at God's order two mountains move towards one another. Only a gap of twelve cubits remains open to be filled in by a barrier-gate. Alexander constructs a big gate of copper and spreads over it indestructible material, unassailable for fire and weapons. Gog and Magog and their followers are damned to stay behind the gate until the Last Day:

> Alexander the king prayed to God, and God listened to him. God gave orders to those mountains which are called "Sons of the North", and

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J. van Oos (ed.), *Non Nova, sed Nove. Mélanges de civilisation mediévale dediés à W. Noomen,* Groningen 1984, p. 195-209; id., *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser,* in: W. Verbeke–D. Verhelst–A. Welkenhuysen (ed.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middel Ages,* (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia. Series 1; Studia. 15), Leuven 1988, p. 82-111.

[40] The *Alexander Legend* speaks of a "place where the sun enters the window of heaven" (*Alexander Legend,* p. 148 [transl.]).

> they moved to one another up to the distance of 12 cubits. He [Alexander] made a brass gate, anointing it on the inside with tasaqtis[41] so that, in case they were to bring an iron bar against it in order to open it, they could not move it, and if they wanted to melt it with fire, it would quench the fire which would be brought up to it, because it is the nature of tasaqtis not to move on account of iron, nor because of the activity of demons, and not even fire, when brought near it, can burn it at all. For indeed, those unclean nations shut up within are accustomed to all manner of evil magic. By means of these two mighty things, he brought to an end all the power of the devils, [lest by fire or by] iron or by [some other] activity, it [the gate] would be opened before them, and they would come out and destroy mankind and defile the earth. However, at the end of the ages, it will be in accordance with the word of Ezekiel, the prophet, who prophesied about them. He said: "At the end of time, from the ends of the world, they will come from the house of Gog and Magog to the land of Israel" These are the nations which Alexander shut up behind the gates of the North: Gog and Magog ...These 22 kingdoms are shut inside the gates of the North.[42]

It should be remarked that the 12 cubits of the iron gate have become now a fixed measure in the Christian tradition of the story. The fact that the two mountains moved to one another as a result of Alexander's prayer to God, however, is a new motif in the account of the enclosure of Gog and Magog. We will find it again in the later

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[41] The explanation of the word *tāsaqtīs* for expressing the magic coating of the gate is problematic. The Syriac copyists of the text did not seem to understand it, because they give many variations of the word in the manuscripts (*Pseudo-Methodios*, ii, p. 23 n. 2). The same is with the Greek version of the text which knows numerous variants of a similar incomprehensible term (*asygkitēs, asikēon, asykeiton, asokiton, asokēton, asykytinon* etc.); for the probability of a conjecture of the word into *asygxytos/asygkitē*, cf. W.J. Aerts, *Alexander's Wondercoating*, in: R.I.A. Nip–H. van Dijk (ed.), *Media Latinitas*, (Instrumenta Patristica. 28), p. 317-322. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 175 n. 10, points out that the Syriac *Physiologus* (5th c.) attributes similar characteristics to the diamond. Indeed, the properties of the precious stone (resistant against iron, steam and smoke) are like the magic cover of the Syriac word: No demon or any enemy can approach to a diamond, because the possessor of the stone vanquishes all diabolic spirits and resists to all evil-doers (J.P.N. Land (ed.), *Anecdota Syriaca*, Leiden 1875, chap. 66, p. 85 (ed.). In the Arabic Alexander tradition the Syriac word is given as *kaṭr/kiṭr* (Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 138-140, 143); cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■ with accounts on the construction of the barrier by Ibn al-Faḳīh, al-Tha'labī, Sirat al-Iskandar etc.

[42] The text is given according to Martinez's translation (*Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 133f). Cf. the German translation of Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodios*, ii, p. 22-24 (chap. VIII, 7-10).

Greek and Western versions of the *Alexander Romance* and also in the Koran and the Arabic Alexander tradition.

The influence of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* has remained alive in West and East Syrian literature until the 14th century. Long excerpts are found in Solomon of Basra's 13th century *Book of the Bee*, in particular the impurity of the sons of Japheth and Alexander's gate.[43] Pseudo-Methodius not only exercised great influence on later apocalyptic texts,[44] his *Apocalypse* was used by Syrian theologians and historiographers too,[45] and was probably known to Muslim traditionists.[46] Very early the vision was rendered into Greek (700-10) and from Greek into Latin (710-20).[47] It became one of the most influential apocalyptic texts in Byzantium and in the Mediaeval West, also stimulating many non-apocalyptic writings.[48] It is by this widespread transmission of Pseudo-Methodius that the story of Alexander's enclosure of Gog and Magog passed from Syriac into Greek and Latin Occidental literature. In other words: the motif of Alexander's iron gate as found in the Greek and Medieval Western versions of the *Alexander Romance* was borrowed and inspired by the Greek translation (second recension) of a Syriac text. Thus in the beginning of the 8th century the *Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* has become the channel by which the motif of Alexander's barrier against Gog and Magog became known in the East as well as in the West. Some of the later Greek versions of the *Alexander Romance* (the sub-versions

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[43] *Book of the Bee*, chap. 54, p. 127-129 ("Of Gog and Magog, who are imprisoned in the North"). The text is important because of its older, now lost, Syriac version of Pseudo-Methodius. For a comparison of both sources cf. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodios*, i, p. X.

[44] Namely the *Edessenian Apocalypse*, the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, the *Christian-Arabic Apocalypse of Daniel*, and the *Bahira Apocalypse*; cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 276; G. Reinink, *Der edessenische 'Pseudo-Methodius'*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990), p. 31-45.

[45] Particularly influenced is Michael the Syrian in his chronicle when referring to the Turks, cf. Dickens, *Sons of Magog*, p. 439, and Chapter 4 note ■■ (118). Cf. the summary in Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit*, p. 345-349; Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 11-15.

[46] O. Livne-Kafri, *Is there a Reflection of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius in Muslim Tradition?*, in: *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 56 (2006), p.112-118.

[47] Due to interventions of the redactors, the Greek and Latin versions do not correspond entirely with the Syriac text; cf. the edition and translation of Aerts–Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*. For the history of the relation of these two translations with the Syriac *Vorlage*, cf. Reinink in: *Pseudo-Methodius*, i, p. 7f., 17.

[48] Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 14, 61-95; Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit*, p. 321-345.

of β: ε, λ, γ, ζ) give even then enriched and embellished accounts of Gog and Magog's enclosure, and the fantastic appearance of the barrier-gate shows a wide variety.[49] However, these Greek versions of the *Romance* did not influence directly the Islamic Alexander tradition of Gog and Magog's enclosure and could not be known by Sallam in Samarra as a source for his Arabic travel account. Therefore, the further development of the episode in Greek and Western literature lies beyond our scope.

6. *The Coptic and Ethiopic Alexander Romance*

In Late antique Egypt Alexander is particularly revered as a saviour-king. The Macedonian is declared to be the son of the magician-priest Nektabenos, the last Egyptian pharaoh. Nektabenos disguises himself as the horned God Ammon and seduces Alexander's mother Olympia so that the child of their love, Alexander, becomes known as 'the two-horned one' An ideal figure as such Alexander is the subject of many popular and mythological stories which go back to Egyptian priestly propaganda of pre-Christian time.[50] The epithet 'two-horned', a genuine Egyptian element indeed, puts a strong mark on the later Islamic Alexander tradition.

The Coptic version of the *Alexander Romance*, written in Sahidic dialect, has survived in nine fragments only. They are dated to the first period of the Arab conquest in Egypt (640).[51] The Coptic *Romance*

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[49] Cf. the summary in Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 38-43.

[50] Ancient Egyptian elements are also reflected in the Coptic apocalypse of Elijah, cf. D. Frankfurter, *Elijah in the Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity*, Minneapolis 1993, p. 212-216. For the Egyptian Alexander tradition in general cf. Macuch, *Egyptian Sources*, p. 503-511.

The Arabic world-chronicle (*al-madjmuʿ al-mubārak*) of the Coptic author Djirdjis al-Makin b. al-'Amid (d. 1273) contains a chapter on Alexander in which al-Makin discusses the sense of the epithet 'two-horned'. Very briefly he mentions that Alexander made a strong gate, shut in Gog and Magog and fastened the gate with chains of iron; cf. the Ethiopic text by E.A.W. Budge, *The Alexander book in Ethiopia*, p. 214-35. The same is told by the Coptic encyclopaedist Abu Shkir b. Buṭrus al-Rhib (d. around 1290). His now lost chronicle Kitāb at-tawārikh includes a chapter on Alexander (Budge, *Life and exploits of Alexander the Great*, ii, p. 387-401). For the Ethiopic translation (16th c.) of the text, cf. A. Sidarus, *Ibn al-Rāhibs Leben und Werk*, Freiburg 1975, p. 25, 30-45, 50-54.

[51] G. Lusini, *Origine e significato della presenza di Alessandro Magno nella letteratura etiopica*, in: *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 38 (1994), p. 98. O. von Lemm, *Der Alexanderroman bei den Kopten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Alexandersage im Orient*, St. Petersburg 1903, p. 6;

which portrays Alexander as a Christian prophet has its origin in the White Monastery near Sohag in Upper Egypt. It was a vivid literary centre in Muslim times. Even though the fragments do not show any trace of Alexander's barricade against Gog and Magog, it is likely that the motif once was mentioned in the text. G. Lusini tries to prove that the Coptic fragments are associated with the elaborate β-version of the Greek *Alexander Romance*. As said above, the subsequent version of the β-recension of the Greek *Romance* has taken over the motif of the enclosure of Gog and Magog from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. One fragment indeed, speaks bout Alexander's journey to the "land of darkness", an episode which is related before the account of the construction of the barrier.

The impact of the Syriac *Alexander Legend* on the Ethiopic *Alexander Romance* is quite obvious.[52] But we do not take into account in our

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and M. Cramer, *Das christliche-koptische Ägypten einst und heute*, Wiesbaden 1959, p. 53, date the fragments to the 6th c.

[52] Budge, *The Alexander book in Ethiopia*, p. 142-144, 236-256; id., *History of Alexander the Great*, p. 236-238. The text goes back on a lost Muslim Arabic text of the 9th c., which has borrowed a number of motifs from the Syriac *Alexander Legend* and has mixed it with other sources, especially the Syriac and Greek Alexander tradition and the Koran. The studies by G. Lusini, *Origine e significato della presenza di Alessandro Magno nella letteratura etiopica*, in: *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 38 (1994), p. 101, 105ff., cf. Macuch, *Egyptian Sources*, p. 509, have shown that the Syriac Alexander Legend was not used as a direct source for the Ethiopic Romance. The motif of Alexander's barrier might have entered the Ethiopic version by an intermediary of a later Greek version of the Romance, probably recension λ, which was translated into Arabic and then became the *Vorlage* for the Ethiopic Alexander Romance. For the textual relationship of the Arabic and the Ethiopic versions in regard to the Syriac tradition, cf. F.C.W. Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander the Flexible Friend. Some Reflections on the Representation of Alexander the Great in the Arabic Alexander Romance*, in: *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 55 (2003), p. 195-210.

The Ethiopic version relates Alexander's exodus from Egypt and his visit of the stinking sea, then his journey towards the impure people at the mountain "Musas", their wild behaviour and the construction of the gate covered with an inscription. As in the Alexander Legend the account refers to the prophesy of Jeremiah (I:14-16). But unlike to the Legend, the mountain, which will be closed by a gate, extends to the great ocean which surrounds the world. The description of the ugly looking of Gog and Magog living behind the mountains has its model in Pseudo-Methodius and the Greek Alexander tradition. Alexander is told that they are extremely wild, and that all the ruined fortresses which he sees in their country and in that mountain have been destroyed by them. Beyond the mountain live the *tqftas*, that is to say, the *nagashwiyan* whose faces are like those of dogs. Their number is unknown, no man can tell their names, and no man has ever been able to enter their country, where are only lofty mountains. Alexander then builds a gate of brass and iron. Alexander selects 3000 skilled workers in iron, and 3000 in brass. They make bellows from the skins of great animals to blow the fire. They melt brass and iron and mingle them in

the way clay is kneaded. At each side of the mountain are attached bolts 12 cubits long. After the completing the construction Alexander seales the gate and covers it with phylacteries against which neither fire, nor sword, nor any other thing could prevail. Upon a leaden tablet he writes: "The nations shall gather themselves together every year, and at every season [thereof], and at every time, and shall seek to open this gate, and though they make plans of every kind, and scheme all sorts of devices, they shall never succeed in opening it. It shall not be opened until the time has arrived when God will be pleased to open it. This shall take place in the year eight hundred and sixty-four. And at the end of ten thousand [years], the nations shall perish [...] God shall send upon mankind some of the kings of Gog and Magog. God shall throw down the gate without [using] the key. The threshold and the lintel of the gate will be worn away by the multitude of man and beast that will pass through it. And when Gog and Magog go forth, they cry out in the borders of the earth, to Rum, and Persia, and Arabia" (Budge, *The Alexander book in Ethiopia*, p. 142-144; id. *History of Alexander*, p. 236-238).

The Geez Commentary on the Apocalypse of St John, the *Tərgwame Qälämis*, compiled in the late 16th c., takes up some of these Alexander traditions in a quite altered form. In Rev. IX:18-20 the Ethiopic commentary links the apocalyptical beasts and troops with Alexander. It says that Alexander will stay victorious against the affliction of the Last Days whereas mankind has to suffer. There is also an allusion to the horrible scene from Pseudo-Methodius about the pregnant women and the cooked embryos (cf. p. ■■). A special element of the Ethiopic tradition is that Alexander brings tamed beasts along. His metal workers make copies of the beasts; they are filled with gunpowder and lead and afterwards mounted on wheels and "having had the images of beasts carved at the gate of the city of the children of Japhet, Alexander blocked it with them and went away. An angel remains there guarding them, lest they [Gog and Magog] go out" (R.W. Cowley, *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, Cambridge 1983, p. 262, 269f.). Quite strange is the long commentary on Rev. IX:1 where the "key for the abyss given to the star" is related to Alexander. The commentary uses traditions of the Alexander Romance and the Alexander Legend which here underwent a great change: Alexander reaches the city of centaurs (they are said to be *säbäd'at*, i.e. either vipers or creature half man and half animal) and then the city of the children of Japheth. It is a city as big as a seventy-day journey; the walls are of iron and 10 cubits high, the gates are of brass. Alexander tells a young man to make a ladder of date palm, in order to climb up and to open the gates. Iron singers, who cry alarm, fell down and die. Alexander sees all around iron images, holding spears, daggers and swords. He founds an inscription of the inhabitants who pride themselves because of their wealth and happiness. Alexander decides that the people have to perish. He opens the gate—the length of the bolt of the gate is 24 cubits—and his troops enter the town. The city of the centaurs has two hills which are brought together by prayer. Alexander takes away the iron singers and puts them on the hills (Cowley, *op. cit.*, p. 258-259). In the same commentary the locusts of Rev ix:1-11 are explained as "these are Gog and Magog, whom Alexander the king confined" (Cowley, *op. cit.*, p. 108).

For the existence of a Christian Arabic Alexander Romance whose tradition is attested quite late (17th c.), cf. Kh.S. Samir, *Les versions arabes chrétiennes du roman d'Alexandre*, in: R.B. Finazzi–A. Valvo (ed.), *La diffusione dell' eredità classica nell' età tardoantica e medievale. Il « Romanzo di Alessandro » e altri scritti*, (L'eredità classica nel mondo orientale. 2), Alessandria 1998, p. 230-232, 242.

study the Alexander tradition in Ethiopia. There is no indication whatsoever that can be linked to Sallam's literary and his ideological background when describing Alexander's barrier in his travel account.

7. *The Coptic Apocalypses*

Apocalypses and prophetic homilies flourished among the Coptic Christians since the mid-seventh century. They were provoked by the oppressive Muslim domination after the Arab conquest. The texts are inspired by biblical and apocryphal motifs which are adapted to the actual political and social circumstances of the writers. The perhaps oldest Coptic apocalypse is attributed to the abbot of the White Monastery, Shenute of Atripe (d. 451), but it was composed at the end of the 7th century, probably as a reaction to the construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.[53] The Muslim temple is interpreted as a prelude to the appearance of the Antichrist and of the imminent Last Days. In prophetic style the vision speaks about the end of the world and tells about the invasions of the Persians and the Arabs as heralds of the coming end. Although the apocalypse speaks about the invaders in Biblical terms, Gog and Magog are not mentioned.

While Syriac apocalypses took up historical events in their texts, Coptic in the first half of the 8th century were mostly homiletic. They tried to exhort and console the faithful in view of the imminent divine judgement.[54] Such a homiletic character is found in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius*. It witnesses to the dramatic social and cultural changes in the life of the Christians in Egypt after the Arab invasion. After exhortations to monks and clerics, the text passes to an eschatological vision. It prophesies that in the Last Days God will send innumerable cruel peoples because of the sins committed by the faithful. The author, quoting the *Apocalypse of St. John*, describes in persuasive images the atrocities which will be committed against

[53] The Apocalypse is preserved in the Arabic biography of Shenute and in an Ethiopic abridged version, cf. E. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Egypte chrétienne aux Ve, Vie et VIIe siècles*, 2 vols., Paris 1888-95, p. 351-383; G. Colin, *La version éthiopienne de la vie de Schenoudi*, (CSCO. 445; Script. Aeth. 76), Louvain 1982, p. 11-14; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 279-281; Van Lent, *Koptische Apocalypsen*, p. 15-17.

[54] Van Lent, *Les apocalypses coptes*, p. 184.

mankind. Interpreting the four beasts in the vision of the prophet Daniel, he sees in the Arabs the fourth beast: "It is a brutal nation with no mercy in its heart".[55] Their ruler lives in Damascus. Astonishing enough the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius* does not qualify the enemy as Gog and Magog.

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius* is closely connected with the prophecies of Pseudo-Samuel of Qalamun in the Fayyum desert, who lived through the Arab conquest. His prophetic homily, originally in Coptic, has survived in an Arabic translation of the end of the 8th century.[56] Samuel worries about Christian assimilation of Muslim practices and fears that the Coptic language may not survive in an increasingly Arabic speaking environment.[57] The kings of Rome and Ethiopia, led by the archangel Michael, are expected "to arise and take back the captives" from the Arabs and to restore Christianity in Egypt. The motif of the Last Emperor, inspired by Pseudo-Methodius, is borrowed from Byzantine apocalypses.[58] In opposition to the previous apocalypses, Samuel of Qalamun knows about the confinement of the wild peoples Gog and Magog and identifies them with the Arabs, but he does not connect them with Alexander. They are given the classical eschatological role in announcing the Antichrist:

> After the affliction brought over the Christians in Egypt by the 'people of the hijra', the king of Ethiopia will marry the daughter of the king of the Greeks, and there will be peace for the Christians during forty years. Then three signs will announce the arrival of the ferocious king: the water of springs and rivers will be changed into blood and this will remain so for an hour; water becomes bitter; babies will talk at the age of three months; at harvest-time blood will come forth from the earth.

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[55] B. Witte (ed./transl.), *Die Sünden der Priester und Mönche. Koptische Eschatologie des 8. Jahrhunderts nach Kodex M 602 pp. 104-154 (ps. Athanasius) der Pierpont Morgan Library*, Teil 1: *Textausgabe*, (Arbeiten zum spätantiken und koptischen Ägypten. 12), Altenberge 2002, p. 179-185; cf. id., *Das Ende der Zeiten. Apokalyptische Elemente in einer koptischen Homilie des 8. Jahrhunderts*, in: W. Beltz–J. Tubach (ed.), *Zeit und Geschichte in der koptischen Frömmigkeit bis zum 8. Jahrhundert*, (Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft. 26), Halle 1998, p. 119-127.

[56] Witte, *Sünden der Priester und Mönche*, p. 56. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 287, dates the text not before the 10th c.

[57] J.R. Zaborowski, *Egyptian Christians Implication. Chalcedonians in the Arab Takeover of Egypt: The Arabic Apocalypse of Samuel of Qalamun*, in: *Oriens Christianus* 87 (2003), p. 103. For this question cf. also A. Papconstantinou, *'They shall speak the arabic language and take pride in it': Reconsidering the fate of Coptic after the Arab conquest*, in: *Le Muséon* 120 (2007), p. 273-299.

[58] Van Lent, *Les apocalypses coptes*, p. 184.

> The wise people then will flee to the mountains because after that the nation which is confined behind the land of the Arabs will come forth; they are the two distasteful Gog and Magog. The earth will tremble before them, and people will flee to the mountains, to caves and graveyards, and they will die of hunger and thirst. That race will defile the earth during five months. After that the Lord will send His angel who will exterminate them in one hour.[59]

Another apocalypse, the *Fourteenth Vision of Daniel*, has survived in Coptic and Arabic versions of the 13th century but goes back on a text of the second half of the 8th century. It was probably stimulated by the downfall of Umayyad rule in 750.[60] As the previous apocalypses, the prophecy is inspired by the vision of the Biblical prophet Daniel. The fourth animal represents the last (Muslim) kingdom on earth. The Arabs are expected to be pushed back into the desert when the Last Emperor builds up the Roman Empire for forty years. After that Gog and Magog will overrun the earth and after that the Antichrist will appear.

This brief survey on early Coptic apocalypses show that notwithstanding the strong Alexander tradition in Ancient and Christian Egypt, the Coptic apocalypses under discussion do not see the outburst of Gog and Magog as being related to Alexander 'the two-horned' Unlike the Syrians, the Copts do not associate their long-standing Alexander tradition with apocalyptic visions. The fusion of Alexander's heroic personality with the motif of the enclosure of Gog and Magog is in fact characteristic for the Syriac tradition only.

8. *The Armenian Alexander tradition*

The Armenian image of Alexander hardly differs from the Oriental Christian tradition. He is considered as the ideal sovereign, the prototype of pious kings, protector of sciences and arts, and above all as a hero and liberator from the Persian yoke. It is not by chance

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[59] Translated according to J. Ziadeh, *L'apocalypse de Samuel, supérieur de Deir-el-Qalamoun*, in: *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 10 (1915-1917), p. 403f.

[60] C.H. Becker, *Das Reich der Ismaeliten im Koptischen Danielbuch*, in: Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellschaft d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, Göttingen 1916, p. 17-24; cf. Van Lent, *Koptische Apocalypsen*, p. 28-30; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 289-290.

that an old lore says about him,[61] that he is an Armenian born on the slopes of Mount Ararat, the national symbol of Armenia. The *Alexander Romance* was translated from Greek into Armenian in the second half of the 5th century, probably in the 480s.[62] It follows quite closely the Greek *recensio vetusta* (α). Armenian writers drew heavily from the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*. The *Romance* served as a literary model, e.g. for the "father of Armenian history" Moses Khorenatsi (8th-9th c.). There are about thirty direct parallels between Khorenatsi's *History of the Armenians* and the *Alexander Romance*.[63] Khorenatsi was even credited with the authorship of the Armenian translation. Other Armenian authors like Lazar of Pharpi (5th c.) and Thomas Artsruni (10th c.), were likewise inspired by the *Alexander Romance*.

Although the classical Armenian authors often mention in their books Alexander and the passes in the Caucasus, they do not bring them in direct relation with one another. In other words, they do not seem to have been aware of Alexander building a barrier-gate in the Caucasus. The reason for this dissociation is probably due to the fact that the motif of the construction of a barrier against Gog and Magog was neither part of the Greek *recensio vetusta*, nor of the

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[61] Simonyan, *La versione armena*, p. 281.

[62] Simonyan, ibid.; R. Schmitt, *An Iranist's Remarks on the Armenian Version of the Alexander Romance*, in: R.B. Finazzi–A. Valvo (ed.), *La diffusione dell' eredità classica nell' età tardoantica e medievale. Il « Romanzo di Alessandro » e altri scritti*, (L'eredità classica nel mondo orientale. 2), Alessandria 1998, p. 257. As for the Hellenistic style of the Armenian translation, cf. S.M. Lombardi–G. Uluhogian, *Due redazioni per il Romanzo di Alessandro armeno: Tessere di un mosaico perduto?*, in: R.B. Finazzi–A. Valvo (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 157-174.

There exist nowadays two main Armenian versions. The first, a translation of the 5th c. with subsequent versions until the 13th c. remains quite close to the Greek text, ed. by H. Simonyan, *Patmowt'iwn Aṙek'sandri Makedonac'woy, haykakan xmbagrowt'iwnner*, Erevan 1989; transl. by A.M. Wolohojan, *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes*, (Records of Civilisation: Sources and Studies. 82), New York–London 1969. The second version in different recensions is dated between the 14th and 16th c. It has been strongly interpolated and adapted to the Armenian context. It is this latter version which became popular in a edition of Khatchatur Ketcharatsi (between 1280 and 1310). The oldest manuscript of his book, which has outstanding illuminations, is published in facsimile by G. Traina, *The History of Alexander the Great. An Armenian illuminated codex of the 14th C. (Venice, San Lazzaro 424)*, (Helios. 5), Padova 2001.

[63] R.W. Thomson (transl.), Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians. Translation and Commentary*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980, p. 24-25.

old Armenian version[64] of the *Alexander Romance*. On the other hand, the Armenians occasionally must have learned about mountain passes called "Alexander's gate" keeping off the wild people from the North Caucasian steppes. The East Armenian historian Moses Daskhurantsi (10th c.) bears witness to this knowledge. He summarizes the missionary activities of Mesrop Mashtots in the Caucasus. When Mesrop went up as far as the Derbent Pass, Daskhurantsi reports, he taught the Christian faith to Caucasian "foreign nations" He even brought Christianity to the Hephthalites (Huns), whom "Alexander imprisoned and settled in the Caucasus".[65] Thomas Artsruni, another historian of the same period, reports how the Armenians tried to resist Islam when the Arabs occupied the country. He expresses his fear for forced conversions in an apocalyptic vision of the "gate of divine wrath" Artsruni, however, understands the gate symbolical as a punishment for unfaithfulness.[66]

As said above, the Armenians did not learn about Alexander's gate through the *Alexander Romance* because the oldest version did not yet contain the episode. Nor did they ever learn about the construction against Gog and Magog through the *Alexander Legend*. This text was probably never translated into Armenian, nor the *Alexander Poem*. The question may be asked whether the Armenians came across the motif through the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. Unfortunately, it cannot as yet be decided what influence this text may have exercised on Armenian literature. Neither is it clear whether the entire apocalypse has ever been translated into Armenian before the first millennium. In his history of Siwnik', Stephanus Orbelian (d. 1304) nevertheless gives a long excerpt from the text. The quotation is taken from the final part of the *Apocalypse*. This part deals with the dreads caused by the "sons of the desert" (the Arabs), with the coming of the Antichrist, with the Last Emperor and with the final defeat of the enemies. The extract also refers to Ezekiel's prophecy on the outburst

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[64] Cf. the list of contents according to the oldest Armenian manuscript of the *Alexander Romance*: A. Drost-Abgarjan, *Zur Rezeption des Alexander-Romans in der armenischen Literatur*, in: S. Vashalomidze–L. Greisinger (ed.), *Der christliche Osten und seine Umwelt*, Wiesbaden 2007, p. 4-5.

[65] Daskhurantsi, *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. 55.

[66] "A gate of destruction of souls rather than of bodies that is erring from the pure, orthodox, apostolic faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Human power cannot prevent the opening of the gate to destruction; only for God, powerful and solicitous in all things, is the power easy" (R.W. Thomson [transl.], Thomas Arcruni, *History of the House of the Artsrunik'*, Detroit 1985, p. 191).

of Gog and Magog who are "confined by Alexander in the north".[67] Unfortunately, Orbelian's excerpt breaks off at this point and does not contain the rest of the story, including the passage with Alexander's construction of the gate. What seems to be sure is that Orbelian did not translate the text himself but used an older Armenian translation of the *Methodius-Apocalypse*. Orbelian himself attributes the translation to Stephanus of Siwnik' (d. 735),[68] a renowned scholar and translator of Greek literature into Armenian. The assignment to this scholar might indicate that it was the Greek version of the *Apocalypse* and not the Syriac original, which had been translated in the early 8th century into Armenian.[69] However, it is not at all certain whether it was Stephanus of Siwnik', who had translated the *Apocalypse* from Greek or Syriac. The biography and work of Stephanus do not contain any indication for this. Orbelian's assignation of the Armenian version to this great *vardapet* may be only a sign of his high esteem for him as author and translator. Whether the Armenian version of *Pseudo-Methodius* goes back to an early translation of the 8th century, and whether it has ever been a complete text, cannot be established as long as no other texts of the *Apocalypse* are found.

That the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* was known in Armenian literature, at least since the 12th century, can be deduced from another testimonial. It is a short apocryphal writing entitled "Question" (*harc'umn*). It deals with the history of mankind from Adam to the end of the world. The text quotes another excerpt from *Pseudo-Methodius* which differs from that of Orbelian. This extract indeed contains the episode of Alexander's prayer to God, who

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[67] "C'est alors qu'arrivera ce que dit la prophétie d'Ezechiel, qu'aux jours suprêmes de la fin du monde, Gog et Magog sortiront contre la terre d'Israël, les portes du nord s'ouvriront et donneront passage à ces nations puissantes, confinées dans le septentrion par Alexandre, Gog et Magog ... [names of 22 kingdoms]", (Orbelian, *Histoire de la Siounie*, p. 89-94, here p. 93).

[68] "Vision de S. Méthode, évêque martyr de Patara; paroles au sujet des événements passés, présents et à venir, tirées des divines écritures: le tout traduit par Ter Stéphannos, évêque de Siounie" (Orbelian, *Histoire de la Siounie*, p. 89).

[69] According to M. Stone, the Armenian version was translated from the Syriac, cf. id., *The Armenian Apocryphal Literature. Translation and Creation*, in: *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV-XI)*, (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull' Alto Medioevo. 43), Spoleto 1996, p. 626; id., The Document called "*Question*", in: R.B. Finazzi–A. Valvo (ed.), *La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell' età tardoantica e medievale. Il Romanzo di Alessandro" e altri scritti*, Alessandria 1998, p. 298-300. But he does not give reasons for this suggestion. For a Greek *Vorlage* of the Armenian version pleads Thomson, *Crusaders*, p. 81.

brings closer the mountains to each other, and the episode of the construction of a gate:

> Then he [Alexander] saw the revolting and horrible-looking race of the sons of Ham [Huns]. They used to eat creeping things and all disgusting vermin, flies and rodents and cats and serpents. And they did not bury the bodies of the dead, but ate them. Alexander having seen this, planned not to permit them to dwell in the Holy Land, since they had contaminated it by their disgusting acts. He sought of God earnestly and assembled all of them and their women and children. And going behind them, he expelled them to the Northern extremes, to which there is no entry from the East up to the West nor from any other place. At once he beseeched God, and He heard his prayers and commanded two mountains which were called Northern "C'oyk'", and they approached to one another to [a distance of] 12 cubits. And he arranged there also bronze gates [druns plngzi], and cemented them by means of a sort of invisible material so that, if they should plan to release them by means of iron, they could not [do so], and if they should wish to burn them by fire, they could not do so, because it extinguishes fire. For the nature of this sort [of material] is [to stand firm] beneath the destruction of fire, and it overcomes all demonic ways of planning. He impeded now this abominable race, smitten by intrigue and instructed by this sort of inhumanity, so that they would be unable to open these doors. According to the prophet Ezekiel, in the Last Days, in the end, Gog and Magog will issue forth to the land of Israel. These are 24 races and kings, who are the following. I do not want to write down the names. At that time the Northern gates will be opened suddenly and the races closed up inside will come forth, and the earth will tremble before their faces, and leaping men will flee to caves and clefts and many shall go forth to deserts. And there will be no one who will bury them, for those who come forth from the North will eat the bodies of men. And they will drink the blood of animals. And the earth will not stand before them ....[70]

M. Stone thought that Orbelian (1304) and the author of this extract (12th c.) had used the same Armenian translation of *Pseudo-Methodius*.[71] However, a thorough analysis shows clearly that the anonymous fragment is not a text *sui generis* but an extract from the popular *Book of Questions* of the Armenian theologian Vanakan vardapet (1181-1251).[72] The extract of *Pseudo-Methodius* in Vanakan's work thus

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[70] Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha*, p. 130-133.
Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[72] R. Ervine, *Antecedents and Parallels to Some Questions and Answers on Genesis in Vanakan Vardapet's Book of Questions*, in: *Le Muséon* 113 (2000), p. 424ff.

allows us of dating the Armenian version of the *Apocalypse* in the first half of the 12th century.

Another text of the first half of the 12th century confirms the opinion that *Pseudo-Methodius* was known to Armenians from this period onwards. The *Sermo de Antichristo* of Pseudo-Epiphanius[73] deals with the upheavals of his time. The author describes the invasions of the Turks, alias Gog and Magog, and the arrival of the Crusaders in the Near East. He uses profusely Byzantine and Syriac apocalyptic writings such as *Pseudo-Methodius*.[74] However, among the quoted passages, the episode of Alexander's gate is not adapted.

The above-mentioned testimonials witness to the fact that the Armenians probably did not explicitly articulate Alexander's gate in the Caucasus before the 12th century. Does this mean that they did not know the motif? An important testimony in this context is the Syrian patriarch Michael (d. 1199). In his chronicle (book V, chap. 3) the patriarch speaks of Alexander as the builder of iron gates against the Huns. He even gives the traditional dimensions of the gate, namely 12 cubits long and 8 cubits high.[75] Michael's chronicle has been twice translated and adapted into Armenian[76] in 1246 and 1248. The translator is the prominent Armenian historian Vardan Areweltsi (d. 1271) who, dependent on the Syriac chronicle, renders faithfully the precise indications of his *Vorlage*. When speaking about the Caucasus passes, he underlines their strategic importance against the invasions of the Turks and identifies the latter with Gog and Magog. Alexander, Vardan says, built the gate of bronze and iron in six years with the help of 3000 smiths: "With this long barrier

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[73] G. Frasson, *Pseudo Epiphanii Sermo de Antichristo (Armeniaca de fine temporum)*, (Bibliotheca Armeniaca. Textus et studia. 2), Venedig 1976; cf. the review of J.-P. Mahé, in: *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 16 (1982), p. 502-503; A. Ferrari, *La salvezza viene da Occidente. Il messianismo apocalittico nella cultura armena*, in: *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 6 (2002), p. 71-72.

[74] The motif of the Last Roman Empire occurs for the first time in Armenian literature in the context of the Crusaders; cf. Thomson, *Crusaders*, p. 75-76. This can be seen as another indication of the late reception of the Pseudo-Methodius Apocalypse in Armenia.

William of Rubruck, in the account of his voyage to the Mongol court in Karakorum (1258), where he frequently met with Armenian and Syrian Christians, speaks about an Armenian bishop, called Methodius, being a "prophet", whose prophesy of the Arab conquest had been fulfilled, cf. Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit*, p. 347.

[75] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, i, p. 113.

[76] Cf. A. Schmidt, *Die zweifache armenische Rezension der syrischen Chronik Michaels des Großen*, in: *Le Muséon* 109 (1996), p. 299-319.

Alexander closed the pass between the sea and the mountain".[77] Vardan so far is the only Armenian author mentioning Alexander's gate, because he read it in the Syriac original of the chronicle. Yet, the motif of Alexander's gate in the Caucasus was not as common in the Armenian literature as in Syriac. The lack of concrete information on the Armenian side is confirmed by the fact that the same Vardan, in his own world chronicle, which he wrote just after the translation of the Syriac chronicle, does not refer anymore to Alexander's gate, although here, too, he draws heavily on the same source and other Syriac texts.[78]

We are convinced that the Armenians, in so far as Alexander's gate is concerned, were not aware of the specific Syriac tradition of the enclosure of Gog and Magog in the Caucasus. We are also convinced that they did not develop a genuine Armenian tradition of such a barrier-gate, at least not in Sallam's time. This remark bears directly on the reason why Sallam, after his visit to the Caucasus, did not remain longer in the region but continued his journey to the Far East in search of Alexander's wall.

9. *The Georgian Alexander tradition*

A Georgian translation of the Greek *Alexander Romance* is not attested before the 17th century.[79] This does not mean that there never existed ancient Alexander traditions in Georgia. For indeed, Alexander's personality occupies a key position in the medieval Georgian *Annals* (*K'art'lis cxovreba*). Alexander is represented here quite differently from the Greek and Oriental Alexander tradition. Alexander's invasion of Kartli (East Georgia/Iberia), the siege of the

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[77] *Armenian Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* I, p. 395f.; Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand*, p. 285.

[78] Cf. R.W. Thomson, *The Historical compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i*, in: *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 43 (1989), p. 131.

[79] The extant Georgian version was translated from Russian between 1700 and 1713 and goes back to a Serbian *Vorlage*, which in its turn reproduces the Middelbyzantine version ζ, cf. K. Kekelidze, *History of the Old Georgian Literature*, ii, Tbilisi 1981, p. 362-364 (in Georgian); A. Baramidze, *Alek'sandriani*, Tbilisi 1940, p. 245 (in Georgian); U. Moennig, *Die spätbyzantinische Renzension *ζ des Alexanderromans*, (Neograeca Medii Aevi. 6), Köln 1992, p. 40. C.B. Lerner, *The Romance of Alexander the Great as One of the Sources of the Conversion of Kartli*, in: *Caucasica* 4 (2001), p. 74-76, suggests a Hebrew Alexander Romance as *Vorlage* of the Georgian annals, but his arguments are not convincing.

old capital Mtzcheta on the river Kura (Mtqvari) and the installation of a member of his family in the capital as king are only known in Georgian tradition. In reality, the historical Alexander did not visit any part of Georgia, but the Georgian Annals begin their national story by forging a direct link between the charismatic world conqueror and the first Georgian royal dynasty of Parnavaz (300 B.C.) who settled in the capital of Mtzcheta. The Annals thus want to associate the Georgian monarchy with Alexander's sovereignty.[80] At the peak of Georgian power the great Georgian king David II (d. 1125) and his successors were even proclaimed 'Aleksandriani', to be "new Alexanders" or "like Alexander".[81]

The transmission of the *Georgian Annals* profoundly reworked the common Alexander traditions[82] so that Alexander was made to invade Kartli. This aspect becomes manifest when Alexander is said to have met local people during his conquest. These proto-Georgian tribes are said to have awful impure customs. Consequently the "Georgian Alexander" reacts in the same radical way as the "Syriac Alexander" had done in that he murders all impure, wild people and clears the country from non-Georgian elements:

> Alexander was the son of Nektabeno, an Egyptian, as it is written in the account on him in the book of the Greeks. This Alexander conquered the world to its very ends. He came from the west, entered from the south, went up by the north, crossed the Caucasus, and came to Kartli. He found all the Kartvelians living by the most foul religion of all nations. For in marriage and fornication they paid no attention to family relationship, they ate everything that was living, they ate corpses like wild beasts and animals; the description of their way of life is inexpressible. He saw that these wild heathen peoples whom we call 'real' Turk and Kipchak were settled on the river Mtqvari in its winding. Alexander was astonished, because other peoples did not live thus. He wished to extirpate them from the cities he came to the land of Georgia and found these fortified cities he divided his army and besieged all these fortified cities; he himself stayed at Mtzcheta Alexander conquered all Kartli. He slaughtered all the mingled tribes living in Kartli; he also slew or took captive all the foreign tribes

[80] Rapp, *Medieval Georgian Historiography*, p. 11, 113, 120.

[81] Cf. A. Tvaradze, *Geschichten und Lobpreisungen der Kronenträger. Christliche Kriegsideologie, Toleranz und Weltherrschaftsgedanken in der georgischen Chronik des 13. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Le Muséon* 121 (2008), p. 210. As for the name "Alexander" well-liked in Georgian nobility in the 15th c., cf. St.H. Rapp, *Imagining History at the Crossroads: Persia, Byzantium, and the Architects of the Written Georgian Past*, (PhD. Diss.), Michigan 1997, p. 216.

[82] Rapp, *Medieval Georgian Historiography*, p. 119f., 263.

> including women and innocent children less than fifteen years old. But he spared the tribes descended from Kartlis.[83]

Despite the fact that a direct witness has not survived, it is quite obvious that the Medieval *Georgian Annals* adapted the *Alexander Romance* and *Pseudo-Methodius*[84] when they relate Alexander's conquest in Georgia. Even the Syriac *Alexander Poem* is suggested as a potential source[85] of the oldest part of the *Annals* which, after a long oral transmission, were written down in the 8th-9th century. But in spite of the high esteem in which Alexander was held in the Georgian history, there is no trace in the national tradition that there was any gate or wall built by him in the Caucasus. The third Georgian king Mirian (162-112 B.C.) is said to have built a fortification (*simagre*) at the Darial Pass in order to keep off the old enemies of the Georgians, namely the Khazars and the Ossetes (Alans). This tradition was still upheld by Wakhushti[86] who in 1745 was reediting the Georgian Annals.

The enemies of old beyond the Caucasus, who lived on the other side of the Darial Pass, were called "Magog" This information comes from Iovane Sabanisdze, the author of the *Martyrium of St. Abo*, composed between 786 and 790, one of the earliest works in Georgian literature. St. Abo was an Arab merchant from Baghdad, who sold spices and fragrant-smelling products in Tiflis when Georgia came under Arab rule. He secretly became a Christian and fled through the Darial Pass to Ossetia, together with Nerses, the prince of Kartli, who had fallen out of favour with the caliph:

> Abo came as a refugee from his own country [Mesopotamia] into the land of the North, where is the home and abode of the sons of Magog who are called the Khazars—wild men, fearsome of face, savage in character, drinkers of blood, without religion, except that they recognize a God creator.

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[83] Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, p. 23-24.

[84] No Georgian translation of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius has survived. Leonti Mroveli (2nd half 8th c.), the author of this part of the Georgian Annals, used probably Syriac works—among others the Cave of Treasures and the Book of the Bee –, and second-hand oral traditions from Syriac and Medieval Georgian adaptations (Rapp, *Medieval Georgian Historiography*, p. 129).

[85] F. von Lilienfeld, *Amt und geistliche Vollmaht der heiligen Nino*, in: M. Kohlbacher–M. Lesinski (ed.), *Horizonte der Christenheit*, (Oikonomia. 34), Erlangen 1994, p. 233.

[86] Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, p. 41; Brosset, *Description géographique de la Géorgie*, p. 228.

Abo thus found in the realm of the Khazars, in the midst of their rough customs, "many towns and villages in that Northern land which by the grace of the Holy Spirit abide securely in the Christian faith".[87] The quotation is not without a certain contradiction. On the one side the author Sabanisdze qualifies the wild Khazars, the "Magogs", by the traditional characteristics for the Northern people who live beyond civilisation. On the other side he admits the Christian life of a large part of them. Abo, who could not be baptised in the Christian country Georgia, was baptized in the rough north by Khazar priests. We find a similar contradiction between the conventional attitude towards the peoples of the North and the confrontation with the rather "human-looking" reality in late Medieval Syrian and Armenian sources concerning the origin of the Turks.[88]

10. *Themes on Gog and Magog*

Origin and Identification

According to the Eastern Christian texts, inspired by the Bible, Gog and Magog are descendants of Noah's son Japheth who settled in the Northern part of the world. They were identified with different "impure peoples": Scythians, Huns, Alans, Khazars, Turks, Kipchaks, or the Mongols. The common denomination of these peoples is that they all were accomplished horsemen who invaded the Roman Empire from the Eurasian steppes and whose civilisations were unknown to the citizens of the Roman Empire.

Appearance

Gog and Magog are regarded as the chieftains of 15 or 22 to 24 kingdoms and nations.[89] The Syriac tradition presents a highly uniform image of the sons of Japheth: They are barbarians, no lovers of mankind, ugly, filthy, wild and wicked horsemen. They are not considered to be human beings, because they are giants of stature

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[87] D.M. LANG, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, London ²1976, p. 118-119; cf. P. Peeters, *Les Khazares dans la Passion de Saint Abo de Tiflis*, in: *Analecta Bollandiana* 52 (1934), p. 51.

[88] Cf. p. ■■.

[89] For the number of kingdoms, cf. *Pseudo-Methodios*, ii, p. 25; Reinink, *Pseudo-Ephraems Rede*, p. 445-449, 451.

and strength.[90] They are numberless like clouds of insects and they cause terror and panic. They practise magic and cannibalistic rituals to strengthen their power; they feed on carcasses and they devour blood and all sort of impure food. The terror, impurity and cruelty of the horsemen are the reason for Alexander to exclude them of the habituated world of the *oikumene*, and thus secure peace for the civilized nations. Most of the apocalyptic features of Gog and Magog are common to Christian and Islamic texts. But none of the horrible characteristics ascribed to them derive from the Bible. Gog and Magog serve as perfect symbols of ugly, brutal foreigners. They are dog-like men. Living at the border of the civilized world, their inhumanity degrades them to the level of cannibals.[91] The *Alexander Legend*, which identifies Gog and Magog with the Huns, decisively disseminates the image of horse-mounted hordes with blue eyes and red hair. They are dressed in skins, eat raw flesh of everything which dies and drink the blood of men and animals. They are swifter than the wind, running between heaven and earth, their chariots and swords and spears flash like fearful lightning. Each horseman has two or three horses at the same time. The noise of the riders is more terrible than the voice of a lion. By every side of hundred men stand one hundred thousand bands of demons. They possess such a force because they are sorcerers knowing magic practices. Their women are like Amazons[92] fighting even better than the men. They have only one breast and they hang knives upon their thighs, arms, necks, so that, wherever a woman stretches out her hand she can lay hold of a knife with which she wounds a man. The *Legend* attributes to Gog and Magog every kind of atrocity. A symptom for their warlike mentality is the blessing of the arms:

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[90] Cf. the Arabic tradition which has a different approach, Chapter 6, p. ■■ (i).

[91] *Alexander Legend*, p. 151f.; *Pseudo-Methodius*, ii, p. 26. Herodotus saw cannibals already among the Scythians. For these ancient features in classical literature, cf. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, p. 83, 103, 178. See also Chapter 4 for the Muslim tradition which dependant on the Syriac tradition consideres Gog and Magog to have dog-faces.

[92] It is interesting to note that the Amazons, living according to ancient geography near the Scythians and thus neighbouring on the Caucasus, were considered in Latin Medieval literature, e.g. the *Historia Scholastica* of *Petrus Comestor* (1179) and the very popular travel account of Jehan de Mandeville (1356), as the guardians of Alexander's wall at the Caucasian Gates (Gog and Magog here associated with the Ten Tribes of Israel), cf. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 58-85.

> They are said to fetch a pregnant woman, pile up a fire and bind her in front of the fire and cook her child within her. Her belly bursts open and the child comes forth, roasted. Then they lay it in a trough and throw water upon its body, and its body melts away in this water; and they take their swords and bows and arrows and spears, and dip them in this water so that each one gain the force of a hundred thousand horsemen.[93]

The Syrian historian Dionysius of Telmahre also harks back to the *Alexander Legend* when relating the dreadful invasion of the Khazars in 627. He says: "The Turks do not know God, they ignore that they have been created by Him, they do not listen to His word and despise Him" He goes on by saying that in 732 the Umayyad prince al-Maslama, fearing the destruction the Khazars might cause, had torn down Alexander's gate and had rebuilt it as the "Gate of the Turks" so that the Khazars might no more cross the border.[94] The Armenian historian Moses Daskhurantsi gives a similar picture of the Khazars, inspired by the apocalyptical tradition: ugly, insolent, broad-faced, eyelashless, mob in the shape of women with flowing hair and well-aimed bows.[95]

The *Alexander Poem* stresses Alexander's divine role in God's eschatological plan with humankind. Here the kingdoms of Gog and

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[93] *Alexander Legend*, p. 151, 231-233. The same practices are attributed to the "magicians" Gog and Magog in the *Sermon on the Last Days*, p. 86-87. Cf. the rewriting of the episode in the Ethiopic Alexander Romance: "Their women are Amazons. They eat their meat raw. They drink the blood of a slain man, and feed on reptiles. They never abide in towns or cities, and do not associate with their fellow-creatures; their dwellings are booths and tents. They run as swift as the flight of stags, and move as quickly as horses. They fight only when several of their companions are mounted on horses, and gallop about like wild goats. God sends them to attack the nation which merits punishment, for they are merciless. When they are about to go to war, they take a pregnant woman, strip her naked, light a huge fire and set her in front of it until the child is cooked in her womb. Then they rip open her belly, take the child out, place it on a large trough and flood it with water. They light a fire under the trough and make the water boil until the flesh is entirely dissolved. The water is then sprinkled over their beasts and weapons of war. If a man should fight against a 100000 enemies he would be able to conquer and slay them. This happens because it is the work of the devil, whom they serve. When a woman conceives, she perceives that she must draw near to her husband that the child in her womb may be an offering unto Satan, their father" (Budge, *The Alexander book in Ethiopia*, p. 139; id., *History of Alexander the Great*, p. 231-233).

[94] I.-B. Chabot (ed.), *Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, ii, (CSCO 104; Script. Syr. 53), Paris 1953, p. 169; R. Hespel (transl.), *Chronicon anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, II, *gallice vertit*, (CSCO 507; Script. Syr. 213), Louvain 1989, p. 127.

[95] Daskhurantsi, *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. 83-85.

Magog's rule are not identified with the Huns or other northern enemies. Nevertheless, the author of the *Alexander Poem* does not get away from the current popular image of Gog and Magog, and describes them in the same terrific images as "flying" Asiatic horsemen:

> They are of awful aspect, of terrible form, of every size in height, each one of them being from six to seven cubits; their noses are flat, and their foreheads hateful. They bath in blood and in blood they also wash their heads; they drink blood and devour the flesh of men and of beasts. They wear skins, sharpen weapons and forge wrath. They are cruel, bitter, tumultuous, evil, sinful, excitable, proud, filthy, and haughty. They are most ferocious and have more wars than all other nations.

Their slaughter of babies recalls the *Alexander Legend*:

> These people shall go forth for slaughter and blood and strife, and shall fly and fill the face of the world with wars and slaughters... they shall dash weaned children on the stones without sparing, and they shall rip up women with their child and cast them down with their offspring...

The *Poem* depicts in gaudy colours how, like locusts, Gog and Magog rush in numerous armies through the eschatological gate.[96]

The *Apocalypse of Daniel* (629) evokes the same horror. Gog and Magog are wild and dirty Huns of enormous stature. They seem to fly because they ride faster than the wind. They have blue eyes, flat noses, and are dressed in skins. Numerous as clouds of insects, they take control over the world and cause terror and panic. They practice magic and cannibalistic rituals to strengthen their power. They feed on carcasses and devour blood and all sorts of unclean food.[97]

Similar qualifications are found in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. The author especially stresses the uncleanness of Gog and Magog. Explaining the reason why Alexander decides to imprison them, he writes:

> Alexander saw the sort of uncleanness they were practising, how they would eat the creeping things of the earth, that is, they were eating mice, dogs and kittens, and how they would not enshroud or bury their

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[96] *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 72-73, 106-119, 126-127; cf. Budge, *History of Alexander the Great*, p. 177f., 186-189, 192.

[97] M. Henze (ed./transl.), *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel. Introduction, Text and Commentary*, (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum. 11), Tübingen 2000, p. 92-93.

> dead, and how they would eat as a delicacy the foetuses that women had miscarried.

In the eschatological part of the Apocalypse when the gates of the North are supposed to be opened, the author focuses again on the inhuman habits of Gog and Magog:

> They will be eaten in the sight of their parents while they are watching. For these peoples that will come out from the north eat human flesh, drink the blood of wild beasts, and eat the creeping things of the earth—mice, snakes and scorpions, and all the unclean reptiles that creep on the ground, and even the bodies of abominable animals and the aborted of the cattle. They will slaughter the children and give (them) to their mothers and force them to eat the bodies of their sons. They even eat dead dogs and kittens and all kinds of imagination. They will destroy the earth, and nobody will be able to stand before them.[98]

It seems that some Syriac writers who later come into direct contact with the "Northern peoples", Turks or Mongols, distance themselves from the popular images of the apocalyptic tradition. Michael the Syrian for his part seems to dissociate himself from these weird stories. In book XIV of his chronicle, which deals with the Turks, he considers them as offspring of Magog, who dwell in the north-west of the world.[99] In this context he quotes the prophecy of Ezekiel, and repeats the known brutal characteristics of Gog and Magog. But he attributes these traditional patterns to the Georgians, who are, as Gog, considered to be descendants of the Biblical figure Japheth: "This and similar things are told by the Georgians who live in their neighbourhood and who are guardians of the gate" Michael says. It is as if he wishes to distance himself from the old yarn that does not any longer fit to his actual knowledge about the Turks. The Syrian patriarch in fact gives a more nuanced and rather positive interpretation of the Turks: their art of making tents, their ability in taming animals, their religion and social organisation. He even admits that they have positive qualities like being incorruptible, prudent, and clever in organizing their life.[100] Considering that the Turks

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[98] *Pseudo-Methodius*, ii, p. 21f, 68; Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 133, 151; cf. the *Book of the Bee*, p. 127, 129.

[99] In other passages Michael equates Magog with the Huns and the Alans (Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, i, p. 113; ii, p. 364).

[100] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, iii, p. 152. Michael's regard on the Turks is studied in detail by Dickens, *Sons of Magog*. For Barhebraeus who identifies Gog and

in their northern habitat have quite human aspects, Michael leaves the answer open as to whether they should indeed be identified with the wild nations of Ezekiel's prophecy.

The Armenian redactor of Michael's chronicle, Vardan Areweltsi (13th c.), also explains the origin of the Turks in more realistic terms. Their tribe is from Thorgom (Gog's brother),[101] he says, and some are Christian, others Muslim while some remained pagan. Vardan, too, no more considers the Turks as an incarnation of Gog and Magog, even if he repeats one well-known characteristic of wild people, namely the impurity. But he does not further narrate the horror story of cooked embryos or that of warrior women being Amazons. Vardan rather gives concrete details about the Turk's way of live and makes interesting ethnographical observations about their religion and social organisation. He recommends their customs, and even adds that they have abandoned cannibalism. Vardan thus confronts the old yarn with the reality and does not consider the Turks as the apocalyptic people of the North.[102] When the Mongols, however, the new "Magogits" entered the historical scene, the qualifications of Gog and Magog—magicians, robbers, and venerators of idols—became again actual. The Armenian historian Grigor of Akants (1250) gives an impressive description which cannot deny his fear of the riding hordes:

> They were not like men. They were terrible to look at and indescribable, with large heads like a buffalo's, narrow eyes like a fledgling's, a snub nose like a cat's, projecting snouts like a dog's, narrow loins like an ant's, short legs like a hog's, and by nature with no beards at all. With a lion's strength they have voices more shrill than an eagle. They appear where least expected. Their women wear beautiful hats covered at the top with a head shawl of brocade. Their broad faces were plastered with a poisonous mixture of gum. They give birth to children like snakes and eat like wolves. Death does not appear among them,

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Magog with the Huns, Kipchaks, Alans and Turks, cf. the references in Takahashi, *Aristotelian Meteorology in Syriac*, p. 382f. The continuator of the chronicle of Barhebraeus refers several times to the Ilkhanids as the "House of Magog" (H. Takahashi, *Observations on Bar Ebroyo's Marine Geography*, in: *Hugoye* 6,1 (2003) n. 53 [http://beth-mardutho.cua.edu/hugoye/]).

[101] Vardan probably saw a sound similarity between Turk and Thorgom; cf. the popular etymology of the name Turk (*al-turk*, from *turika*) in Arabic sources (Chapter 4, p. ■■ 19).

[102] *Armenian Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* II, p. 391. For a similar changing to a more realistic view about the peoples of the north see the account of Ibn Ḥawḳal (10th c.), cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■.

for they survive for three hundred years. They do not eat bread at all.[103]

Location

Shocked by the impurity of the peoples, Alexander encloses them, says *Pseudo-Methodius*, "in the Northern regions (*suppay garbya*) at the entry, i.e., the gate of the world in the North" (*tar'eh d-'amla men garbya*).[104] According to the ancient geographical tradition, the entire Eastern Caucasus was called the "Northern land" The cold and mostly unknown region was understood as being inhabited by uncivilized, warlike and primitive peoples. Thus the *Cave of Treasures* settles Gog and Magog at the Northern border of the inhabited world, up to the sources of the river Tigris.[105] For Elishe, the Armenian historian of the 5th century, it was a punishment to be exiled in the region of "Guran and Maguran".[106] The *Alexander Poem* made Alexander march towards the "Land of Darkness", where "dreadful great mountains shape the border, that God has set forever between the Magogits and mankind, a rough area" (*athra 'asqa*). The mountains are terribly high, dreadful and impassable.[107] Specifically, Georgia

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[103] R. Blake–R. Frye (transl.), *History of the Nation of the Archers*, in: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12 (1949), p. 295f.

In the Medieval Western tradition the popular etymology derived the name Mongols from "Magogoli"—descendants of Magog. European countries considered the Mongol invasion as the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the escape of Gog and Magog from behind the Caspian Gates. Rumour had it that the Mongols had dog-faces. Gog and Magog were seen as "duo reges principales: Gog, qui gladio pugnat; et Magog, qui precipit, maledicit et benedicit" (C.S.F. Burnett, *An Apocryphal Letter from the Arabic Philosopher al-Kindi to Theodore, Frederick II's Astrologer concerning Gog and Magog, the enclose Nations, and the scourge of the Mongols*, in: *Viator* 15 (1984), p. 153, 164). For the identification of Gog and Magog with the Mongols in the eyes of the Medieval Latin tradition cf. Ch. Burnett–P. Gautier Dalché, *Attitudes towards the Mongols in Medieval Literature: The XXII Kings of Gog and Magog from the Court of Frederick II to Jean de Mandeville*, in: *Viator* 22 (1991), p. 153-168.

[104] *Pseudo-Methodius*, ii, p. 22.

[105] *Cave of Treasures*, ii, p. 72, 73.

[106] R.W. Thomson (transl.), *Elishē. History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies. 5), Cambridge/Ma., 1982, p. 208.

[107] *Alexander Poem*, ii, p. 69, 76. See also Michael the Syrian who writes: "La région habitée par ces Turks, qui sont Gog et Magog, se trouve au nord-est ... Cette région s'étend de l'extrémité de l'Orient ... jusqu'aux extrémités du Septentrion, dans le voisinage de la contrée occidentale, dans l'étendue de sa plus grande longueur ; et en largeur jusqu'aux confins septentrionaux de la terre habitée. On dit de cette région qu'elle est entourée de montagnes inaccessibles" (*Chronique*, iii, p. 151). In his *Candelabre du Sanctuaire* Barhebraeus repeats several times the geographical idea

(Iberia) appears in the eyes of Syrian Christians to be the Land of Darkness. Thus the Palestinian monk Peter the Iberian (d. 488) is called a representative of "those Northern countries which stretch out towards the rising of the sun".[108] It is here "at the confines of the North [...] in the face of the North wind" (*b-appay ruha d-garbya*), where "the horn of the North wind rests upon it"[109] that Alexander imprisons Gog and Magog. Associating in his time the Turks with Gog and Magog, Michael the Syrian remarks:

> Their habitat extends from sunrise to the extreme north of the inhabited world. This region is said to be surrounded by unassailable mountains: only at two spots are there gates which they can pass through: one opens towards the East, in the direction of Persia [Derbent], the other towards Georgia [Darial], at the spot where there also are fortresses. This gate is said to be the one which was built at Alexander's order to prevent the peoples of the North from marching out. In earlier times the kings of the peoples of the Orient were said to have guarded these gates, but at present they are in the hands of the Arabs. The eastern gate, on the other hand, is a narrow road of a two days' march long. At its end fortresses are built, manned with garrisons which prevent the numerous barbarians from coming out" [110]

Michael points to the two main passes in the Caucasus range: the Derbent Pass in Caucasian Albania, present-day Daghestan, also known as "Guard of the Huns" (Armen. *pahak hunac'*), or Tchogh Pass (Arm. *kapan Tcholay*), or "Albanian Gate" and "Gate of the Gates" (Ar. Bab al-Abwab), and to the Darial Pass in Eastern Georgia. The passes cut through the mountains from north to south and have for centuries been used for invading peoples from the north (Scythians, Alans, Huns, Khazars and Turkish tribes). Both passes were strongly fortified by Romans and Persians. The Darial

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of "unknown, desolate and impassable lands and mountains of the north". He locates the land of the Huns and the enclosed Gog at the Eastern end of the fifth clime (Takahashi, *Aristotelian Meteorology in Syriac*, p. 382, 383); cf. the Arabic tradition which locates Gog and Magog between the fifth and seventh clime (Chapter 4, p. ■■17).

[108] R. Raabe (transl.), *Petrus der Iberer. Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1895, p. 4 (ed.), p. 14 (transl.); cf. C.B. Lerner, *The Romance of Alexander the Great as one of the sources of the Conversion of Kartli*, in: *Caucasica* 4 (2001), p. 73. For the denomination "land of the rising sun", see the Alexander Legend and Pseudo-Methodius above.

[109] *Alexander Legend*, p. 144, 149, 152. Barhebraeus in his *Book of Meteorology* defines the North wind as cold "because it passes over a multitude of snow-covered mountains before coming to us" (Takahashi, *Aristotelian Meteorology in Syriac*, p. 175).

[110] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, i, p. 151f. and i, p. 103.

Pass in particular was the weak point in the defence system of the Caucasus. Since the second half of the 5th century it was a permanent problem. The battle for the maintenance of the costly defence system, and the fact that the Romans were rather reluctant to comply with the Persian demands, concealed a continuous danger of war between the great military powers which wrestled for predominance in the Caucasus.[111]

Although both passes were often confused by classical authors and indistinctly called "Caucasian Gates" or "Caspian Gates",[112] Michael the Syrian clearly locates Alexander's gate at the Darial Pass[113] according to the Syrian tradition. The narrow gorge of the Darial Pass on the Georgian military road connecting present-day Vladikavkaz and Tiflis was also known as "Garrison of the Iberians" (Gr. Iouroeipaax),[114] "Gate of the Alans" (Arm. *drunk' alanac'*), or "Guard of the Gorge" (Arm. *jorapahak*).[115] The pass is described as a magnificent gorge through which the Terek rushes between granite cliffs rising to heights of from 1300 to 1600 m. Already Strabo mentioned the difficult climb into the defile.[116] The narrow entry was

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[111] Cf. Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity*, p. 270; cf. Luther, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites*, p. 105-106, 108.

[112] Cf. E. Kettenhofen, Art. *Darband*, in: E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vii (1996), p. 13-14; Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity*, p. 216; Kolendo, *Caspiae Portae*, p. 142.

[113] Vardan Areweltsi, however, in his Armenian translation of Michael's chronicle identifies Alexander's gate with Derbent, an attribution which became widely accepted in the 12th c. He says that Alexander closed "with this long barrier the pass between the sea and the mountain", cf. above p. ■■ 24.

[114] Kettenhofen, ibid.; cf. Kettenhofen in his review of Luther, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitshrift* 91 (1998), p. 163. He corrects Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 100, 106, and R.H. Hewsen, *Armenia and Georgia. Christianity and Territorial Development from the 4th to the 7th Century*, TAVO, BVI 14, Wiesbaden 1987, both scholars identifying *Iouroeipaax* with Derbent. As for the Persian etymology of the name, cf. L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents: contributions à la géographie historique de la région du Ve s. avant l'ère chrétienne au VIe s. de cette ère*, Beirut 1962, p. 92-93.

[115] Vardan Areweltsi associates the Turks (Kipchaks) with the Georgian word *xitšaxk'*, because they are supposed to be closed up as in a gorge (*xiw*) and in a vessel (*tšax*) (*Armenian Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* II, p. 392; *Armenian Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* I, p. 399; Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand*, p. 287).

[116] Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity*, p. 46f. Cf. Pliny the Elder, who writes in his *Natural History* VI:9: "With these peoples of Iberia [...] are found the Caucasian Gates, called by many, quite erroneously, the Caspian, a formidable work of nature, between steep clefts of the mountains where one can find gates, closed with iron beams; right through the middle of these gates flows the river Diri odoris [which means 'of nauseating odour'] On a rock on this side of the gates stands a castle,

since early Christian times fortified and might have supported the idea that Alexander was connected presumably with the building of these strongholds.[117] The Georgians were often seen as the guardians of the gate. Their habitat at the entry of the Caucasian pass was also well known in the Medieval Western tradition. The Europeans considered the Georgians as the "antemurale" of the Christian world against the new invasion of Gog and Magog, i.e. the Mongols.[118]

The Breasts of the North

The two mountains in the Caucasus which on Alexander's prayer were supposed to approach to one another so that a barrier could be built in the remaining pass are called in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* "Sons of the North" (*bnay garbya*).[119] However, the majority

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called Cumania; it is established strongly enough to bar the passage of innumerable troops".

[117] On the ruins of this pass, Julius von Klaproth, who made his way through the gorge of Darial in 1812, writes: "Das Tal mag hier nicht über 60 Faden breit sein, und wird von zwei hohen steilen Gebirgen eingeschlossen. Auf der Westseite sah man sonst noch Überbleibsel der Quermauer [der einstigen Festung], von der es eingeschlossen wurde. Am Felsen waren östlich nach dem Terek zu Treppen gehauen, um Wasser zu holen, und unter der Festung sah man Spuren von Gärten und Obstbäumen, obgleich die Gegend schon seit langer Zeit verlassen war [...]. Nach der georgischen Geschichte soll Dariela von dem dritten Könige Mirwan [...], der von 167 bis 123 v. Chr. regierte, erbaut worden sein, um sein Land gegen die Einfälle der Chazaren, die im Norden des Kaukasus wohnten, zu schützen. Der Name Dariela scheint tartarischen Ursprungs zu sein, den Dar oder Thar bedeutet eng, schmal, und jol oder jöl Weg, also Darjöl einen engen Pass, wie denn in der Tat das Tal hier so eng ist, daß wie bei Thermophyla 300 Mann mit Leichtigkeit eine große Armee zurückhalten können [...] Ohne Zweifel ist Dariela, die auch von den Georgiern Chewiskari oder die Pforte von Chewi genannt wird, die bei den Alten so berühmte Kaukasischen Pforten" (J. von Klaproth, *Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien*, i, Halle–Berlin 1814, p. 671-679).

[118] "Porro David, rex Georgianorum, qui cum suis predecessoribus Portas Caspias tenuit et custodivit, ubi sunt inclusi Gog et Magog ... cuius terra et regnum contra Medos et Persas est nobis quasi antemurale" (*Anselli Cantoris S. Sepulchri Epistola ad Ecclesiam Parisiensem*, in: Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, Paris 1899, vol. 162, col. 729). The scholiast Oliver (1170-1227) participating in the 5th Crusade thought that the Georgians live in direct neighbourhood to Gog and Magog: "Sunt autem Georgiani cultores Christi Persis vicini longo terrarum tractu a Terra promissionis distantes, quorum dominium extenditur usque ad Caspios montes, in quibus dem tribus incluse Antichristi desiderant tempora" (H. Hoogeweg, *Die Schriften des Kölner Domscholasters, späteren Bischofs von Paderborn und Kardinalbischofs von S. Sabina Oliverus*, Tübingen 1894, p. 233). I am grateful to Dr. Peter Halfter (Marbach and Louvain-la-Neuve) for this reference.

[119] *Pseudo-Methodius*, ii, p. 22f; Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 133, corrects the translation "Sons" on the basis of the Greek translation into "Breasts".

of Greek, Syriac, Armenian and Latin sources call the mountains "Breasts of the North" (*bezzay garbya*; Arm: *stink' hiwsisi*; Gr. *mazoi tou borra*; Lat. *ubera aquilonis*)[120] or "Breasts of the World".[121] According to a Syriac astronomical treatise of the 6th century describing the winter season and the northern geography of the world, the "Breasts of the North" were made of crystal.[122] We may remark that this name occurs in many Syriac texts, and it was this reading which became prevalent in the eastern and western Alexander tradition. Certainly, it is not assured which of these names is the earliest occurrence.[123] However, "Breasts of the North" seems to be a common designation in Eastern Christian literature and more in accordance with the natural shape of the two mountains being separated by a gap, a position which is liable to be cut of by a barrier-gate.

The caliph in Samarra, having established a governor in the Caucasus,[124] was well aware of the strategic spot at the Darial Pass and might have known the Syriac name. This may have been the reason why his envoy Sallam directed his steps at first to the Caucasus to begin his search for Alexander's gate there. The fact that the interstice, where Alexander was supposed to have built the barrier-gate, lies between the "Breast of the North", excludes the other

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[120] Aerts–Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, p. 115; J. Trumpf, *Alexander, die Bersiler und die Brüste des Nordens*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 64 (1971), p. 326, 328. In the Mediaeval Hebrew *Alexander Romance*, the two mountains are called according to the Latin tradition "Promontorium" and "Boreum", cf. Van Bekkum, *A Hebrew Alexander Romance*, p. 119; id., *A Hebrew Romance According to MS Héb. 671.5 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale*, (Hebrew Language and Literature Series. 1), Groningen 1994, p. 77; cf. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 50f.

[121] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, iii, p. 152; *Armenian Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* II, p. 391. *Armenian Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* I, p. 395. The mountains are called in the 12th c. Armenian extract of Pseudo-Methodius as preserved in Vanakan's *Book of Question* "Northern C'oyk'" (*c'oyk' hiwsisi*), cf. above p. ■■. The name C'oyk' cannot be explained, cf. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha*, p. 130 n. 27. The word is perhaps a corrupted form of *cags hiwsisi* ("ends of the north") or *stink'* ("breasts")?

[122] A. Götze, *Die Schatzhöhle. Überlieferung und Quellen*, Heidelberg 1922 (Sitzungsberichte d. Heidelb. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl. 1922, 4), p. 46.

[123] Cf. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius*, ii, p. 23 n. VIII,7 (1), and Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, p. 174 n. 8, and Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, p. 43, for references of both names in Syriac and Greek literature. The difference of the names lies in a minimal variation in the Syriac writing. The Syriac letters *n* in *bny* ("sons") or *z* in *bzy* ("breasts") can be easily confused in copying the manuscripts, cf. A. Schmidt, *Die "Brüste des Nordens" und Alexanders Mauer gegen Gog und Magog*, in: W. Brandes–F. Schmieder (ed.), *Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, (Millennium-Studien. 16), p. 89-100.

[124] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■ (3).

famous Caucasian pass, the so-called "Albanian or Caucasian Gate" at Derbent (Ar. Bab al-Abwab),[125] which is situated between the Caspian Sea and the Eastern slopes of the Caucasus so that there can be no question of two mountains. The original location of Alexander's gate was since the Syriac *Alexander Legend* supposed to be at the pass of Darial. Knowing these geographical facts, which can be traced from the Syriac attestations to the Koran and the Muslim tradition, there was no reason for Sallam to search for Alexander's wall at the "Albanian Gate" in Derbent.

[125] Cf. EI² *s.v.* Bāb al-Abwāb (D.M. Dunlop).

GOG AND MAGOG AND ALEXANDER 'THE TWO-HORNED' IN THE KORAN [1?]

In the previous Chapter we have seen how deeply the motif of Alexander and his barrier against Gog and Magog was rooted in Syriac tradition. It is worth noting that Sallam's journey starting in Samarra to find Alexander's wall, took place in the same milieu at the very end of this literary period when the Syriac motif of Alexander's barrier had become imbedded in Islam. It is but logical to follow the theme in the upcoming literature of a new culture which was going to make its entry in the Near East at this point, namely the Koran, the Early Islamic literature and the Arab poets.

In Islam, Alexander is known under the names of al-Iskandar and of 'the two-horned one' (*Dhu 'l-Qarnayn*). The epithet he is given in the Koran and in Islamic tradition[2] is already known in the Syriac *Alexander Legend* which itself goes back to Jewish and probably Egyptian tradition. The name is also found in the Greek, Coptic and Ethiopic Alexander tradition.[3]

Gog and Magog and 'the two-horned one' are mentioned by name in Koran XVIII:83-98 and XXI:95-96. Even if Sura XVIII is not read

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Cf. E. Kettenhofen, Art. *Darband*, in: E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vii (1996), p. 13-14; Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity*, p. 216; Kolendo, *Caspiae Portae*, p. 142.

[2] Some Muslim commentators, however, distinguish between Alexander (Iskandar) son of Philippus, and 'the two-horned one', son of Japhet, cf. Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, p. 32f; Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, p. 43f., 111-113. When writing about Alexandria in Egypt, Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 71 (Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 87) remarks that "some pretend that 'the two-horned one' is identical with al-Iskandar [Alexander the Great], while others say that he is not the son of Philippus. The 'two-horned one' was 'long-lived' [ʿayyāsh]—he lived for 700 years"; longevity is considered to be a sign of God's blessing. The builder of the barrier against Gog and Magog, the builder of Merv and of the light-house in Alexandria, "was provided with all sorts of resources and was taken up into heaven, whereas [Iskandar] the Greek lived only for a short time and behaved very badly"

[3] Cf. A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Horns*, in: *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 58 (1927) p. 100-122; Polignac, *L'Homme aux Deux Cornes*, p. 29-51.

According to al-Ṭabarī, Alexander was called 'the two-horned one' because he went from one end of the world, in the west, to the other end, in the east. The word *ḳarn* means horn, and the extremities of the world are called "horns".

everywhere during the Friday prayer in the mosques,[4] there is little doubt that Muslims in general are familiar with Gog and Magog and the barrier of the Macedonian king, 'the two-horned one'

1. *Koran* XVIII:83-98

83. And they[5] will ask you about the two-horned one. Say: "I'll recite to you a story about him.
84. We had given him power on the earth, and opened for him a way to everything"
85. He[6] then took a way [sabab].
86. When he finally came to the place where the sun sets, he found that it sets in a muddy spring. And near it he found a people. We said: "You two-horned one! You either intend to punish [them] or you permit kindness to rule among them"
87. He said: "If a person does wrong, we shall punish him. After that[7] he will be led before his Lord, and He will punish him in a terrible way.
88. But if a person believes and does what is right, he [one day] may expect the [very] best as a reward.[8] And We will address him in a friendly way"
89. He then took another way [sabab].
90. When he finally came to the place where the sun rises, he found that it rises over people for whom We have not created protection against it.
91. So [it was]. And We [indeed] know how it was with him.
92. After that he took [still another] way.
93. When he finally came to the spot between the two barriers, he found before them [on this side] people who, when something was said to them, hardly understood it.
94. They said: "You two-horned one! Gog and Magog are causing harm on the earth. Should we not grant you a payment so that you build a barrier between us and them?"

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[4] Cf. L. Massignon, *Analyse de la Sourate xviii du Qor'an (Ahl al-Kahf)*, in: id., *Opera Minora*, i, Beirut 1963, p. 154 ; id., *Les Sept Dormants d'Ephèse (Ahl al-Kahf) en Islam et en Chrétienté*, in: *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 22 (1954), p. 59, 62f. He refers to I. Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung*, Leiden 1920 (Reprint: 1970), p. 335, who writes that Sūra XVIII of the *Seven Sleepers* (of which the passage on Gog and Magog forms a part), according to usage accepted everywhere, is recited as the introduction to public rite on Friday. Massignon limits Goldziher's "everywhere" considerably, but R. Blachère, *Le Coran*, Paris 1966, p. 317, nevertheless repeats it.

[5] the Jews and Christians of Medina.

[6] The 'two-horned one'.

[7] the Youngest Day.

[8] paradise?

95. He said: "The power which my Lord has given me is more valuable [than what you can offer me]. Now help me efficiently so that I may make a rampart between you and them.
96. Bring me the lumps of iron" After he finally had made [the rampart] between the two mountain-slopes[9] equally high as these], he said: "Blow [the fire]" After he finally had made it[10] red-hot, he said: "Bring me [molten] metal, so that I can pour it over it.
97. Now they[11] were unable neither to come across it[12] nor to break through it"
98. He said: "This is [a proof of] the mercy of my Lord. But when the promise[13] of my Lord one day comes true, He makes it crumble. And the promise of my Lord is true"

2. *Koran XXI:95-96*

95. And there is a ban on any town which We have destroyed so that its inhabitants shall not return
96. Until the moment an opening will be made for Gog and Magog and they[14] from every hill come running hither [for the Last Judgement].

3. *Rudi Paret's commentary on Koran XVIII:82ff*

One might have expected to find here a commentary on the just-quoted Koran verses by a widely recognized Muslim authority, such as Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari (9th c.).[15] However, for a Western reader his commentary would request a super-commentary. It therefore seems more appropriate to follow Rudi Paret's translation and explanations.[16] Like Western scholars in general, Paret is of the opinion that Sura XVIII:83-98 contain episodes from the *Alexander Romance.*

Arabic *sabab*, translated as "way" in verses 85 and 89 literally means "rope" but, Paret remarks, it is to be taken here metaphorically in the sense of "expedient, resource" It is a remarkable expres-

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[9] or "mountain-ribs"
[10] the iron.
[11] Gog and Magog.
[12] to this side.
[13] or "the threat".
[14] According to some commentators, the dead inhabitants are meant.
[15] *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ii, *Kitāb al-anbiyā'*, p. 60:7.
[16] Paret, *Der Koran*, p. 318-321.

sion, which probably refers to the source through which the prophet Muhammad may have become acquainted with the story of Alexander. The Syriac version of the *Alexander Romance* and the *Alexander Legend* relate that Alexander travelled through deserts and rocky regions in a land where the sun does not shine, until "the middle of the day" It was not from the position of the sun that Alexander knew that it was midday, but he had measured the way geometrically with the help of strings, from which he figured out the time of day.[17] According to the version of the Babylonian Talmud, Alexander received the following advice: "Take Lybian donkeys which are able to walk in the dark,[18] and also a ball of ropes; fix this on this side [i.e. at the entrance of the land of darkness]. When you take this way, hold on to the ropes, and you will get back to your present position".[19]

Friedländer remarks that the original motive with measurement by animals had been forgotten, and that the donkeys apparently were seen as mounts and pack animals. In that case, however, it is difficult to see how these animals could find their way out in complete darkness. In order to overcome this problem it seems logical that the motif of a thread, like for instance the *thread of Ariadne* had to be added in order to make the roaming in the darkness possible. According to Fraenkel,[20] the ropes refer to the Greek *schoinioi* with which Alexander measured the length of the way. But Paret considers it improbable that the choice of the Arabic term *sabab* goes back to such a rope-motif.

The people that 'the two-horned one' finds at the place where the sun sets (Koran XVIII:88) are not further identified, but the people at the place where the sun rises, to a certain extent are (XVIII:90). The request for neither punishing them nor dealing friendly with them does not seem to be clearly motivated. Maybe, Paret writes, the request addressed to 'the two-horned one' is simply to be understood as an invitation to take this unknown people, who have no sovereign, under his rule.

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[17] Friedländer, *Die Chadirlegende*, p. 9.

[18] A well-known quality of these animals.

[19] Friedländer, *Die Chadirlegende*, p. 44 and note 5.

[20] S. Fraenkel in his review on Nöldeke's *Beiträge*, in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 45 (1891) p. 323.

4. *Barrier/Rampart/Gate (sadd/radm/bab)*

For what is generally called Alexander's wall, the Koran uses the terms *sadd* (XVIII:94) and *radm* (XVIII:95); *saddayn* (XVIII:93) seems to indicate that 'the two-horned one' finds two obstructive ramparts, whereas in verse 94 the inhabitants urge him to build a rampart (*sadd*) between themselves and Gog and Magog. There either is a real discrepancy here, or it has to be assumed that there were two—perhaps natural—obstructive ramparts and that the task of 'the two-horned one' only was to fill in the interstice (XVIII:96) and to reconstruct it into a homogeneous defensive wall. The latter interpretation, we may add, seems correct if *saddayn*, literal "two ramparts", is understood as meaning "two obstructions" or in the Syriac sense of "two mountains" As in the Syriac tradition, all Muslim commentators speak of two mountains which God caused to come together but for a certain interstice, in which 'the two-horned one' then built a rampart, wall or gate. The people who "hardly understood what was said to them" (XVIII:93) lived "before the two barriers" The latter phrase seems to represent the situation as it will be after 'the two-horned one' has built the rampart, for when he arrives, there is no rampart yet, and consequently no "before", nor "behind" for that matter. After the rampart is finished, Gog and Magog will find themselves "behind" it, i.e. on the side where there are no Muslims.

There is only a slight difference in meaning between *sadd* (or *sudd*) and *radm*. Lane[21] describes *sadd* as "any building, or construction, with which a place is closed up, barrier, rampart", while *radm* is "a thing intervening between two other things, preventing the passage; it is larger than a *sadd*".[22] It is interesting to note that the Koran does not use the Syriac term "gate" or "door" (Syr. *tarʿa*, Ar. *bab*) in connection with the construction of 'the two-horned one' But Sura LVII:13 mentions a *sur lahu babun* "a (city) wall with a gate" that will be set between the Unbelievers and the Believers; inside the gate there will be mercy, but outside, in front of it, punishment. It is tempting to see in this verse a comment in reverse on Sura XVIII:92ff., where the Believers find themselves before the rampart of 'the two-horned one' and the Unbelievers (Gog and Magog) on the other side.

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[21] Lane, *Lexicon s.vv.*

[22] In the present work *sadd* is translated with "barrier", *radm* with "rampart".

However, no commentator seems to have seen a relation between these texts.

In Ibn Khurradadhbih's version of Sallam's travel account, the term *sadd* occurs eleven times, *bab* sixteen times, and *sur* just once, while *radm* is not found. In al-Idrisi's version *sadd* occurs nine times, *bab* ten times, and *radm* three times, while *sur* is not found. There does not seem to be any difference in meaning between these terms as they are used in Sallam's account. It is however interesting to note that the more Sallam approaches his aim, i.e. the barrier of 'the two-horned one', the more he uses the word "gate" according to the Syriac tradition.[23] As was the case in the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, Muslim tradition describes how God reduced the distance between the two mountains and how 'the two-horned one' then closed the gap with a gate. Its posts were fixed into the two mountain-sides. In this description, which is also that of Sallam, there is no room for a wall as such. In this context it may be remarked that the geographer Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi (d. 1286), quoted by J. Golius, used the term *al-sur* to indicate the Great Wall of China.[24] In his *Muruj*, al-Mas'udi speaks of the barrier of 'the two-horned one',[25] but in this context the term refers to the dam he built when constructing the city of Alexandria. Yet, there seems to exist a slight similarity between the construction of the two barriers. During the night, sea-monsters destroy what had been built at Alexandria. al-Mas'udi describes the stratagem that 'the two-horned one' used to neutralize the monsters. But there is no divine intervention as is the case with the barrier-gate built by Alexander according to the Syriac tradition.

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[23] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (6, 22).

[24] J. Golius (ed.), *Muhammedis fil. Ketiri Ferganensis, qui vulgo Alfraganus dicitur, Elementa astronomica, arabice et latine, cum notis ad res exoticas sive orientales, quae in iis occurrunt*, Amsterdam 1669, p. 106f.

[25] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 830-31, cf. Chapter 5, p.■■.

GOG AND MAGOG IN ISLAMIC TRADITION

The second source for any religion-related subject in Islam, after the Koran, is Tradition (*hadith*) where the theme of Gog and Magog and the barrier of Alexander 'the two-horned' is well represented. The *hadith* shows the early Islamic thinking about the motif before and at the time of Sallam (9th c.).

1. *The Sunni collections*

The best-known Sunni collections are the *Six books* or *Six Sahihs* ("The six sound, or reliable ones"), all compiled in the 9th century, i.e. in the days of Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam. The compilers were al-Bukhari (d. 870), Muslim (d. 875), Ibn Madja (d. 887), Abu Dawud (d. 888), al-Tirmidhi (d. 892) and al-Nasa'i (d. 915). Two other important traditionists of the same period are al-Tayalisi (d. 819) and Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 855).

2. *The Shi'i collections*

The largest and most authoritative of the Shi'i collections is the *Bihar al-anwar* ("The seas of the lights"), indeed *une mer à boire.*[1] The compiler was al-Madjlisi (d. 1698), "a most prolific collector of traditions and unprecedented influential author in the world of the Twelver Shi'a".[2] The traditions on Gog and Magog are found under the heading: "The place of return (*al-ma'ad*): Signs of the Hour and the story of Gog and Magog".[3]

There is hardly any difference between Sunni and Shi'i traditions as far as the texts dealing with our subject are concerned. The chains

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[1] The work was printed in 110 volumes, Teheran 1956-72. In the present work references are to the Beirut reprint of 1983.

[2] EI[2] *s.v.* al-Madjlisī, Mullā Muḥammad Bāḳir.

[3] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 295-316.

of transmitters, on the other hand, show great differences.[4] The traditions in both Sunni and Shi'i collections have been formative for the ideas in Islam concerning Gog and Magog and 'the two-horned one' Over the centuries only nuances have been made, but the data collected by the early compilers have remained unchanged. The relevant traditions will be taken and translated here from both the Sunni and Shi'i collections.

3. *Authoritative Koran commentators and lexicographers*

An early Islamic authority for the story of Gog and Magog is al-Tabari (d. 923), the great historian and Koran commentator.[5] In his work known as *The Commentary* he closely follows the traditions on Gog and Magog noted down in the collections during the previous century. This is also the case with the Koran commentators al-Zamakhshari (d. 1144)[6] and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1209).[7] Arab lexicographers undoubtedly have also contributed to keeping alive the traditions and legends around Gog and Magog. Lane[8] refers to such classics as the *Sahih* of al-Jawhari[9] (d. 1006-7), the *Lisan al-'arab* of Ibn Manzur[10] (d. 1311-12), the *Misbah* of al-Fayyumi (finished in 1333), and the *Qamus* of al-Firuzabadi[11] (d. 1415). The traditions of the 9th century, those collected by al-Bukhari in particular, were extensively drawn upon by Ibn Hadjar al-Asqalani (d. 1449), an Egyptian *hadith* scholar, judge and historian whose life work, the *Fath al-bari* a commentary of al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, "constitutes the final summation of the science of *hadith*".[12] Among the many other Sunni Koran commentators we may mention al-Hauwari[13] (2nd half 9th

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[4] On the texts of traditions, cf. EI² *s.v.* matn (A.J. Wensinck), on the chains of transmitters, *s.v.* isnād (J. Robson).

[5] EI² *s.v.* al-Ṭabarī, Abū Djaʿfar Muḥammad b. Djarīr (C.E. Bosworth).

[6] EI² *s.v.* al-Zamakhsharī, Abu 'l-Ḳāsim Maḥmūd (C.H.M. Versteegh), and ibid., Suppl. *s.v.* (W. Madelung).

[7] EI² *s.v.* Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (G.C. Anawati).

[8] Lane, *Lexicon*, *s.v.* ʿajjā.

[9] EI² *s.v.* al-Djawharī, Abū Naṣr Ismāʿīl (L. Kopf).

[10] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad b. Mukarram (J.W. Fück).
EI² *s.v.* al-Fīrūzābādī, Abu 'l-Ṭāhir Muḥammad (H. Fleisch).

[12] F. Rosenthal in EI² *s.v.* Ibn Ḥadjar. The traditions on Gog and Magog are part of the *Kitāb al-fitan* of Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād (Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fath*, vol. xvi), see J. Aguadé, *Messianismus zur Zeit der frühen ʿAbbasiden: das Kitāb al-fitan des Nuʿaim ibn Hammād*, (Diss.), Tübingen 1978.

[13] al-Hauwārī, Hūd b. Muḥkim, cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 41.

c.). Important Shi'i Koran commentators were al-Qummi[14] (10th c.) and al-Tusi[15] (d. 1274).

For both Sunni and Shi'i traditionists the key passages on Gog and Magog and 'the two-horned one' are, of course, Sura XVIII:82-97 or 99 and XXI:96-97. al-Madjlisi, unlike the Sunni transmitters, also quotes Koran verses which contain references to the Day of Judgement[16] or to some apocalyptical signs, in particular the "smoke" and "the beast from the earth".[17]

The early Islamic interpretation of Gog and Magog, found in both Sunni and Shi'i traditions, in Koran commentaries and in lexicographical and geographical works, was as it were summarized by al-Qazwini[18] (d. 1283), a well-known Arab geographer and cosmographer. His two extant works, the *Book on prodigies of things created and miraculous aspects of things existing*, commonly named *Cosmography*,[19] and the *Book on monuments of the countries and history of their inhabitants*, commonly known as *Geography*,[20] enjoyed great popularity in the Muslim world. Both works contain sections on Gog and Magog based on *hadith* collections, Koran commentaries and early geographers, Yaqut[21] in particular.

4. *Themes on Gog and Magog*

al-Qazwini's above-mentioned works contain passages which have direct bearing on our subject. In the following these passages are translated and supplemented with data from *hadith* collections, which occasionally add to the details found in al-Qazwini. The material on Gog and Magog is divided here into themes, which are not found as such in the sources. As such classifications go, overlap and repetition is almost unavoidable.

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[14] al-Ḳummī, Abu 'l -Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm, cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. i, p. 336.

[15] EI² *s.v.* al-Ṭūsī, Nāṣir al-Dīn (H. Daiber).

[16] EI² *s.v.* Sā'a "The Hour" (U. Rubin).

[17] The verses in question are Koran VI:258; XXI:109, XXVII:82, XLIII:261, XLIV:11-12, XLVIII:18. The commentary on these verses begins in al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 296/l. 15, that on Gog and Magog on p. 297/l. 12.

[18] EI² *s.v.* al-Ḳazwīnī, Zakariyyā' b. Muḥammad (T. Lewicki).

[19] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb 'adjā'ib al-makhlūḳāt wa-gharā'ib al-mawdjūdāt.*

[20] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-'ibād.*

[21] EI² *s.v.* Yāḳūt al-Rūmī (Cl. Gilliot); Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, v, p. 46.

Appearance

The final section of al-Qazwini's *Cosmography* deals with "well-known living creatures with strange forms and shapes, which are different from those of the well-known living creatures".[22] al-Qazwini divides these creatures into three categories:

> The first category is the people with strange forms and shapes created by God in the limits of the earth and on the islands of the sea. To these belong Gog and Magog. They are peoples whose number only God can count. The height of one individual of them is half the stature of a medium-sized man.[23] They have canine teeth like those of predators, instead of nails they have claws, and they have a very hairy tail. People say that no individual of them dies before having seen thousand of his offspring. To these [living creatures] also belong peoples called Mansak.[24] They live in an eastern direction near Gog and Magog, look like human beings but have ears like those of an elephant. Each ear is like a garment. When they go to sleep, they lie down on one ear and cover themselves with the other. To these [creatures] also belong peoples who dwell on a mountain near the barrier of al-Iskandar; they are short-sized, five span high, broad-faced, black-skinned, with white spots. They shun human beings and others, climb trees and do not associate with human beings.

The other beings said to belong to this category are human but have strange forms indeed. They live on islands such as the islands of the Indian cocoa-nut, of the pomegranate and of the Zanj.[25] They are not mentioned in relation with Gog and Magog or with the barrier of 'the two-horned one'.

The relevant passage on Gog and Magog in the *Geography* is the following:

> The 'two-horned one' asked: "What are their characteristics?" The people said: "They are short-sized, sturdy, broad-faced, their height is half of that of a medium-sized man; they have canine teeth like predators, and claws instead of nails. They have hairy tails and two huge ears, one is very hairy on the outside and hairless on the inside; the other is very hairy on the inside and hairless on the outside; one serves as a cover, the other as a mattress. They have so much hair on their body that it is covered by it; they coo to each other like pigeons, howl

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[22] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb ʿaǧāʾib*, p. 448ff.

[23] *raǧul marbūʿ*. The edition erroneously has *marbūḥ*.

[24] Cf. below p. ■■ (20).

[25] EI² *s.v.* Zandj (G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville); cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■.

> like dogs and mount each other wherever they meet, in the way animals do".

Gog and Magog, according to the *Geography*, are said to exist either in three[26] or in two kinds.[27] The first are as tall as a cedar, the second as broad as they are tall, and the third kind can cover its body with one ear and lie down on the other. The *Bihar* adds that *Hudhayfa asked the Prophet what a cedar (arz) is. He said: "It is a tall tree in Syria. The second kind just mentioned is said to be such that neither mountain nor weapon can resist them. The two kinds mentioned above are either extremely tall or extremely short".*[28] A tradition ascribed to Ibn 'Abbas says that *Gog and Magog are one, or two, or three, span tall*, i.e. twenty-seven inches;[29] and al-Tabari[30] reports:

> 'the two-horned one' explored their country and saw that their height is half of that of an average man, but that males and females are equally tall. Instead of nails they have claws, their teeth are like those of predators, their gums are strong as a camel's and they grind their teeth when chewing. Shurayh b. 'Ubayd, on the authority of Ka'b al-Ahbar,[31] says that they exist in three kinds: one have a body like a cedar, another are four by four cubits, and the third use one ear as a mattress and wrap himself in the other. Something like that is found in a tradition of Hudhayfa.

According to Ibn Hadjar[32] these characteristics are also reported by al-Jurjani,[33] by Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi[34] and by al-Tabarani.[35] In a tradition transmitted by Wahb b. Munabbih[36] (d. 728) it is said:

> Gog and Magog are a people who have half the height of an average man; on their hands they have claws instead of nails; they have molars

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[26] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 283; cf. al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb 'adjā'ib*, p. 448; Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 222/l. 15.

[27] al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, p. 448.

[28] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 297.

[29] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 221/l. 19.

[30] *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 281f.

[31] He was a Yemenite Jew (d. 652-53) who became a convert to Islam, and is considered the oldest authority on Judaeo-Islamic traditions, cf. EI² *s.v.* Ka'b al-Aḥbār (M. Schmitz).

[32] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 221.

[33] al-Djurdjānī, 'Abdallāh Ibn 'Adī (d. 976); cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i p. 198f.

[34] Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 938); cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 178f.

[35] EI² *s.v.* al-Ṭabarānī, Abu 'l-Ḳāsim (d. 971) (M. Fierro).

[36] He was a South-Arabian story-teller and Ḳur'ān commentator, cf. EI² *s.v.* Wahb b. al-Munabbih, Abū 'Abd Allāh (R.G. Khoury); Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 305.

> and canines like predators, large ears, one of which serves them as bed, the other as cover; there is no man or woman among them whose death is not known in advance, i.e. a woman does not die before having given birth to thousand children; the same goes for men.

al-Hauwari writes in his commentary[37] on Koran XVIII:92ff.:

> 'the two-horned one' came to the two barriers, two slippery mountains, from which everything glides down. He built the barrier, and found Gog and Magog fighting with a people whose faces were like those of dogs. He chopped them off. He then found short-sized beings that were fighting the dog-faced beings. He went on and found a nation of cranes,[38] fighting with the short-sized beings. He went on and found a nation of serpents, each of which could swallow huge rocks. Then he reached the sea which encircles the earth.

Origin

After quoting Sura XXI:96 ("until when Gog and Magog are let out and they from every height are rustling down from all directions"), Ibn Hadjar writes that *they are two tribes from the children of Japheth son of Noah.*[39] Ibn Mardawayh[40] according to Ibn Hadjar, however, gives a prophetic tradition according to which *Gog is a nation and Magog another.*

The Shafi'i jurist al-Nawawi[41] (d. 1277) and others have drawn attention to the tale of those who maintain that Adam, while asleep, had an emission of seminal fluid, that his semen got mixed with dust, and that the children Gog and Magog were born from this as his offspring. *But this,* he says, *is to be rejected. It has no basis, except in the authority of someone from the ahl al-kitab* [*i.e. Jews, Christians and Sabians*].

According to the *Bihar*:

> Ka'b al-Ahbar says that Gog and Magog are a rare phenomenon among Adam's offspring: a drop of Adam's nocturnal emission got mixed with earth and from this mixture God created Gog and Magog. They are thus related to us [human] on the paternal, but not on the maternal side. This, however, is far fetched. The fatwas of al-Shaykh

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[37] Hūd b. Muḥkim, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 479f, cf. p. ■■ (12).

[38] *gharānīk*, see Sura LIII:19-20 and commentaries.

[39] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, vii, p. 195f.

[40] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, vi, p. 297. Ibn Mardawayh, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Mūsā (d. 1019), a traditionist and Ḳur'ān commentator, cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 225.

[41] EI² *s.v* al-Nawawī, Muḥyī al-Dīn (W. Heffening).

> Muhyi al-Din [al-Nawawī] say that for the majority of the religious scholars Gog and Magog are children of Adam but not of Eve, and that they are our brothers because born from our [common] father. So he says, but, remarks Ibn Hadjar, we have not found this mentioned by the ancient authorities, except by Kaʿb al-Ahbar.

Kaʿb is refuted by a reliable tradition according to which Gog and Magog are the offspring of Noah, and Noah certainly is the offspring of Eve.[42] Ibn Hadjar adds that Gog and Magog are descendants from Adam and from Japheth, son of Noah:

> It is said that Gog and Magog are Turks, as al-Dahhak[43] maintains, but it is also said that Gog is a Turk, and Magog a Daylam.[44] Kaʿb says that they are children of Adam but not of Eve. But this is refuted because prophets do not have nocturnal seminal emissions. My [i.e. Ibn Hadjar's] answer to this is that Adam saw in his dream that he had intercourse with a woman. It is also possible that it was an efflux of semen.[45] This is conceivable, just as it is conceivable that Adam urinated. The first [interpretation] is the accepted one. And if not, where were Gog and Magog at the time of the flood?[46]

al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi do not mention the details on the origin of Gog and Magog given by Kaʿb al-Ahbar. According to the *Sirat al-Iskandar*, only Gog descends from Adam; Magog is an offspring of Eve's menstrual blood.[47] And for Wahb b. Munabbih, *Gog and Magog are neither ins [human beings] nor jinns*.[48]

A tradition which goes back to Abu Hurayra (d. 678),[49] a companion of the Prophet, says that the sons of Noah were Sem, Ham and Japheth:

> The children of Sem are the Arabs, the Persians and the Byzantines; the children of Ham are the Copts, the Berbers and the Blacks; the

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[42] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 298.

[43] al-Âaḥḥāk b. Muzāhīm (d. 723), a traditionist and grammarian in al-Kūfa, cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 29.

[44] In early Islam Daylam, the mountainous region south of the Caspian Sea, had an unfavourable reputation. It was a refuge for anti-ʿAbbāsid elements such as the ʿAlids, cf. EI² *s.v.* (V. Minorsky).

[45] *mā'* "water, fluid" and also a euphemism for semen.

[46] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 221.

[47] Ms Aya Sofya 3004, fol. 152r, cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 199 n. 95.

[48] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 280; cf. EI² *s.v.* Djinn (D.B. Macdonald–H. Massé).

[49] EI² *s.v.* Abū Hurayra al-Dawsī al-Yamānī (J. Robson).

children of Japheth are Gog and Magog, the Turks and the Slavs. But there are weak points in its chain of transmitters.[50]

The *Biḥar* adds a few details to the well-known story of Noah and his sons: Noah is said to have lived 2500 years:

> One day, while he was asleep on the ship, the wind uncovered his private parts. Ham [Cham] and Japheth laughed, but Sem—peace be upon him—forbade them to laugh. However, each time Sem covered what the wind had uncovered, Ham and Japheth uncovered it. When Noah woke up and saw them laughing, he asked what was going on. Sem told him what had happened. Noah then lifted his hands up to heaven for a curse and said: "Oh God! Change Ham's semen so that only black children are born to him; oh God! Change Japheth's semen" And God changed the semen of both, so that all the Blacks wherever they are, descend from Ham, and all the Turks, Slavs, Gog and Magog, and Chinese, wherever they are, descend from Japheth, while all the whites descend from Sem.[51] The Commander of the Believers, ʿAli b. Abi Talib, was asked about the creation. He answered that God created one 1200 on land and 1200 in the sea, while there are seventy kinds of descendants of Adam, besides Gog and Magog.[52]

Gog and Magog are thus said to be descendants from Adam. But according to al-Qummi, they were created after the angels.[53]

Numbers

Peoples believed to bring about the end of time are always represented as being very numerous, whether they are historical, such as the Assyrians, the Scythians and the Huns, or legendary, such as Gog and Magog. The Jewish-Christian tradition is no exception in this respect, nor is the Islam.

al-Shaʿbi[54] (d. between 721-29) relates:

> When 'the two-horned one' arrived at the land of Gog and Magog, many peoples gathered around him and called in his help against them. They said: "Oh victorious king! Behind this mountain are nations [so numerous that] only God can count them; they destroy our homes, eat our crops and fruits, devour everything, even grass, and tear ani-

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[50] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 222.

[51] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 303, cf. Yarshater, *History of al-Ṭabarī*, ix, p. 11-12; EI² *s.v.* Ḥām (G. Vajda).

[52] Ibn Ḥadjar, ibid.

[53] al-Ḳummī, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 15.

[54] He was a famous legal expert and transmitter, cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Shaʿbī, ʿĀmir b. Sharāhīl (G.A.H. Juynboll).

> mals apart like predators do; they eat all the small edible animals of the earth, and no creatures multiply as they do, for no one of them dies before thousand offspring are born to him" The 'two-horned one' asked: "How many kinds are they?" They answered: "They are so many nations that God alone can count them. Those who dwell in our neighbourhood are six tribes: Gog, Magog, Tawil, Taris, Mansak and Kamadi. Each of these tribes is as numerous as [all] the inhabitants of the earth. As for those who are far away from us, we do not know them.[55]

According to al-Tabari *Gog and Magog are many peoples, each of them numbering 400000*, or:

> they are nine times more numerous than human beings. Gog and Magog foresee their own death, for no male dies before having fathered thousand children, nor does any female die before having given birth to the same number.[56]

The *Bihar* adds that

> the Prophet, according to Hudhayfa, said that Gog is one nation and Magog another, and that each consists of four hundred nations. The father of the thousand male offspring dies only after these are capable of carrying weapons.[57]

al-Tayalisi,[58] a famous collector of *hadith*, has only a short note on this item:

> they are children of Adam, are unleashed on mankind, and spoil their means of livelihood. They have thousand offspring and more, and those who come after them will be three nations: Tawil, Taris and Mansak.[59]

In his *Tafsir* al-Qummi likewise remarks:

> Gog and Magog are the most numerous of the created beings.[60] It is also said that they mount each other like animals.[61] al-Nasa'i[62] adds

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[55] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āṯār al-bilād*, p. 416.
[56] *Tafsīr*, ix, p. 83, 85.
[57] al-Maǧlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 297.
[58] EI[2] *s.v.* al-Ṭayālisī, Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān (G.H.A. Juynboll).
[59] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, no. 2282.
[60] al-Ḳummī, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 15.
[61] *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 281.
[62] EI[2] *s.v.* al-Nasā'ī, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 915) (A.J. Wensinck); Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 167.

> that they have as many sexual relations as they wish. al-Hakim[63] and Ibn Mardawayh, on the authority of ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAmr,[64] say that Gog and Magog descend from Adam and that they form three nations. According to ʿAbd al-Rahman Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi jinns and men [together] constitute ten sections, nine of which are Gog and Magog, while Ibn ʿAbbas is said to have transmitted that five out of the six parts of the world belong to Gog and Magog and only one part to the other beings. Once they have marched through the barrier of 'the two-horned one' and spread over the earth, their vanguard is in Syria and their rear in Iraq.

These traditions are also given by Ibn Hadjar[65] who says that they have been transmitted on the authority of Abd Allah b. Salam,[66] a Jew from Medina who had converted to Islam.

Food

al-Qazwini:

> 'The two-horned one' asked: "What do they eat?" They answered: "Each year the sea ejects two fishes for them; the distance between head and tail of each fish is longer than a ten days' journey; they feed on crocodiles, snakes and sea monsters [tananin]; in spring they pray, in the way rain is prayed for, that these tananin are rained down on them. If they are doused with that, they become fertile and fat, but if they are not doused in that way, they become barren and emaciated".[67]

al-Tabari said:

> their food consists of the sea-monster called tinnin. In spring it falls down from heaven. If they do not get it, they become barren.

Elsewhere he reports that, according to other traditions, Gog and Magog are cannibals.[68] As a symptom of their wild and uncivilized

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[63] He was a traditionist of note (d. 1014), cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh (J. Robson); Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 221.

[64] ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (d. 684) was the author of the *Ṣaḥīfa al-Ṣādika* (cf. E. Sachau *et al.* (ed.), Ibn Saʿda. *al-Ṭabakāt al-kubrā*, Leiden 1940, p. 262), a famous fragment of *ḥadīth* texts, cf. EI² *s.v.* Ṣaḥīfa (A. Ghédira); Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 84.

[65] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fath*, xvi p. 222.

[66] EI² *s.v.* ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām (d. 663-64) (J. Horovitz); Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 304.

[67] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āṯār al-bilād*, p. 416. As for the so-called *ṣalāt al-istiṣḳā'* or "supplication for rain", cf. EI² *s.v.* (T. Fahd); see also T. Fahd, *Le merveilleux dans la faune, la flore et les minéraux*, in: M. Arkoun (ed.), *L'étrange et le merveilleux dans l'Islam médiéval*, Paris 1978, p. 139.

[68] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 279.

character, the *Bihar* notes that *Gog and Magog will not pass by any elephant, wild beast or pig without eating it; they also eat their dead.*[69]

Role in eschatology

In the Koran the eschatological role of Gog and Magog is directly connected with the barrier of 'the two-horned one': the wild people will be held back behind it until the end of time. al-Qazwini writes on this item:

> According to some information Gog and Magog scratch the barrier every day until they almost see the sun from behind it. Then one of them says: "Let us go home, we shall breach it tomorrow" They then go home, but during the night God restores it just as it was before. The following day they dig and scratch at it again. This goes on like that every night and day until the moment of their break-out arrives. Then one of them says: "Let us go home and we shall breach it, God willing" The barrier then remains weakened until they come back to it the following day and see that it is like that [i.e. unrestored]. They then breach it and march out against mankind. They drink the waters of the earth until they have exhausted them. People seek protection in their fortresses. They [Gog and Magog] conquer the earth and subdue those they find. When no one is left for them [to subdue], they will shoot their arrows against heaven. When these fall back onto them, looking as if daubed with blood, they say: "We have conquered the inhabitants of the earth and overwhelmed the inhabitants of heaven" But God will send worms against them, called al-naghaf. These will penetrate into their ears and noses, and kill them. The Prophet said: "By Him in Whose hand is my soul, the beasts of the earth will become fat from their flesh" al-Khudhri[70] relates: I heard the Prophet of God say: The barrier of Gog and Magog is breached, they march out against mankind, as God says: "They are rustling down from every height" [Koran XXI:96]. They cover the entire earth. The Muslims will withdraw to their fortresses and gather their livestock. Gog and Magog will drink the waters of the earth. Their vanguard passes the Euphrates,[71] they will drink its waters and leave it dry. Those coming after them will pass by and say: "There once was water here" No human being

[69] al-Madjlisī, *Bihār*, vi, p. 297f. The Scythians and Sarmatians in Siberia defleshed with a knife the remains of a deceased, perhaps to bring them back to the centrally located cemetery. This practice may have been interpreted by outstanders as cannibalism (Mallory–Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, p. 40). The cannibalism of Gog and Magog is also affirmed in the Syriac tradition, cf. the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius in Chapter 2, p. ■■.

[70] al-Khudhrī, Abū Sa'īd (d. 693); cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, *s.v.* index.

[71] They thus are supposed to come from the East.

> will be left except those who are in the fortresses or on high and inaccessible mountains. One of them says: "We have finished off the inhabitants of the earth, there remain those who are in heaven" Then he brandishes his lance and throws it into heaven, and it comes back to them tainted with blood as a sign of test and trial. They then say: "We have killed the inhabitants of heaven" But while they are thus occupied, God sends worms onto them like al-naghaf worms, which enter their ears. It is also said that they pierce their [of Gog and Magog] ears and necks and that they become as dead. No sound is heard from them at all, nor [is there] any movement. The Muslims say: "Is there no man who comes forward on our behalf and has a look at what these peoples have done?" Then one of them comes to the fore, prepared to get killed. He descends to the plains [litt. earth] and finds Gog and Magog lifeless, one on top of the other. He then calls out: "Oh you Muslims! Rejoice! God has saved you from your enemies" They then come out of their fortresses and strongholds. It is related that the earth stinks of corpses. God then sends rain which causes torrential floods which carry their corpses to the seas. It is related that these floods will last forty days, but seventy days and four months are also mentioned. The Prophet said: "Gog and Magog are such that neither mountain nor weapon can stop them, nor do they pass by any elephant, pig, camel, wild or domestic animal without eating it; they also eat their dead. Their vanguard is in Syria and their rear in Khurasan; they drink the rivers of the east and the lake of Tiberias".[72]

What al-Qazwini calls "some information" is in fact the almost identical text on the role of Gog and Magog in eschatology found in al-Tabari. The differences between the various texts are minimal indeed. According to al-Tabari, *Gog and Magog scrape the barrier of 'the two-horned one' until they can almost see the sun shining through it, or, as Ka'b al-Ahbar says, until the sound of their axes can be heard by their neighbours on the other side.*[73] To this information of al-Qazwini, Ibn Hadjar adds:

> It is possible that that phrase [i.e. "God willing"] happened to pass over the tongue of that foreman without him realizing its meaning, so that he will obtain what was intended by this phrase's blessing. And when the fixed time has come, God makes one of them say: "We shall come tomorrow, God willing, and we shall get rid of it [the barrier]" Gog and Magog will come back in the morning, but the barrier will be stronger than it was the day before until one of them embraces Islam at a moment when God wants that His affair be terminated and the Believer says: "Tomorrow we shall open it, God willing" They will

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[72] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āṯhār al-bilād*, p. 417.

[73] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 283; ix, p. 83-85, cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, ii, no. 1060; al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 311.

> come in the morning, return to the barrier and open it. However, [remarks Ibn Hadjar], the chain of transmitters of this tradition is very weak.[74]

The *Bihar* adds:

> Gog and Magog will dig with their untiring pickaxes, and will succeed when one of them becomes a Muslim at the moment God wants His affair to be finished. It is this believer who pronounces the phrase "God willing", after which God opens the barrier. Asked when this will take place, the Prophet answered that it will happen at the moment in which only something like the equivalent of the sediment in a receptacle is left of this terrestrial world.

The same text also reports:

> al-Talaqani[75] related that he was reading a book of God in which was quoted the long story of 'the two-horned one', how he built the barrier against Gog and Magog until where it said: Gog and Magog visit the barrier once every year, and that is because they roam about in their lands until they hit upon that rampart which confines them. They then go back and roam about [again] in their lands. They go on doing this until the Hour is near and the signs are coming, as the Koran says: "Until when Gog and Magog are let out, and they from every height are rushing down" [Koran XXI:96]. "The barrier", 'the two-horned one' said, "is a mercy of my Lord. When the promise of my Lord comes, He will flatten the barrier; the promise of my Lord is true" The barrier will collapse just before the Day of Resurrection. The Quraysh asked the Prophet when the Hour would come. God then revealed: "They will ask you when the Hour will reach its anchorage; say: the knowledge of it is with my Lord" [Koran VII:186] until where He says: "but most of the people have no knowledge" [Koran VII:187].[76]

Regarding the phrase "God willing", al-Hauwari writes that

> it is God's decision whether these words are uttered or not. When He wants Gog and Magog to come forth, He causes some of them to add the [proper] exceptional formula "God willing" Then they begin to say: "We shall be back tomorrow, God willing"

The same author remarks:

> the worms are said to be the weakest of God's creatures. After the death of Gog and Magog, while people are constantly returning [to

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[74] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, vi, p. 298.

[75] al-Ṭalaḳānī, Abu 'l-Ḥasan (d. 995), cf. EI² *s.v.* Mathal (R. Sellheim).

[76] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 311.

> their homesteads], pomegranates satisfy the appetite of a family to everyone's satisfaction.

In a much shorter version, al-Hud says:

> when God wants Gog and Magog to come out, He causes a change in the speech of some of them so that they will say: "We shall go back tomorrow, God willing"

al-Hud also remarks that

> worms are called the weakest of God's creatures. After the death of Gog and Magog the earth will bring forth its flowers and blessings. People will return until the pomegranate will satisfy the appetite of the ahl al-bayt and until there will be comfort in being alive. While people find themselves in such a situation, they will be informed that Dhu'l-Suwayqatayn[77] had attacked 'the House' The Muslims then will send an army, but they will not reach them nor come back to their companions before God will send a pleasant wind from underneath the Throne.[78]

In passing, it may be of interest to note that the phrase "God willing" (*in sha' Allah*) has been personified in a tradition recorded in the town of Dienné[79] in the Sudan. Here Inshallah has become a young man who, when his name is pronounced by his father, will eat away what remains of Magog's barrier. Gog and Magog then spread over the earth.[80]

The eschatological role of Gog and Magog is mentioned in both Sunni and Shi'i traditions. As already said, the texts used by the two denominations are almost identical. The difference lies in the fact that the Shi'i traditions show a tendency of explaining the stories in a more metaphorical way.[81] It is worth noting again that many of

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[77] "The man with the two small shanks", the nickname given in Muslim tradition to what they call the very ugly and deformed Abraha (Abū Yaksūm), the Abyssinian Christian king of Yemen who led an attack against Mecca in 570, the year in which the Prophet Muḥammad is believed to have been born; cf. EI² *s.v.* Abraha (A.F.L. Beeston); cf. also al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, i, *Kitāb al-ḥadjdj*, p. 403:47, and Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 2232/58, 59 ("Dhu 'l-Suwayḳatayn, the Abyssinian"); cf. Attema, *Voorteekenen*, p. 133; M. Weisweiler, *Buntes Prachtgewand: über die guten Eigenschaften der Abessinier von Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd-al-Bāqī al-Buḫārī al-Makkī, literarhistorisch untersucht und übers*etzt, Hannover 1924, p. 9.

[78] al-Ḥūd b. Muḥakkam, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 480, 481.

[79] EI² *s.v.* (R. Mauny).

[80] G. Mommersteeg, *In de stad van de Marabouts*, Amsterdam 1998, p. 87f.

[81] EI² *s.v.* Ta'wīl (I. Poonawala).

the Gog and Magog traditions are said to be *marfuʿ*, i.e. containing words of the Prophet himself.

Most traditions dealing with Gog and Magog are found in Ahmad b. Hanbal's *Musnad*. The corruption which they are working [Koran XVIII:93] consists in their killing the people outside the barrier once they have broken out, and in eating their flesh and that of the beasts.[82] On the authority of Muhammad b. al-Sa'ib al-Kalbi[83] (d. 763) it is also said:

> Gog and Magog want to practise corruption in the future, at the moment of their outbreak. Only with God's permission will they be able to climb over the barrier [Koran XVIII:96a] or to pierce [Koran XVIII:96b] its lower part, for it is consistent and firm. The barrier, therefore, does not show any defect. "Until when Gog and Magog are let out" [Koran XVIII:96a] means that the barrier will split open by falling down, by demolition or by being shattered.[84]

According to al-Qummi, the same verse means that *Gog and Magog will come forward towards this world and devour all mankind. After that, the Almighty will argue against idolatry.*[85]

Koran XXI:96b ("And they from every height are rustling down") means, according to the *Bihar*:

> Gog and Magog break up and that there is no hill in sight from which people are not rushing down. "And the true promise is near" [Koran XXI:97a], i.e. of the True One, is the Day of Resurrection. "And see, there are the bulging eyes of those who have not believed" [Koran XXI:97b] means that they can hardly blink because of the calamity and terror of that day. They say: "Woe to us! We have been negligent of this" [Koran XXI:97c] i.e. we have been engaged in worldly affairs but have been forgetful of this day and have not thought about it. According to al-Kalbi the barrier is guarded every night by al-Khidr[86] and al-Yasu [ʿIsa/Jesus][87] in order to prevent Gog and Magog from breaking out. The outbreak will only take place after ʿIsa b. Maryam [Jesus] will have killed the dajjal[88] [the Antichrist]. Then God will permit Gog and Magog to come from behind the barrier and they will mix up because they are so numerous, and they will surge [Koran XVIII:99]

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[82] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 297.
[83] EI² *s.v.* al-Kalbī, Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib (W. Atallah).
[84] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 299.
[85] al-Ḳummī, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 50.
[86] 'The Servant of God', cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Khiḍr (A.J. Wensinck).
[87] EI² *s.v.* 'Īsā (G.C. Anawati).
[88] EI² *s.v.* *Dadjdjāl* (A. Abel).

> like water agitated by waves. But it is also possible that jinns and ins [human beings] get mixed, for that is a sign of the Hour.[89]

Islamic eschatology knows ten signs which portend the Last Day, the so-called 'signs of the Hour'.[90] They are:

- the coming out of the descendants of Asfar
- the coming of the Mahdi
- the coming of the dajjal
- the descent of 'Isa b. Maryam
- the rising of the sun in the West
- the coming forth of Gog and Magog
- the beast coming out of the earth
- the assumption of the Koran into heaven
- the smoke
- the burning of fire from Yemen, or, the subsiding of the earth.

The order of the signs may differ, as is clear from the following quotations from *Muslim*:

> The Hour will not come before there will have been ten signs: the rising of the sun in its western quarter; the dajjal : the smoke; the beast; Gog and Magog; the coming of 'Isa b. Maryam; three lunar eclipses the eclipse in the east, the eclipse in the west, and the eclipse in Jazirat al-'Arab;[91] the fire that will come out of the depth of Aden: it will drive people on to the place of gathering, will stay with them when they pass the night, and will hold siesta with them when they hold siesta.[92]

al-Tirmidhi, unlike al-Qazwini, mentions the role of Jesus in the Gog and Magog story:

> After 'Isa has killed the dajjal, a people preserved by God from the dajjal will come to him. God will clean their faces and inform them about their ranks in paradise. Meanwhile God reveals to 'Isa: "I have brought servants of mine on whom the killing by Gog and Magog will not be imposed. Therefore, protect My servants until the measured time comes".[93]

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[89] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 299. al-Ḳummī, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 14-15, does not mention Jesus.

[90] EI² *s.vv.* Sā'a; Aṣfar, Banū; Mahdī; Dadjdjāl; 'Īsā; Dābba.

[91] EI² *s.v.* 'Arab, Djazīrat (G. Rentz).

[92] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *K. al-fitan*, p. 39; cf. Ibn Mādja, *Sunan*, p. 36:28, no. 4055; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *K. al-fitan*, bāb 21; cf. Attema, *Voorteekenen*, p. 144-147, 164-166; Kaptein, *Eindtijd*, p. 60.

[93] Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, p. 31:59; cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 52:110; Ibn Mādja, *Sunan*, 36:14, 33; p. 36:14; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, iv, p. 181; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, xvii, p. 62f.; Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 225. See also Attema, *Voorteekenen*, p. 138.

al-Tabari also has the story of Gog and Magog marching to the West, and of their eating away everything and drinking all the water.[94] Ibn Hadjar adds that

> 'Isa, the prophet of God, and his companions will be beleaguered in such a way that for each of them a bull's head will be of greater value than one hundred dinars. Man and beast take refuge in fortresses. When Gog and Magog reach Jerusalem—according to al-Zamakhshari[95] they are unable to reach Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem—they think that they have exterminated life on earth.

After the episode of the shooting of the arrows unto heaven, al-Tabari writes that

> God sends the worms at the intercession of 'Isa. They will kill Gog and Magog in one night.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudhri, in his *Musnad*, adds:

> they will not utter any sound. Their corpses will be eaten by the beasts or, according to other traditions, they are carried off to the sea by rain which purifies the earth.[96] The Muslim who comes to the fore will cry out: "Oh community of God! Are you not rejoicing? God has protected you from your enemies" And they will come out from their towns and fortresses, and release their livestock, but the only herbage will be the flesh of Gog and Magog. And they will appreciate it more than any herb which they ever came upon[97] and get fatter than they ever were.[98]

Ibn Hadjar writes:

> 'Isa will come down on earth but he will be unable to find even one inch which is not filled with the evil smell and stench of Gog and Magog. At his demand, God sends birds which resemble the necks of Bactrian [i.e. long-necked] camels which will carry Gog and Magog away and throw them where [only] God knows. A favourable wind will carry the Muslims under their armpits and take away the soul of every believer and Muslim. But the evil people will go on to have intercourse with each other in the way the donkeys do.[99]

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[94] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ibid.
[95] al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, p. 584; al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 302.
[96] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 283, 289; ix, p. 83-85.
[97] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, iii, no. 1; Ibn Mādja, *Sunan*, nos. 4076, 4080.
[98] Ibn Mādja, *Sunan*, nos. 4076, 4080.
[99] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 226.

Some traditions underline that the pilgrimage to 'the House' (Mecca), as well as the *'umra*, will continue to be made even after Gog and Magog have come out.[100] In another tradition it is said:

> At the end of time 'Isa will come down near the white eastern minaret in Damascus, clad in two yellow garments, while putting his hand on the wings of two angels. Then he follows the dajjāl, overtakes and kills him near the eastern gate of Lydda.[101] Meanwhile God reveals to Īsa b. Maryam: "I have taken some of My servants who are protected from being killed [by the dajjal]; nobody is capable of killing them; therefore bring them to the mountain" Then God will send worms against Gog and Magog and they will die to a man.[102] The birds will throw them into the mahbal i.e. the place where the sun rises. The rain, which wills last forty days, will wash the earth and leave it behind like a mirror. One she-camel will be sufficient for large groups of people, and one cow for a whole clan.[103] On Resurrection Day God will order Adam to despatch people to the fire [of hell]. At his request how many he must despatch, God will answer: nine hundred ninety-nine out of every thousand. At that time the new-born will become white-haired and every pregnant woman will miscarry. People will seem to be drunk but they are not drunk; it will be a severe punishment inflicted by God. People asked who that single one will be, and the Prophet answered: "Nine hundred ninety-nine are of Gog and Magog and one is of you" The people said: "Allahu akbar", but the Prophet said: "Will you not be satisfied if you will be one-fourth of the people in paradise? By God! I do hope that you will be one-fourth in paradise; and I hope that you will be one-third in paradise; and by God! I hope that you will be half of the people of paradise".[104]

According to some traditions the Hour was already imminent during the lifetime of the Prophet, and Gog and Magog had already begun to make a breach in the barrier. A strict distinction between these categories of traditions is not easily made. At a certain point the traditions on Gog and Magog were taken up into other eschatological stories such as those of the *dajjal* (the Antichrist) and of 'Isa.[105]

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[100] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, iii, no. 11201, cf. ibid., no. 11604; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, i, *Kitāb al-ḥadjdj*, p. 25:47.

[101] EI² *s.v.* Ludd (M. Sharon).

[102] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, iv, p. 249.

[103] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, iv, no. 17598; cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 249; Ibn Mādja, *Sunan*, no. 4075; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 59, no. 2240.

[104] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, iii, p. 41 no. 11279. Cf. Abraham's intercession with God on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom in Gen. XVIII:20-33.

[105] Cf. for the references Attema, *Voorteekenen*, p. 134-140; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, xvii, p. 62, 63.

The *hadith* collections and al-Tabari's *Tafsir* contain several themes on Gog and Magog which are not mentioned by al-Qazwini, namely names, location, identification, human aspects and descriptions of the barrier.

Names

al-Tabari's commentary on the Arabic names of Gog and Magog (*Yajuj–Majuj*), will be dealt with in the next chapter. Of the other authors consulted, the Imami Shi'i scholar al-Tusi is the only one to mention this item. According to him, they are foreign names. He says the plural of Ya'juj (with *hamza*) is Ya'ajij, like Ya'qub/Ya'aqib. The plural of Yajuj and Majuj is Yawajij, like Taghut/Tawaghit, Harut/Hawarit. When written with *hamza*, both words are a *maf'ul* form of *ajja*; without *hamza*, they are a *fa'ul* form of *yajja*.[106]

Location

In the traditional Islamic division of the world into seven climes,[107] the land of Gog and Magog is generally located between the fifth and seventh climes. al-Qazwini locates *the abode of Gog and Magog in the east of the seventh clime.*[108]

al-Tabari and al-Baydawi locate the two mountains (mentioned in Koran XVIII:93/96): *in Armenia, in Azerbaijan or in the most eastern part of the land of the Turks; but the two mountains perhaps are also to be found between Armenia and Azerbaijan or in the farthest North.*[109]

The Shi'i traditions locate the barrier either *behind the Mediterranean, between the two mountains found there, whose rear part is the encircling Sea/ Okeanos (Bahr al-muhit)*,[110] or behind Derbent, and the "Two Khazars"[111]

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[106] al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vii, p. 89f.

[107] EI² *s.v.* Iklīm (A. Miquel); J.B. Harley–D. Woodward, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, (The History of Cartography. II,1), Chicago–London 1987, p. 94

[108] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āṯār al-bilād*, p. 416f.

[109] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, viii, p. 278, 281; al-Bayḍāwī, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar. *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl*, ed. H.O. Fleischer, *Beidhawii Commentarius in Coranum: ex. codd. Parisiensibus, Dresdensibus et Lipsiensibus*, Leipzig 1846-48; p. 573; cf. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīh*, iv, p. 3.

[110] EI² *s.v.* Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ (D.M. Dunlop).

[111] For the two *Khazars* cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■.

in the direction of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The barrier measures 200 cubits in height, and the wall is about 50 cubits wide.[112]

According to the *Bihar*, the place of the barrier is in the Northern quarter of the western part of the inhabited world.[113] al-Tusi[114] places the barrier almost at the same place, namely *behind the Bahr al-Rum between the two mountains found there. The rear part of these is near the Bahr al-muhit. But others, [al-Tusi remarks], say that the barrier is behind Derbent and the Caspian Sea (Bahr al-Khazar)*[115] *towards Armenia and Azerbaijan.*

Razi writes: *the place of the two barriers [Koran XVIII:92] is in the north, between Armenia and Azerbaijan, or they should be looked for in the degree of latitude of the Turks.*

Identification

Judaism, Christianity and Islam showed a tendency to equate, in times of danger, a fearsome enemy with the apocalyptical figures of Gog and Magog. For Ezekiel, they were still unnamed enemies from the north; for the Syrian Christians of the 6th to 8th centuries, they were concrete enemies from the north, namely the Huns and Hephthalites, and later the idea of Gog and Magog was associated with the Turks and Mongols. As expressed in early Islamic tradition and al-Qazwini, they likewise were the Turks: *Gog and Magog are two mighty tribes of the Turks, descendants from the son of Japheth son of Noah.*[116]

The above-mentioned Muslim traditionists of the 9th century were all aware of the anti-Turkish mood in Baghdad, which in 836 led to the move of the caliphal court from the capital to Samarra. The stories brought back from the campaigns in the east added to the fear of the enemy there, indicated rather indiscriminately as Turks. Because of his position in the administration, Ibn Khurradadhbih, and Sallam for that matter, very probably met at least some of these traditionists, Ahmad b. Hanbal in the first place. The current trend of identifying the fear and horror-inspiring Turks with the riding horsemen Gog and Magog was certainly known to them. These

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[112] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 298.

[113] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 302. The *Biḥār* quotes Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the *Ta'rīkh* of al-Ṭabarī, the *Kitāb al-masālik* of Ibn Khurradādhbih. It also mentions Abu'l-Rayhani (al-Bīrūnī), but does not name a work of his.

[114] al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vii, p. 81.

[115] EI[2] *s.v.* (D.M. Dunlop).

[116] al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āṯār al-bilād*, p. 416.

feelings are clearly expressed in the traditions, often in quite depreciative terms.

According to a tradition transmitted by al-Zamakhshari, Gog and Magog, before the barrier was built, *used to come out every spring in order to eat all that is green, and to carry away all that is dry.*[117] This seems a reminiscence of raids made by nomadic peoples, such as the Turkish tribes in Central Asia. In a tradition transmitted by al-Bukhari[118] the Turks are directly linked to the end of time:

> The Hour will not come before you have fought a people whose footwear is made of hair, and before you have fought the Turks who have small eyes, ruddy faces, small and finely chiselled noses, but rough and broad faces; it is as if their faces were shields clad with sinews[119] one above the other. You will find them the most disgusting of all peoples because of this.

Elsewhere[120] al-Bukhari has a similar tradition:

> The Hour will not come before the Muslims have fought the Khuz[121] and the Kirman of the Persians, who are red-faced, flat-nosed, who have small eyes and footwear made of hair; they are the Baraz.

In Arabic sources the name Turk is often said to derive from *turika* "to be left behind", the passive form of *taraka.* Originally, it is said, *Gog and Magog were 24 or 22 peoples,*[122] or, according to Wahb b. Munabbih and Muqatil b. Sulayman *21 peoples.*[123] *When 'the two-horned one' locked them up behind the barrier, one people were left behind (turika) because they were absent on a raid,*[124] or, according to a less anti-turkish approach, *they were left out because they believed in God.*[125] On the authority of al-Suddi,[126] Ibn Mardawayh reports that *the Turks are a contingent*

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[117] al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, p. 584.

[118] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-manāḳib*, p. 61:25.

[119] *turs muṭraḳ*, cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, col. 1850.

[120] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ii, *Kitāb al-anbiyā'*, p. 60:7.

[121] i.e. the Ghuzz or Oghuz Turks, cf. EI² *s.v.* (Cl. Cahen).

[122] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 221. Cf. the Syriac tradition in Chapter 2 p. ■■ (27).

[123] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 298. Muḳātil b. Sulaymān b. Bashīr, traditionist and Ḳur'ān commentator (d. 767). His prestige as a traditionist was rather low, cf. EI² *s.v.* (M. Plessner–A. Rippin).

[124] Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 299; Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 355.

[125] Ibn Hishām, *Kitāb al-tīdjān*, p. 302.

[126] He was a popular preacher, whose reputation as a transmitter of prophetic traditions was disputed (d. 745); cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Suddī, Ismā'īl b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (G.H.A. Juynboll).

of Gog and Magog who broke out alternately. They had gone out on a raid and thus remained 'on this [i.e. the Arab] side' of the barrier.[127]

Another tradition[128] reports: *Gog are the Turks, and Magog the Jil and Daylam,*[129] the formidable adversaries of the Muslims in Gilan (Northern Iran). *Sometimes the Turks and Khurasanians are given the epithets of the dajjal, who is said to come out from a land in the east, called Khurasan. He will be followed by peoples who have rough and broad faces.*[130]

Appearance

In most traditions identifying Gog and Magog with the Turks—and, to a lesser extent, with the Persians or the Khurasanians—these enemies of the early 'Abbasids are given a human aspect, even if a racist stance, to use a modern term, is not absent. Their neighbours carry names which in the Bible (Gen. x:2, Ezek. xxxviii-xxxix) are given to offspring of Japheth: Tawil, Taris, Mansak (Manshak, Mashak) and Kumara.[131] As mentioned above, Gog and Magog are said to descend from Japheth son of Noah, to whose name Wahb b. Munabbih and Muqatil b. Sulayman add "the father of the Turks".[132] Referring to Wahb b. Munabbih's history book,[133] Ibn Hadjar notes:

> Among Gog and Magog there are craftsmen and rulers, subjects who obey those who are set over them, and people who know God, who confide in His omnipotence and divine will.

Ibn Hadjar adds that *they have palm trees which they graft as often as they wish.*[134]

The fantastic, fear-inspiring descriptions given by Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Fadlan, al-Mas'udi and others intensify and also exaggerate the descriptions of Gog and Magog evoked by the traditions given above.

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[127] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 298.
[128] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, p. 221.
[129] Cf. above note ■■ (44).
[130] Ibn Mādja, *Sunan*, no. 4072.
[131] al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, p. 2; al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb 'adjā'ib*, p. 448; cf. Miquel, *Géographie*, ii, p. 508.
[132] al-Madjlisī, *Biḥār*, vi, p. 298.
[133] Cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 305f.
[134] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 225.

For the Arab geographers, Gog and Magog are human beings. Ibn Hawqal[135] relates that Russian and Khwarazmian merchants used to import silk and skins from the regions of Gog and Magog. Their human aspect also stands out clearly in the *Sirat Iskandar*.[136] It tells about frequent contacts between Muslims and individual "Yajujis", and relates in detail about their diplomatic exchanges with Alexander. Their language, described as *the inaccessible language of the Turks, which is incomprehensible is translated into Arabic by al-Khidr. Their king is called Qanun, their religion qualified as worship of sun and moon.*

Description of the barrier

Quite a number of traditions refer to the barrier of 'the two-horned one' as being about to be breached in the Prophet's lifetime. The Prophet is said to have made a gesture which indicated how large the opening was: *Today part of the rampart of Gog and Magog was opened like this", and Wuhayb*[137] *joined his fingers to make 'ninety'*.[138] Ahmad b. Hanbal too notes: *the Prophet said that part of the barrier was about to open 'like this', and "he made a circle of ninety, bringing his thumb and forefinger together"*.[139] According to another tradition:

> the Prophet awoke from sleep with a reddened face and said: "Woe to the Arabs because of the evil that is imminent. Today part of the rampart of Gog and Magog is opened like this", and he made a round with his thumb and the next finger. Zaynab bint Jahsh said: "Oh Prophet! Shall we perish even if there are righteous people among us?" He said: "Yes, for there is much wickedness" .[140]

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[135] Ibn Ḥawḳal, *Kitāb al-masālik wa l-mamālik*, p. 482; cf. Miquel, *Géographie*, ii, p. 507.

[136] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 199f.

[137] On Wuhayb b. Khālid, see Ibn Ḥadjar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb fī sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, xi, p. 169f.

[138] Cf. EI² *s.v.* Subḥa (A.J. Wensinck); cf. below *ḥallaqa* "to make a circle"; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, ii, no. 8475; cf. I. Goldziher, *Le rosaire dans l'Islam*, in: *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 21 (1890), p. 299f., who refers to al-Tirmidhī, *Saḥīḥ*, ii, p. 262, 278: *wa-yuḥkidna bi l-anāmil* "let them [the women] count on the finger-tips"; for the way "ninety" is made with the fingers, see al-Ḳasṭallānī, Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad (d. 1517), *Irshād al-sārī fī sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, x, Cairo 1907, p. 243.

[139] The opening thus was seen as a hole, not as a fissure, cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (8) where Amīn Rāzī speaks of a hole.

[140] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad.*, no. 10834; cf. Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 226.

Even the outward appearance of the barrier is found in a prophetic tradition. The description shows a certain resemblance with those of Sallam and al-Biruni:[141]

> Someone said to the Prophet: "I saw the barrier of Gog and Magog: it looked like a striped cloak with a black and a red(-dish) stripe".[142] He said: "You indeed saw it"

Ibn Hadjar also quotes a tradition mentioned by al-Tabarani[143] which goes back to Abu Bakr:

> Two men came to the Prophet and said something like that. But he added something which must be rejected, namely: "By the One in Whose hand my soul rests! I saw it [the barrier] in the night of my heavenly journey [Koran XVII:1], tiles of gold and silver"

The reason for rejecting the latter "addition" may have been the consideration that the supernatural character of the heavenly journey[144] should not be brought in relation with such a terrestrial item as the barrier of 'the two-horned one' But al-Tabari, apparently, did not see any inconvenience in linking the Prophet's heavenly journey with the barrier.[145] Quoting the expression: *"By Him Who holds the soul of Muhammad*[146] *in His hand"*, he writes:

> Behind Jabalqa and Jabarsa,[147] the Prophet saw three nations: Mansak, Tafil and Taris, and before them Gog and Magog. The angel Gabriel took him to them during his night journey, and he called on them to worship God. But they refused to listen to him,[148] as did the three nations who considered God's messengers as liars. These nations, together with Gog and Magog, are in the fire.

Ibn Hadjar quotes al-Bazzar[149] who, on the authority of Abu Bakr, reports that *a man saw the barrier and studied it in detail.* According to

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[141] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■.

[142] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, vi, p. 226, vii, p. 195; cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, xvi, p. 23, and Lane, *Lexicon s.vv.* burd, ḥabara. For the Prophet's *burda*, cf. EI² *s.v.* (R. Basset).

[143] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, vii, p. 195.

[144] EI² *s.v.* Mi'rādj 1 (B. Schrieke–J. Horovitz).

[145] Yarshater, *History*, i, p. 237f.

[146] "my [i.e. Muḥammad's] soul" is a well-known variant; cf. e.g. the index on Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*.

[147] As for the two cities in East and West, cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, index *s.vv.* Djābalḳā and Djābarṣā.

[148] The inhabitants of the cities, on the other hand, agreed to follow the religion of God.

[149] al-Bazzār, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Amr (d. 905); cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 162.

al-Qummi,[150] *'the two-horned one' built a gate of copper, iron, pitch and tar.* al-Tusi[151] says that *the barrier is 200 cubits high and the wall about 50 cubits wide.* Ibn al-'Arabi,[152] Ibn Hadjar remarks,[153] sees a threefold meaning in the traditions about Gog and Magog and the barrier:

> – God prevents Gog and Magog from digging continuously night and day.
> – God prevents them from trying to climb the barrier with a ladder or a device. He does not put this in their mind, nor does He teach it to them. It is also conceivable that there is neither wood in their land nor tools appropriate for that. But [Ibn Hadjar remarks] this interpretation must be rejected because in Wahb b. Munabbih's story of Gog and Magog they have trees and other agricultural produce to make tools.
> – God prevents Gog and Magog from saying "God willing" i.e. from bringing about the end of time before the moment determined by God.

[150] al-Ḳummī, *Tafsīr*, ii, p. 15.
[151] al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vii, p. 83.
[152] Ibn al-'Arabī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Ma'āfirī (d. 1148) was a traditionist from Seville, cf. EI[2] *s.v.* (J. Robson).
[153] Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 224.

GOG AND MAGOG IN MEDIAEVAL ARABIC, PERSIAN AND TURKISH PROSE

Mediaeval Arab writers and the few Persian and Turkish authors, who followed in their footsteps, did not ignore the motif of Gog and Magog and the barrier. Prose-writers and poets found their inspiration in the Koran, which had declared that the story is part of *Revelation*, and the Tradition had provided it with many details. The interpretation, however, often varied greatly. Geographers and historians described Gog and Magog and the barrier and tried to locate them, while scholars such as Ibn Khaldun and al-Biruni did their best to avoid the excesses of popular belief. Story-tellers availed themselves of the motif to provide popular entertainment. Poetry and epic literature, finally, made full use of the dramatic possibilities of the theme. These two parts of the literary production will be dealt with in the next chapter. Here we want to see how Arab, Persian and Turkish prose-writers treat the motif. As was the case with *Tradition*, the material presented here has been broken up into various categories. Preference is again given to themes over chronology of authors.

1. *Themes on Gog and Magog*

Appearance

According to al-Jahiz (d. 868), the famous Arab *bel esprit*[1] and a contemporary of Sallam, people pretend that the *nasnas* and other such beings are combinations of *shiqq* and man, and that the creatures which are behind the barrier are a combination of *shiqqs*, *nasnas* and Gog and Magog.[2] al-Jahiz probably believed in the existence of Gog

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[1] EI² *s.v.* al-Djāḥiẓ, Abū ʿUthmān al-Baṣrī (Ch. Pellat).

[2] al-Djāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, i, p. 189; iii, p. 142; iv, p. 7; vii, p. 178. *Shikk* is "a species of diabolical beings having the form of the half of a human being", Lane, *Lexicon*, *s.v.*; cf. EI² *s.v.* Shikk (B. Carra de Vaux–T. Fahd); it is also the name of two pre-islamic diviners. Amīn al-Maʿlūf, *Muʿdjam al-ḥayawān. An Arabic*

and Magog because the Koran mentions them explicitly, but it is doubtful whether he shared the opinions of his days about the *nasnas* and the *shiqqs*. For him the *nasnas* were identical with the *waq-waq*.[3] al-Qazwini describes the *nasnas* as half-men coming from *shiqqs* and whole men; the *shiqqs*, in their turn, are other halves of men with one leg and one arm.[4]

According to the Arab geographers the *nasnas* (or *nisnas*) originally is nothing other than an anthropomorphic ape, observed by seafaring Arab merchants of the Indian Ocean, and only the gibbon, found in Malaysia, Indonesia, Burma and the Himalayas, corresponds fairly accurately to the descriptions given. The reports of those gibbons were rapidly distorted by the imagination of those who transmitted them, to the point where the *nasnas* became a monstrous semi-anthropomorphic creature. With the *shiqq*, the *nasnas* is not without analogy with the monoculus and satyrus of Pliny. They live in the land below the country of the Zanj[5] (in the most eastern island of Malaysia) and in the extreme north of the Sino-Asiatic continent. These three lands are said to be inhabited by particularly small people: the Negrillos in Malaysia, in the Deccan and in the southern Himalaya, and the Lapps, the Samoyedes, the Tungus in Eastern Siberia, and other nomadic ethnic groups of the arctic and sub-arctic regions.[6]

al-Dinawari,[7] philologist, mathematician and also a contemporary of Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam, relates the building of the barrier as it is given in the Koran. Then he adds:

> 'the two-horned one' asked the people living near the barrier who were the various people around them. They named: Gog and Magog, Tawil, Taris, Mansak and Kumara. When he had finished building the barrier between them and those people, he left them and came to a people of a red colour and with a reddish beard; men and women lived separated except for three days per year.[8]

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zoological dictionary, Cairo 1932, p. 13-18 describes the *nasnās* as gibbons and pygmees; cf. also Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān*, p. 60, 105.

[3] EI² *s.v.* Wāḳ-wāḳ (G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville–G.T. Tibbetts–Sh.M. Toorawa).

[4] Fahd, *Le merveilleux dans la faune*, p. 118.

[5] Cf. Chapter 4, p. ■■.

[6] EI² *s.v.* Ḳird.

[7] EI² *s.v.* al-Dīnawarī, Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad b. Dāwūd (d. 894-99 or before 902-3) (B. Lewis).

[8] al-Dīnawarī, *al-akẖbār al-ṭiwāl*, p. 39; cf. Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, p. 35ff. See the coloured pictures no. 1 and 2 in Mallory–Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, p. 16-17.

Ibn al-Faqih:

> Gog and Magog are short, bald, and broad-faced, while their size is that of an average man. At their hands they have claws instead of nails; they have molars and canines like those of wild cats, and they have large ears, one of which serves them as bed, the other as cover.[9]

Among the authors quoted here, al-Mas'udi probably was the best qualified Arab writer to deal with Gog and Magog and the stories around them. His great curiosity and extensive travelling brought him, among many other regions, to Armenia, Azerbaijan and the frontiers of Khurasan, all visited by Sallam some hundred years earlier. In his *Kitab al-tanbih*, he gives a general description of the people of the North, without mentioning any specific group:

> They are tall, have a fierce character and rough customs; they are stupid and their speech is dull-witted; they have a white complexion which passes from white to bluish; their skin is delicate and their flesh thick; their eyes are also blue, in harmony with the shades of their complexion; they have flowing hair, which is red because of the effect of the humid vapours.[10]

And in his *Murudj* he sees Gog and Magog as Turks:

> The typical physiognomy of the Turks as well as their small eyes is due to the climate they live in. Even their camels have short legs, a long neck and white hair. This is also the case with the people of Gog and Magog.[11]

For Ibn Hawqal (d. after 973), the famous Arab geographer whose work *The Configuration of the Earth*[12] is said to be based on travel and direct observation, Gog and Magog are beardless and hairless. These characteristics clearly refer to peoples of the Mongolian type. al-Marwazi,[13] physician and writer on geography and anthropology (d. after 1120), notes:

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[9] Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 300; Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 355. In the Iskandarnāma, Gog and Magog are called "elephant-ears", cf. M.S. Southgate (transl.), *Iskandarnamah, a Persian medieval Alexander-romance*, New York 1978, p. 232; cf. "carpet-ears", below p. ■■ (n. 16 etc.).

[10] Carra de Vaux, *Livre de l'avertissement*, p. 39.
al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 369.

[12] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Ḥawḳal, Abu l-Ḳāsim 'Alī (A. Miquel). Cf. Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, p. 12, 14, 169, 202, 292, 392, 482.

[13] EI² *s.v.* al-Marwāzi, Sharaf al-Zamān (C.E. Bosworth).

> The small size of Gog and Magog is due to the cold. As opposed to the heat, the cold has the property of joining together, of making massive, of tightening and contracting the parts. This takes place in the farthest part of the country of the Turks, especially in the region of Gog and Magog.

The same author also writes:

> 'the two-horned one', before entering the Land of Darkness, met in the land of Gog and Magog people with small eyes and faces covered with hair like those apes which do not come out at midday but only at night, for they hide themselves from the sun's heat in mountain lairs.[14]

According to al-Idrisi (d. 1165):[15]

> the size of men and women among Gog and Magog does not surpass that of the inhabitants of our lands,

but he also says:

> Magog is small, and that men and women are not taller than three shibr [ca. five inches]. Their face is completely round, they are totally covered with a sort of down, have large, round and drooping ears which reach down to their shoulders; their language resembles a whistle; they are basically nasty, dishonest and given to shameful depravity. During the entire year they live in snow and ice. It is said that they are two brothers, born of a common father. They are white- and auburn-coloured, of a very burning disposition, and are a highly prolific race. Before the barrier of 'the two-horned one' existed, they were engaged in incursions into their neighbours' lands, so that the entire surface of that region became deserted, without cultivation, uninhabited and full of serpents. Part of their population 'the two horned' found honest and pious, but miserable, supported by neighbouring tribes. He let them live on the other side of the rampart. The Arabs gave them the name of Turks because they were part of the tribe of the Turks of Alexander, though born of Gog and Magog. The Turks called Adkash are said to have broad faces, large heads, much hair and piercing eyes. Their speed is different [from ours] and peculiar. They worship fire and all sorts of bright objects.[16]

The Persian historian Mirkhwand[17] (1498) writes:

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[14] Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān*, p. 159.

[15] EI² *s.v.* al-Idrīsī, 'Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad (G. Oman).

[16] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, p. 934f.; Jaubert, *Géographie*, ii, p. 416-420; cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 347.

[17] EI² *s.v.* Mīrkh^{w}ānd, Muḥammad b. Kh^{w}āndshāh (A. Beveridge–B. Forbes Manz). Mīrkhwānd's universal history is written in Persian but its title is in Arabic:

> Gog and Magog were divided into three species: of the first were those whose stature was 120 cubits high, but the breadth of their bodies was less; of the second were those whose bodies measured 120 cubits in height and as many in breadth; of the third were those whose dwarfish bodies varied in height from one span to four cubits; the latter were called long-ears. The elephant and rhinoceros were unable to cope with them when they met them.[18]

An almost identical text is found in the *History of the Friend of Biographies* by Khwandamir (d. around 1535),[19] a paternal cousin of Mirkhwand. According to Khwandamir, the third species is also known as *carpet-ears*.

The Persian biographer Amin Razi[20] (d. early 17th c.) composed *Seven Climes*, a great collection of biographies, arranged geographically according to the seven climes. Gog and Magog are dealt with under the seventh clime, together with the Bulgars and the Slavs. The text on the appearance of Gog and Magog is identical with those of Mirkhwand and Khwandamir, except that for Razi *the breadth of the first species is in absolute disagreement with their stature.*[21]

Origin

For Ibn Hawqal, al-Idrisi and Khwandamir, Gog and Magog are human beings. The geographers and men of letters do not repeat the fables about the way they descend from Adam and/or Eve as related in some traditions. Mirkhwand (according to Khwandamir) reports that *Gog and Magog were the sons of Mutushalkh son of Japheth*, i.e.

Rawḍat al-safā' fī sīrat al-anbiyā' wa l-mulūk wa l-khulafā'—"Garden of purity: the history of prophets, kings and caliphs" The first book of the popular work deals with the history of the pre-Islamic kings of Persia, and contains a section on Gog and Magog and Sallām.

[18] Mīrkh^{w}ānd, *Rawḍat al-safā'*, p. 123-125; cf. E.G. Browne, *A literary history of Persia*, iii, iv, London 1902, 1920 (Reprint: Cambridge 1976, 1978), indexes *s.v.*; J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, Dordrecht 1968, index *s.v.*.

[19] EI^{2} *s.v.* Kh^{w}āndamir, Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Ḥusaynī (A. Beveridge–J.T.P. de Bruijn); cf. E.G. Browne, *A literary history of Persia*, iii, Cambridge 1969, p. 434; J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, Dordrecht 1968, index *s.v.*; C.A. Storey–Y. Bregel, *Persian literature, vol. i: Qur'anic literature*, London 1927 i, p. 104-109. The latter deals with pre-Islamic history and contains on p. 679 (*Tarīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥumā'ī, Teheran) a short passage on Gog and Magog, where the reader is referred to Mīrkhwānd's *Rawḍat al-safā'*. The Persian texts of Kh^{w}āndamir and Rāzī, quoted in the present work, were translated into English by Dr. Asghar Seyed Ghorab and Dr. Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden University).

[20] EI^{2} *s.v.* Rāzī, Amīn Aḥmed (E. Berthels).

[21] Rāzī, *Haft Iḳlīm*, p. 515-518.

of the Methusala of Gen. v:21, spelled Mu(a)tushalih in the Arabic Bible translation.[22]

Numbers

The innumerable peoples of Gog and Magog are a feature unanimously shared by all Arab authors. Thus al-Jahiz writes about the soldiers of Khorasan:

> Even if Gog and Magog were to vie in multitude with those of us [the guerriers of Khurasan], that dwell beyond the river [Oxus], our men would be superior to them in number.[23]

According to Ibn al-Faqih,

> Those who live nearest to the inhabitants of the region are six tribes: Gog and Magog, Tawil, Taris, Mansak, Kumari, each of them as numerous as all mankind taken together. The inhabitants of the region did not know the tribes of those who live far away from them. There is no way of communication except the gorge [between the two mountains].

A common feature in the various texts is that a large crowd gathered around 'the two-horned one' when he reached the place of the barrier. They told him that behind that mountain were people whose number God alone knows and who had destroyed their lands and crops. Ibn al-Faqih, followed by al-Tabari, writes that *males and females do not die before having produced one thousand children.* And Mirkhwand writes:

> Gog and Magog, having established themselves near the rampart of 'the two-horned one', begat a numerous progeny since mankind [according to the opinion of ʿAbd Allah b. ʿumar][24] are divided into ten parts, nine of which are the descendants of Gog and Magog. It is likewise recorded in histories that Gog and Magog were two nations, each of which was divided into one hundred tribes, and that one man

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[22] *Mutūshalkh/Mu(a)tūshalih*: the letters *h* and *kh* are easily confused in Arabic script. The origin of Gog and Magog is not found in Rehatsek's translation of Mīrkhʷānd's *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'*.

[23] C.T. Harley Walker, *Jāhiz of Baṣra to al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān on the "Exploits of the Turks and the army of the Khalifate in general"*, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1915), p. 645.

[24] 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 693) was a son of the second caliph, and a famous transmitter of traditions, cf. EI² *s.v.* (L.V. Vaglieri).

of these never died until he beheld one thousand children of his descendants.[25]

Food

Ibn al-Faqih (according to al-Muʿalla b. Hilal al-Kufi) relates that people at al-Massisa[26] had told him:

> The sea waves, notwithstanding impetuous rumbling, are not agitated. This is a punishment inflicted upon the sea animals, which then cry to Allah. Seven clouds arrive, one after the other, and go up together to the sky. Then something comes out of them which people consider to be the sea monster tinnin:[27] it is seen with its head in the thick cloud and lashing its tail. It then disappears, being chased towards Gog and Magog. After that the sea calms down.

Ibn al-Faqih also says:

> A tinnin had fallen from the cloud and died. When an infection had affected the population, doctor Buqratis [Hippocrates] examined it and found out that the tinnin was two parasangs long, several cubits wide and had a round body; it was speckled like a leopard, covered with scales like a fish. Near its head it had two huge wings, similar to the fins of a fish, from which other heads ramified. The main head had the form of a human head; it was large as a stout hill, with two ears, long and large like those of an elephant; from this head, necks came out, each ten cubits long and carrying a head similar to that of an elephant.[28]

According to al-Masʿudi,

> Some people think that the sea monster [tinnin], is thrown into the land of Gog and Magog. It there causes a hail to come down, which kills the monster. Its chair then serves as food for Gog and Magog. [...] when 'the two-horned one' asked about the food of Gog and Magog, he was told that the sea every year throws up for them two fishes, each of which it takes ten days to pass through. In spring their food is the sea monster which, at its season, is prayed for in the same way people pray for abundant rain at its season. They call each other

[25] Kh^{w}āndamir and Amīn Rāzī have the same text as Mīrkh^{w}ānd, except that for them each tribe of Gog and Magog is divided into four hundred tribes.

[26] Misis in Turkey; cf. EI^{2} *s.v.* al-Maṣṣīṣa (E. Honigmann).

[27] Cf. Chapter 4, p. ■■.

[28] Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 300; Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 356f.

> in the way pigeons do, and howl like wolves; they mate like animals on the spot where they meet.[29]

According to Ibn Fadlan:

> God every day sends Gog and Magog a fish from the sea. Each one takes a knife and cuts off a morsel which is enough for himself and his family. If he takes more than he needs, he and his family suffer from stomach ache, and they sometimes die of it. After they have taken what they need, the fish returns to the sea.

And for Mirkhwand

> The food of Gog and Magog consists mainly of crabs, which abound in their country.

Role in eschatology

In Koran XVIII:82ff Gog and Magog and the barrier of 'the two-horned one' are given a prominent place in eschatology. The revelation of these texts may have been codified about the time when Hassan b. Thabit (d. 659) wrote his poem.[30] He undoubtedly contributed to the spread in early Islam of the stories around Alexander 'the two-horned one', which later were to find their way into the collections of Islamic traditions.

An important reference to the eschatological role of Gog and Magog as found in the Tradition and in al-Tabari, is the *Dürr-i meknün* "The Hidden Pearl", written by Ahmed Yazıcıoğlu (d. around 1466), known as Bican ("the lifeless") because of his ascetic lifestyle. The *Dürr-i meknün*, called the first Ottoman encyclopaedia, contains passages on Gog and Magog and the barrier of 'the two-horned one' which show the author's familiarity with the Arabic sources.[31] He

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[29] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 286; cf. Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 299-300; Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālat* (Canard, *La relation du voyage*, p. 109, 138f.); Miquel, *Géographie*, ii, p. 510.

[30] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[31] According to the *Dürr-i meknün* (Kaptein, *Eindtijd*, p. 133), Gog and Magog, together with the *daddjdjāl* and others, will end up in the third level of Hell, called Ḥaṭīma, a variant of al-Ḥuṭama (Koran CIV:4-5), meaning "crusher, shatterer" According to al-Ṭabarī, al-Ḳurtubī and other exegetes, it is the fourth level of Hell, or also a name for one of the gates of Hell, cf. Th. O'Shaughnessy, *The Seven Names for Hell in the Qur'ān*, in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (1961) p. 444-469, here p. 463f.; Ş. el-Ṣāleḥ, *La vie future selon le Coran*, Paris 1971, p. 46. For al-Ḥuṭama as the fifth hell, especially for Jews, cf. C.C. Castillo, *Abu l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Kitāb Shayārat al-yaqīn. Tratado de escatologia musulmana*, Madrid 1987, p. 82f.

indeed was widely known as a translator of works written in Arabic. In the Chapter on the coming out of Gog and Magog, the author writes:

> Gog and Magog are two brothers from among the descendants of the prophet Noah. They are small in stature, and have small eyes and lop ears. They spread over the earth and break through the barrier. They roast the people and animals they meet. Whatever the quantity of sweet water, those who arrive first drink it all; the next drink all the brackish water, and the last lap up all the mud. The face of the earth will be overcrowded. A bird will have to alight on their heads because it cannot find a place to nest. Dearth will be so great that on [Mount] Tur a sheep will be sold by auction for thousand gold pieces. The believers satisfy their hunger with mindfulness of God, and Īsa advises the believers until God turns Gog and Magog over to their doom. They shoot their arrows towards heaven. Then they hear that the people have gathered on [Mount] Tur, and they too move in that direction. People say to Īsa: "Please, pray that God eradicate this sinful horde". Īsa prays and the believers say "Amen" God sends an army in the shape of a black horse which destroys them at once. After that God sends birds with necks like camel-necks, which throw the corpses of Gog [and Magog] into the sea. The surface of the earth is cleaned and resembles paradise. There will be confidence and belief, and Īsa will break the idols. The believers will be [very] busy with worshipping. Everything will be very cheap, and the 'People of the Cave' will become disciples of Īsa. They even perform the pilgrimage with him. Īsa then goes to Medina and takes an Arab wife with whom he begets daughters. He will be sultan for forty years; others say seven years. But for him too life will not be everlasting, and he will participate in God's mercy and be buried next to Umar.[32]

Amin Razi writes:

> Gog and Magog, when it is time for them to come forward, make a hole in the barrier, come out and spread over the earth. They eat every animal they find. If one of them dies, they eat him too. They become superior to what lives at that time. Those who do not die by their hands, lock themselves up in fortresses. After that Gog and Magog wage war against Almighty God and shoot arrows towards heaven. By the power of Almighty God the arrows, now blood-stained, are returned. Because of this they become joyful and say: "We have conquered the inhabitants of the earth and now we will also conquer the inhabitants of heaven" After that the Praised and Almighty Truth sends worms to them, called fa'f. These worms creep into their ears and ruin them. Then the people who had fled for them and gone

[32] Kaptein, *Eindtijd*, p. 187-189.

hiding in the mountains and in strong fortresses, come back to their dwellings in joy. After that Almighty God arranges that rains fall upon them so that the surface of the earth is cleaned from their filthy corpses, which are thrown unto the sea. It is very well known, [Razi adds], that Gog and Magog every day come to the front of the barrier and work it with teeth, tongues and claws in such a way that there is just a little bit left. Getting tired they leave it alone, saying: "When morning comes, we will make a hole" When they come back in the morning, they see that, by the power of Almighty God, the barrier is as it was before. Until Resurrection Day this is what happens to them.[33]

Names

According to al-Tabari and Ibn Hadjar most of the reciters of the Koran who are from the Hidjaz and from Iraq preferred the reading Yajuj wa-Majuj [without hamza], but *'Asim*[34] *and al-Araj read Ya'juj wa-Ma'juj*. Ibn Hadjar remarks that Asim's reading of both words with a vowelless hamza comes from the Banu Asad. Muslim[35] had already remarked that both words are written with or without hamza, but that the great majority leave the hamza out. The poets al-'Ajjaj and his son Ru'ba b. al-'Ajjaj (8th c.)[36] read the words with hamza instead of *ya'* (under Syriac influence?). al-Zamakhshari and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi record the reading *Ajuj wa-Majuj* (or *Ma'juj*).[37] Arabic etymology considers the names as *yaf'ul* and *maf'ul* forms of *ajja* "to flame fiercely, to be intensive", or also "to make a rustling sound like that of an ostrich", because they move so swiftly and powerfully. Another etymology derives the words from al-*ajjaj* "water with a strong salty taste".[38] The reading Ajuj wa-Majuj bears great resemblance with the names *Agog wa-Magog*, found in the Syriac tradition.[39] Other philologists consider the names as *fa'ul* forms of *yajja* and *majja*, the latter meaning "to cast forth, to eject (from the mouth)".[40] Still others refer to Koran XVIII:99 ("We shall leave them surging[41] against

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[33] Rāzī, *Haft Iklīm*, p. 515-518.

[34] Head of the school of the reciters in Kūfa (d. 744-45).

[35] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 52 no. 2880.

[36] See below.

[37] al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, p. 498, 584; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ*, iv, p. 349; cf. Ibn Ḥadjar, *Fatḥ*, xvi, p. 221.

[38] Lane, Lexicon, *s.v.*

[39] *Alexander Poem*, i, p. 22; *Sermon on the Last Days*, i, p. 60.

[40] Lane, Lexicon *s.v.*

[41] *tamūdjū*, from *mādja* "to be agitated with waves".

each other"). Others, finally, consider the names as of non-arabic origin (*'ajami*).[42] For the majority, al-Tabari notes: *both names are non-arabic, but some say that they are rather Arabic, the distinction lying in their etymology. The derivation of the names from the verb madja comes from God Himself: "And We shall leave them on that day surging against each other [Koran XVIII:99]"* This surging takes place when Gog and Magog march forward from behind the barrier.

Location and Identification

Not only geographers and astronomers, but other authors as well give information about the place where Gog and Magog are located. The astronomer al-Farghani[43] (d. after 861) and a contemporary Sallam, writes:

> The seventh clime begins in the east, in the north of the lands of Gog and Magog, and extends to the land of the Turks.[44]

Ibn al-Faqih, who knew Sallam's travel account, writes:

> The distance between the land of the Khazars and the place of the barrier is two months.

In the chapter on the creation of the world, he writes:

> The left wing [of the world which is represented as a bird] are the Khazars. Behind them are the people called Manshak and Mashak,[45] and behind these are Gog and Magog, who belong to the people about whom God alone knows. [...]It is also said that one of the seven climes belongs to the people of Gog and Magog; the latter do not enter into the region of the others[46] nor do these enter into theirs.[47]

The phrase: "Behind the Khazars and the Manshak/Mashak" is to be understood as pointing to the Caucasus north of Bab al-Abwab, for, Ibn al-Faqih goes on:

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[42] Cf. A. Jeffery, *The foreign vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, Baroda 1938, p. 288f.

[43] EI[2] *s.v.* al-Farghānī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Kathīr (H. Suter–J. Vernet).

[44] al-Farghānī, Abu 'l-'Abbās, Muhammedis Fil. Ketiri Ferganensis, qui vulgo Alfraganus dicitur, *Elementa astronomica, arabice et latine, cum notis ad res exoticas sive orientales, quae in iis occurrunt*, ed. J. Golius, Amsterdam 1669, p. 38-39.

[45] Apparently two forms of the name Mesech, son of Japheth, cf. Chapter 4, p. ■■.

[46] Namely the Arabs, the Greeks, the Abyssinians, the Indians, the Turks and the Chinese.

[47] Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 3f; Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 6, 7.

> Beyond Bab al-Abwab are the kingdoms of Sur, of the Laks, the Alans, of Filan, Masqat and the town of Samandar. From Gurgan[48] to the Canal of the Khazars is eight days if the wind is favourable. The Khazars are all Jews, but they have been judaized only recently. From the land of the Khazars to the place of the barrier are two months.

Ibn al-Faqih then quotes Koran XVIII:82-93 and adds that *in spring Gog and Magog return to their lands, not leaving anything fresh without eating it, nor anything dry without taking it away.*[49]

There is a great difference in opinion between Ibn Rusta[50] and al-Mas'udi regarding the location of Gog and Magog. For Ibn Rusta the territory of Gog and Magog is in the north-east, and not in the Caucasus:[51]

> The fifth clime begins in the land of Gog and Magog in the east and passes immediately into Khurasan; the sixth clime begins in the land of Magog and passes over the land of the Khazars; the seventh clime begins in the east with the Northern Gog, passes over the land of the Turks, the coastal land of the Caspian Sea, etc. What lies behind these climes, begins in the land of Gog, passes over the land of the Toghuz-ghuz and the land of the Turks, then over the land of the Alans, then over that of the Avars.[52]

al-Mas'udi, on the other hand, writes that the sixth clime is particularly associated with Gog and Magog:

> The farthest posts of civilisation in the east are the frontiers of China and al-Shila;[53] they end in the barrier of Gog and Magog built by 'the two-horned one'; it runs through the ravines into the mountains which lie behind it; from there Gog and Magog used to swoop down on the plains. This barrier begins in the seventh clime outside the habitable region, then takes a southward direction and runs right along the habitable region till it finally reaches the Sea of Darkness.[54]

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[48] A region in Northern Iran, at the south-east corner of the Caspian Sea; EI² *s.v.* Gurgān (R. Hartmann–A. Boyle).

[49] Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 298; Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 354.

[50] EI² *s.v.* (S. Maqbul Aḥmad).

[51] In this context it is interesting to note that Ibn Rusta on the one hand denies the reliability of Sallām's account—which he had read (cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ but on the other seems to accept the results of the journey of his contemporary, namely that the barrier of 'the two-horned one' was not to be found in the Caucasus but further to the north-east.

[52] Ibn Rusta, *Kitāb al-aʿlāḳ al-nafīsa*, p. 98.

[53] al-Shīlā (al-Sīlā) i.e. Korea, cf. EI² *s.v.* (T. Saguchi).

[54] al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh*, p. 32ff.; Carra de Vaux, *Livre de l'avertissement*, p. 43.

According to al-Masʿudi Gog and Magog live in the seventh clime.[55] He also says:

> Gog and Magog, like the Franks, the Slavs, the Lombards, the Spanish, the Turks, the Bulgars, the Khazars, the Bulgars, the Alans, the Galicians and all the nations who live in the Northern regions, are descendants from Japheth, the youngest son of Noah. Those who live nearest to the inhabitants of the Northern region are six tribes, among them Gog and Magog, each of them as numerous as all mankind taken together. The inhabitants of the North do not know the tribes who live far away from them. There is no way of communication except through the gorge.[56]

For al-Tabari the barrier against Gog and Magog is in the east:

> Coming back from the West, 'the two-horned one' went to the east via Tibet. He constructed the barrier of Gog and Magog between two high mountains; there was a large valley there and a passage from one mountain to the other said to be 1000 cubits wide.[57]

The philologist, historian and *homme de lettres* Qudama b. Dja'far[58] (d. around 932) relates in his *The Book of Tax*:

> 'The two-horned one' learned from the king of China about a very numerous Turkish people living north-east of Shul[59] and Khumdan who caused disturbances in the north-eastern part of the country. The king told him that cattle and iron were the only booty that could be conquered on them, and that they were living in a corner of the earth which is enclosed to the north by the Green Sea which nobody can cross, to the west and south by sky-high mountains, and that their only way out is a pass as narrow as a belt. If this were closed, they would stay inside and people would be freed from their evil doings. The 'two-horned one' closed the valley with a barrier, and this is the barrier God speaks about in the Koran.[60]

The geographer al-Istakhri[61] (10th c.), who gives a greater number of climes, says that Gog (Magog is not mentioned) *is found in northern direction if one traverses the land between the Slavs and the Kimäk* (an early

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[55] Carra de Vaux, *Livre de l'avertissement*, p. 51.

[56] al-Masʿūdī, *Murūdj*, § 910.

[57] al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, i, 212.

[58] EI² *s.v.* Ḳudāma b. Djaʿfar al-Kātib al-Baghdādī (S.A. Bonebakker).

[59] Shūl possibly is Kāshghar, cf. EI² *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth); Khumdān has been identified with Changan, the former capital of China (modern Xian), cf. P. Pelliot, *L'Evêché Nestorien de Khumdan et Sarag*, in: *T'oung Pao* 25 (1928), p. 91.

[60] Ḳudāma b. Djaʿfar, *Kitāb al-kharādj*, vi, p. 264f. (ed.), p. 206 (transl.).

[61] EI² *s.v.* al-Iṣṭakhrī, Abū Isḥāḳ Ibrāhīm (A. Miquel).

Turkish people living in Western Siberia on the lower course of the river Irtysh):

> The kingdom of China is said to have 'the Encircling Sea'[62] at its east and north, the kingdom of Islam and Hind at its south. At its west, it is 'the Encircling Sea' too, if Gog and Magog, and what lies behind them as far as that sea, indeed belong to this kingdom. That which lies between Gog and Magog and 'the Encircling Sea' in the North, and between the desert of Sudan and 'the Encircling Sea' [in the south], is desert ruins; what we have heard is that there are buildings, but I do not know how great the distance is between these two deserts and the shore of 'the Encircling Sea'. The reason is that it is not possible to travel in these two because of the excessive cold which prevents construction and life in the North, and the excessive heat prevents life and construction in the south.[63] Gog are in the region of the North when one travels through [the land] between the Slavs and the Kimäk. God knows best about their dwelling places and the rest of their land.[64]

For Ibn Hawqal the location is almost the same as that of al-Istakhri:

> The empire of China is bordered to the north and east by the Ocean, to the south by the empire of Islam and by Hind, and to the west again by the Ocean; within that empire must be included Gog and Magog and the neighbouring people who stretch out till the shore of the Ocean. The territories which in the north separate Gog and Magog from the Ocean, and in the south from the deserts of the Blacks until the Ocean, include barren solitudes where, according to my information, are no cultivated lands, no animals, no plants.[65]

And Ibn Fadlan writes:

> Between Gog and Magog and us is the sea on one side, while mountains surround them on the other side. The barrier also separates them from the gate through which they used to come out. If God wishes them to come out into the inhabited world, He opens the barrier for them, the sea draws back and the fish leaves.[66]

As said above, Gog and Magog were human beings in the eyes of several authors, be it that for some they are different "from us"

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[62] EI² *s.v.* Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ (D.M. Dunlop).

[63] This seems to refer to conditions in and around the Taklamakan desert, cf. Chapter ■■

[64] al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 9.

[65] Ibn Ḥawkal, *Kitāb Sūrat al-arḍ*, p. 482.

[66] Canard, *La relation du voyage*, p. 109f.

(mankind). Already in the 10th century the geographer Ibn Hawqal had distanced himself from the popular stories about Gog and Magog found in the *hadith*. He sees them as human beings. They trade with the Russians and the Khwarazmians and their products are found as far as Spain:

> Their tribes are found towards the north once one has crossed the lands of the Slavs and the Kimäk. God alone knows their position and their territory, which consists of steep mountains which pack animals, cannot climb; their ascent is only possible for pedestrians. I never met anyone better informed about them than Ibrahim b. Alp Tekin,[67] the chamberlain of the ruler of Khurasan. He told me that merchandise is carried to them by men or on the spine of goats; the ascent or descent of the mountains sometimes takes their merchants, arriving from Khwarazm, one week or ten days. The greater part of the fur trade and the best beaver skins, which are put on the market in Spain, exist in the land of the Russians and come to them from the region of Gog and Magog. Their merchants [of Transoxania] penetrate into the land of Gog and Magog in order to get beaver skins and furs. It is very rare that a bearded man ventures into their midst; most of the travellers are beardless and without moustache. The adults of Gog and Magog are hairless and beardless. If a man with a full beard enters their land, the prince of the line of Gog and Magog, in whose territory he has arrived, sees to it that his body hair is pulled out; this, however, does not prevent him, after the operation, from treating the other with great consideration and to permit him to do his business.[68]

It is worth noting that these Khurasanian merchants, among whom undoubtedly also Muslims, were in contact with people of the Mongolian type, as is clear from the remark that Gog and Magog are hairless and beardless. These merchants must have introduced Islam in the Chinese trade centres along the highway from Tashkent to China and on the northern branch of the Silk Road. This form of proselytism, so well known in Islamic history, is reflected in al-Idrisi's remark, perhaps taken from al-Jayhani, on the way in which Islam had been introduced in those regions.[69] There is no serious objection against assuming that this form of islamization was already

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[67] Abū Isḥāḳ Ibrāhīm b. Alptekīn (d. 966) was the son of the founder of Ghaznawid power, cf. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 38; EI² *s.v.* Alp Takīn (W. Barthold–Cl. Cahen).

[68] Ibn Ḥawḳal, *Kitāb al-masālik*, ii, p. 482f. Ibn al-Wardi gives Ibn Hawqal's passage on the basis of Abu Ishaq's information, but omits the remark on the Mongolian appearance of Gog and Magog.

[69] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■.

practised before and during Sallam's days, one century before Ibn Hawqal's time. This then would confirm his remark about Muslims in the region who spoke Arabic and Persian and had mosques and Koran schools.[70]

al-Biruni (d. after 1050), described as one of the greatest scholars of mediaeval Islam and certainly the most original and profound,[71] has a passage on 'the two-horned one', the barrier and the journey of the caliph's dragoman—but he does not mention Sallam by name. He refers to Ibn Durayd[72] (d. 933) who gives a couple of names of Himyarite princes who are said to be 'the two-horned one':

> One prince of the Yemen[73] writes in a poem that 'the two-horned one' was his predecessor and mentions briefly the latter's adventures. [al-Biruni remarks that] of all the various versions this is the true one, because the princes, whose names begin with the word Dhu occur only in the history of the Yemen and nowhere else.

The wording of the Koran does not indicate the geographical position of the barrier but, according to al-Biruni:

> From geographical works and itineraries it is known that Gog and Magog are a tribe of the Eastern Turks, who live in the southern-most parts of the fifth and sixth climes.

He then summarizes the story of Sallam given by al-Tabari and briefly refers to Ibn Khurradadhbih's text:[74]

> The mission went to Bab al-Abwab, and finally arrived at the barrier; it was constructed of iron tiles, joined together by molten brass, and with a bolted gate; its garrison consisted of people of the neighbouring countries.[75]

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[70] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■.

[71] EI² *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī Abu 'l-Rayḥān Muḥammad (D.J. Boilot).

[72] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Durayd, Abū Bakr Muḥammad, philologist and lexicographer (J.W. Fück); cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, p. 172; J. Kraemer, *Legajo-Studien zur altarabischen Philologie*, in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 110 (1961), p. 261f.

[73] As'ad b. 'Amr b. Badī'a b. Malik b. Subayḍ b. 'Abdallāh b. Zayd b. Yāsir b. Yun'im.

[74] It is not known which version of that text was accessible to al-Bīrūnī. According to him, it was Caliph al-Mu'taṣim who sent Sallām on his mission, not al-Wāṯiḳ, as all other versions of the text have. Is this just a mistake on the part of al-Bīrūnī or did he have a version of Sallām's account which carried this name?

[75] al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-aṯār al-bāḳiya*, p. 41 (ed.), p. 50-51 (transl.).

For al-Biruni, a believing Muslim, the barrier did exist. He apparently located it somewhere behind the Bab al-Abwab, but he has serious doubts about the authenticity of Sallam's account.[76]

al-Idrisi divides the habitable earth into seven climes i.e. zones extending from the extreme west to the extreme east, but he does not define the latitudes of these climes. Each clime is divided into ten parts, so that the tenth part of each is to its extreme east:

> Gog and Magog are found in clime five/part ten, in clime six/parts five and ten, and in clime seven/part nine.

The ninth section of the sixth clime also comprises a part of the land of the Kipchak,[77] the land of the Türkesh,[78] and the barrier of Gog and Magog. As for the land of the Türkesh, he writes:[79]

> It touches the barrier, it is a cold region with much snow and rain. The land of the Kipchak is likewise. The ninth part of the fifth clime comprises the mountains which surround the regions of Gog and Magog; they are conterminous with the lands inhabited by the Adkash, whose territory lies east of the Caspian Sea. This part also comprises the entire land of the Adkash; to the west lies the land of the Oghuz; the people who live to the east are close to the mountains which surround Gog and Magog. These mountains are so steep that they cannot be ascended from any side. And if by any means they may, the summit cannot be reached on account of the mass of heavy snow which never melts, and because at all times the summit is enveloped by a kind of vapour which is never dispersed and never leaves it.[80] In the tenth section of the fifth clime lies the upper land of Gog. They are descendants from Sem, son of Noah. Their stature is very short, but, according to what is said, the length of the men among them, i.e. of the people of Gog, is like the length of one of us, and their women are likewise. But it is not known what their religions or beliefs are. The land of the people of Magog is lower [than the one just mentioned]. They are all extremely short, their men and women not exceeding the length of three palms. They are thickly covered with hair, and have large, round, and pendulous ears. Under the eighth part of the sixth clime are the

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[76] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[77] EI² *s.v.* Ḳıpčaḳ (G. Hazai).

[78] EI² *s.v.* Turks, i, 2 ("The tribal history of the Central Asian Turks") (P.B. Golden).

[79] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, p. 934, 938; Jaubert, *Géographie*, ii, p. 416-420; Wilson, *The Wall of Alexander*, p. 585ff.

[80] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, p. 843; Jaubert, *Géographie*, ii, p. 344. This is a fairly realistic description of the Tianshan heights, cf. Chapter 12.

fetid land,[81] the land of Samriq, i.e. the land of the Valakh[82] Turks, and also the Sisian territory i.e. the demolished regions destroyed by Gog and Magog.[83] The regions [i.e. towns with their districts] of the Samriq land are: Marzan, Ghauran, Dadami, Sakra, Khothmakhont, Bagra, Ratsa, Khorman, Danbaha, and Lakhman.[84] An unnamed narrow pass leads to the above-mentioned regions. A great river flows from within the mountains, passes through the above-mentioned narrow pass and runs out beyond the mountains to a very great lake.[85] Lakhman[86] is a city lying on the summit of the above-mentioned mountains; the river issues from there and takes its name from that town. From Danbaha vessels proceed to the lake, and from there, against the current, to the city of Jurman.

al-Idrisi goes on by saying that Talas[87] is the centre of the Samriq Qarluq, and that Lakhman, built on the Sunya mountains, which divide the Samriq from the Sisian regions, is a very large town.[88] The tenth part of the same clime contains a portion of the land of Gog and Magog. The seventh part of the seventh clime contains the rest of the Bashkir[89] regions, and the Northern boundary of the fetid land. The ninth part contains a portion of the inner land of Gog and Magog and part of the Pitchy Sea i.e. the Sea of the Extreme East, which is dark. The tenth part of the seventh clime, finally, is occupied by the Dark Sea.

The Persian poet Nizami Ganjawi (d. between 1180-1217)[90] writes:

'the two-horned one', after his expedition to China, left that country in the intense heat of summer, and proceeded to the land of the Kirgiz

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[81] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■

[82] The early Arabic form of Turkish Ḳarluḳ; cf. EI² *s.v.* Ḳarluḳ (C.E. Bosworth).

[83] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[84] Cf. below and Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[85] Perhaps the Ili river which empties itself into Lake Balkhash, or the Irtysh river, which flows into Lake Issık-köl; cf. Chapter 8, p. ■■.

[86] al-Idrīsī's description seems to agree with what Gardīzī remarks on the town of Barskhān, cf. Chapter 8, p. ■■; cf. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 39-40; Göckenjan-Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 135f.

[87] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[88] According to al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 6, the journey from the extreme east of Farghāna—the well-known valley on the middle Jaxartes—to the frontier of Toghuzghuz territory, which begins where Ḳarluḳ territory ends, lasts 30 days. Wilson, *The Wall of Alexander*, estimates that this would be the distance between the extreme east of Farghāna and 850 east longitude. The town of Khorman mentioned above probably is to be identified with Djurmān. The Ḳarluḳ occupied approximately the territory between the 710 and the 850 east longitude and from the Tianshan mountains to Lake Balkhash and the south of the Tarbagatai Range.

[89] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[90] EI² *s.v.* Niẓāmī Gandjawī, Djamāl al-Dīn (P. Chelkowski).

> and the north. After wandering through an endless, barren desert devoid of all life and composed of silver sand, he came to a fine city near mountains, whose inhabitants complained of the inroads and devastations of Gog [Magog is not mentioned]. The 'two-horned one' then built there a barrier of steel. The barrier is not further described.[91]

In Nizami's poem Gog and Magog have become the names of the two mountains which are joined by a dam by Alexander.[92] Elsewhere it is said that

> Alexander conquers Derbent, goes to the fortress Sarir, reaches the Northern edge [of the Caucasus], and erects there the barrier against Magog. Behind the elevation he can see a plain as large as the Sea.[93]

According to the Persian historian and geographer Hamd Allah Mustawfi al-Qazwini (d. after 1339-40),[94]

> Bab al-Abwab is called Sarir by the Arabs, Derbent and sometimes also Filan by the Persians, while the king of this country is known as the filan-shah. The Mongols name this place Timur Kapi [Iron Gate]. It was founded by king Luhrasp the Kayanian and completed by his grandson Isfendiyar, son of Gushtasp. A rampart extended from the city wall on the one side down to the Caspian Sea, and out into the waters. Some folk call this rampart the wall of Gog and Magog, but this is an attribution of local authority.[95]

Ibn Battista[96] (d. around 1368-69) reports:

> The distance between the city of Sin-kalian[97] and the barrier of Gog and Magog is sixty days' travel "as I have been told", and that there is no city, either of infidels or of Muslims, beyond this city. Wandering infidels live there who eat the sons of Adam if they overcome them.[98]

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[91] Niẓāmī, *Iskandarnama*, p. 540. In the first part of the Iskandar-nāma, Alexander is said to have built a barrier at the request of the Khazar Turks against the inroads of the Kipchak Turks. Niẓāmī probably does not refer here to our rampart, cf. Wilson, *The Wall of Alexander*, p. 584; E.G. Browne, *A literary history of Persia*, ii, Cambridge 1969, p. 411.

[92] Niẓāmī, *Iskandarnama*, p. 39.

[93] Niẓāmī, *Iskandarnama*, p. 221f., 538f.

[94] EI² *s.v.* Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (B. Spuler).

[95] Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-ḳulūb*, p. 240; cf. also Chapter 7, p. ■■(26).

[96] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A. Miquel).

[97] Ṣīn-kalān i.e. the town of Ṣīn al-ṣīn [Canton], cf. Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta*, iv, p. 813, 896f.

[98] Marco Polo states that the people of the kingdom of Fuju (Fukien) eat the flesh of the men who have not died a natural death. It has been assumed that this refers to aboriginal mountain tribes, but there have been allegations of cannibalism among Chinese, Mongols and Tibetans (Yule, *The Book of Marco Polo*, i, p. 311-314 n. 9; ii,

> That is why people do not pass through their country or travel to it. I did not meet in that country anyone who had seen the rampart, or had seen anyone who had seen it.[99]

Ibn Khaldun[100] (d. 1382), the famous historian, sociologist and philosopher, deals with the location of Gog and Magog in several places of his *al-Muqaddima*:

> The cultivated part of the earth extends more to the north. In the shape of a circular plane it extends in the south to the equator and in the north to a circular line[101] behind which there are mountains separating [the cultivated part of the earth] from the elemental water. Enclosed [between these mountains] is the dam of Gog and Magog.[102] In the ninth section of the sixth zone are the Adkash. In the east the section is hugged by the Qufaya Mountains that surround Gog and Magog. In the middle of this ninth section is the dam built by Alexander.[103]

Mirkhwand notes that it is related that

> Manshak, one of the children of Japheth, had two sons, called Gog and Magog. Since each of his sons had obtained land, these two proceeded to the Far East, near the region where the barrier of 'the two-horned one' at present stands. *He also writes that* each generation [of Noah's sons] migrated to some region of the world and began to cultivate the land. Gog and Magog chose to go to the eastern borders, to a place where the barrier of Iskandar had been built and a huge number of people were born to their generation.[104]

Khwandamir, who has almost the same text, speaks of the farthest eastern borders. He also remarks that

> a curious society of man is found at the borders of China, where there is a tribe whose appearance resembles that of man, but whose hair resembles that of apes.[105]

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p. 225); cf. the cannibalism ascribed to Gog and Magog already in the Syriac tradition (cf. Chapter 2, p. ■■ and Chap. 4 ■■ n. 69).

[99] Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta*, iv, p. 897.

[100] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Khaldūn, Walī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (M. Talbi).

[101] For a description of the map, which is nearly identical with that of al-Idrīsī, cf. Ibn Khaldūn–Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, i, p. 109ff. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the earth floats upon the elemental water like a grape, ibid., p. 110.

[102] Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, i, p. 96, 137, 163, and note 202.

[103] Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 157, 163.

[104] Mīrkh^{w}ānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'*, p. 124.

[105] Cf. Chapter ■■ p. ■■.

Ibn al-Wardi, philologist and man of letters (d. 1457),[106] practically copied part of Ibn Hawqal's text. He too writes:

> Gog and Magog live in the Northern zone of the earth. They are found in the regions between the Kimäk and the Slavs. God knows best the space they occupy. Their regions are towering; that is why no riding animal can climb them, nor can they be reached in another way than on foot.[107]

The Ikhwan al-Safa',[108] who wrote their letters probably between 961 and 986, consider Gog and Magog as

> just a nation among many others, who are all sons of Adam: Turks, Abyssinians, Blacks, Nubians, Arabs, non-Arabs, Persians, Byzantines, Indians, Sind, Chinese, Nabataeans, Zutt,[109] Kurds, Gog and Magog, Sisan and other people not known to the greater part of men.[110]

Mirkhwand and Khwandamir apparently also reckon Gog and Magog among the human beings. They both remark that one of their abominable customs is *to devour the body of someone who dies among them.* On the other hand, they also write that *Gog and Magog cannot be considered as human beings for they have neither law nor religion, do know neither God nor man, and live like animals.*

For Ibn Khaldun, Gog and Magog are not only human beings, they are also white:

> The inhabitants of the North are not called by their colour, because the people who established the conventional meanings of words [to them] were themselves white. Therefore the inhabitants of the North, the Turks, the Slavs, the Toghuzghuz, the Khazars, the Alans, most of the Western Christians, Gog and Magog, are found to be separate nations and numerous races called by a variety of names.[111]

For the great Persian poet Nizami Ganjawi finally the people called Magog (Gog is not mentioned) are

> humans like us but of a demoniac character with hearts of iron and claws like diamonds, malicious and rampant like wolves. Their hair reaches from head to foot, not a bit of their face can be seen. They

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[106] EI² *s.v.* Ibn al-Wardī, Zayn al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar (Moh. Ben Cheneb).
[107] Ibn al-Wardī, *Kharīdat al-adjā'ib*, p. 17/27.
[108] EI² *s.v.* Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Y. Marquet).
[109] A people of north-western India, cf. EI² *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth).
[110] C. Baffioni, *Frammenti e testimonianze di autori antichi nelle epistole degli Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafā'*, Rome 1964, p. 342-343.
[111] Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 172.

> have talons and teeth like rapacious animals and use them to shed blood. When running they overtake the wind, with their claws they pierce steel. Whether they eat or run, they are pagans: there is among them no one who believes in God. They have no other occupation than eating and sleeping, and none of them dies before having begotten a thousand children.[112]

Description of the barrier

F. Doufikar-Aerts distinguishes four types of barrier described in the Arabic texts. The first type (1a) is the description as given by al-Tabari and, with hardly any difference, by Ibn al-Faqih, both referring to Wahb b. Munabbih as their source.[113] Another type (1b) is found in the *ʿAraʾis al-madjalis* of al-Thaʿlabi, a Koran commentator and collector of stories[114] (d. 1035), and also in the *Kamil* of the historian Ibn al-Athir[115] (d. 1233). Doufikar-Aerts considers al-Thaʿlabi's text as exemplary for both types (1a and 1b).[116] The second type is a shorter version of the same description, found in an historical work called *Nihaya*. The Ms. Cambr. Qq 225 of this work has a Chapter called "The story of al-Iskandar and the marvelous stories about him".[117] Grignaschi dates the *Nihaya* around 850, which would mean that it is contemporary with Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam. There is however no link between Sallam's description of the barrier and the text of the *Nihaya*. The story in the latter text is word for word identical with a second tradition given by Ibn al-Faqih, and, be it less faithful, by al-Thaʿlabi.[118] The third type is the text which Doufikar-Aerts discovered in Ms. Paris BN ar. 3687. This anonymous text, entitled *Biography of al-Iskandar*,[119] is an example of the

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[112] Bürgel, *Das Alexanderbuch*, p. 538f.

[113] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, xvi, p. 15; Ibn al-Fakīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 300.

[114] al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-madjālis*, p. 365, cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Thaʿlabī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (A. Rippin); T. Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ. Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, Bonn 1967, p. 80ff.

[115] EI² *s.v.* Ibn al-Athīr, ʿIzz al-Dīn Abu 'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī (F. Rosenthal); Ibn al-Athīr, *Kitāb al-Kāmil*, i, p. 202.

[116] Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 137-138.

[117] *Kiṣṣat al-Iskandar wa-ʿadjāʾib aḥādīthuhu*. The manuscript has been described by M. Grignaschi, *Pseudo-Asmaʿī, Kitāb siyar al-mulūk al-musammā bi Nihāyat al-arab fī Akhbār al-Furs wa l-ʿArab*, in: *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* 22 (1969), p. 15-67; cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 24ff.

[118] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 140.

[119] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 51-52, indicates the anonymous text with the name of the Christian copyist Ḳuzmān, Yūsuf b. ʿAṭīya.

popular Arabic Alexander epic and was virtually unknown so far. Yet it is an essential element in the transmission of the Syriac Alexander material to the Ethiopic versions of the *Alexander Romance*. The Arabic text gives a complete *Alexander Romance*, the basis of which most likely is a tradition of the Syriac *Alexander Romance*, the *Alexander Legend, the Alexander Poem* and other not yet fully identified sources. The fourth type, finally, comprises the construction of the barrier as described by Sallam, in the version of Ibn Khurradadhbih as well as in that of several geographers after him.[120]

The manuscript of the British Library Add. 5928 contains several texts ascribed to 'Umara b. Zayd[121] which deal with the barrier:

> 'The two-horned one', ['Umara relates], leaves his army behind under the leadership of al-Khidr and travels on. He meets with numerous human-like animals, and finally reaches his aim and builds the barrier. On the authority of a tradition which goes back to Hasan al-Basri, 'Umara reports *that* 'the two-horned one' puts a stone eagle on the barrier on whose breast he has inscribed one of God's names.[122] Each time Gog and Magog approach the barrier, the eagle begins to screech. According to Hasan, the screeching could be heard at a ten days' distance. The people who hear it begin to cry and to pray to God that He averts the threatening danger. God then sends al-Khidr and Ilyas[123] who fly by and call to the people that they should stay where they are. They then fly on to the barrier where they pass the night in order to protect it and to pray to God until the barrier is restored to its pristine state. According to 'Ali b. Abi Talib Gog and Magog succeed in climbing the wall every night by means of their teeth and tongues. Then al-Khidr and Ilyas appear and begin to raise a terrible cry which puts Gog and Magog to flight. This is repeated every night until the Mahdi[124] appears and summons al-Khidr and Ilyas. But even then Gog and Magog will not leave the barrier until the dajjal appears and people gather in the temple of Jerusalem under the leadership of the Mahdi.[125]

Ibn al-Faqih describes the building of the barrier as follows:

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[120] Cf. Chapter 7.

[121] Rieu, *Catalogue*, p. 170; cf. Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 30.

[122] EI² *s.v.* al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā (L. Gardet).

[123] The prophet Elijah, cf. EI² *s.v.* (A.J. Wensinck–G. Vajda).

[124] The Mahdī is the restorer of religion and justice, cf. EI² *s.v.* (W. Madelung).

[125] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 145.

Friedländer, *Die Chadirlegende*, p. 179ff., mentions a work of al-Ṣūrī, Ibrāhīm b. Mufarriḏj (d. around 1495) called "History of al-Iskandar 'the two-horned one' of Byzantium and his vizier al-Khidr". The campaign of 'the two-horned one' against Gog and Magog is described in ms. BL Add. 7366, fol. 283b ff.

> He ['the two-horned one'] then gave orders regarding the iron, and large bricks were struck from it, *and* he had copper melted. Then he used copper to cement the bricks,[126] with which he made in the defile a construction which he brought up to the level of the two mountain crests. When this was finished, he gave orders regarding the copper: it was melted and poured over it. In that way it became a solid whole without a crack.[127]

al-Mas'udi mentions the barrier in several places of his *Murudj*. He writes that he has given information about the barrier built by 'the two-horned one' in his "Middle Book", but adds that he will not write about it because the construction has caused many discussions.[128] Great monuments all over the world are described in the *Kitab al-uluf*[129] of the astrologer Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhi. In the "Description of the earth and the great buildings and monuments it contains",[130] al-Mas'udi writes that al-Balkhi *found illustrations which gave the width of the wall between the two mountains—but not the length and the height—, a width which in celestial degrees was of nine and a half degrees, and corresponds, from one mountain to the other, to 150 parasangs.*

al-Tha'labi writes about the construction:

> When he ['the two-horned one'] measured the distance between the two mountains, he found that it was 100 parasangs long. When he then began to construct, he digged so deep for the foundation that he reached water. This foundation he made 50 parasangs broad. He put firewood between the mountains and [a layer of] iron on top of it, followed by [a layer of] firewood. He continued piling them up alter-

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[126] According to the *Nihāya*: clay bricks (Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 140).

[127] Ibn al-Fakīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 298; Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 354; cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 140.

[128] *Kitab al-awsat* (al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 730, § 1419). According to Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 334, the "Middle Book" is an extract by the author himself from his *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān*.

[129] *Kitāb al-ulūf fī buyūt al-'ibādāt*. It is a study on the temples built in the world during each millenium, cf. EI² *s.v.* Abū Ma'shar Dja'far b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī (d. 886) (J.M. Millás); he was a contemporary of Ibn Khurradādhbih and Sallām. According to al-Mas'ūdī, Abū Ma'shar's disciple Ibn al-Maziyyār (= Ibn Bāziyār, see Pellat, *Les prairies d'or*, index, vi, p. 97, vii p. 654) and other authors wrote about this subject.

[130] *Kitāb al-ard wa-mā 'alayhā min al-abniya al-'azīma wa l-hayākil al-mushayyada*. According to Pellat, *Les prairies d'or*, § 730 n. 1, this probably is Abū Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balkhī, *Suwar al-akālīm*, also known as *Takwīn al-buldān* and generally admitted as the basis of the geographical works of al-Istakhrī and Ibn Ḥawkal; cf. V. Minorsky, *A false Jayhani*, in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1949), p. 93-94.

> nately "until both sides of the crevice were on the same level" [Koran XVIII:95-96] as the two mountains. He then ordered to set the whole on fire and said: "blow"! [Koran, ibid.] until he had molten copper dripped into it. The fire consumed the firewood so that the copper took the place of the firewood. In this way the iron riveted itself to the copper so that it looked like a striped textile [with stripes] of yellow and red copper and of black and dust-coloured iron. It became an extremely long and indestructible barrier of which the Exalted said: "they were unable to climb this" i.e. to get over it, "or to pierce it" [Koran XVIII:98] .[131]

Gog and Magog occur in a considerable part in the epical *Sirat al-Iskandar* as protagonists. The *Sirat al-Iskandar* describes the building of the barrier as follows:

> He ['the two-horned one'] sat down there and summoned the craftsmen who had come with him. He selected from among them three thousand three hundred coppersmiths and ironworkers. They constructed the awe-inspiring gates. For this they took very large animal skins [i.e. bellows]—they had the correct enormous proportions—and had these [bellows] blow the fire in order to melt iron and copper. He had [the molten iron and copper] kneaded so that they became pliable in the way clay is kneaded. He made a gate twelve cubits long and twelve cubits broad. For this he made an enormous threshold, placed it underneath the gate between the wooden [doorposts] and dug it in. After that he melted layers of iron and copper and, at the inside, he attached a chain to the upper and lower threshold. He then placed the gate on its spot and ordered to close it. At the backside of the gate he made two long iron bolts, each twelve cubits long. The gate [itself] he made of iron and consolidated it and had its extremities enclosed into the two sides. He ordered to make short nails and to drive them into the gate and into the [entire] obstacle. After that he said: "This gate will prevent the people to come out on their horses. Even [foot-] men who want to go inside cannot enter it" Over the rest he poured iron and finished it off with nails. After that he constructed the front side. He also closed the gate with a closing of yasus[132] i.e. magical signs taken from Greek books,[133] which prevent that the gate is opened except at God's order. After that he asked for iron and copper, had them kneaded, and fabricated for the gate a key with 12 bits which had to

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[131] al-Tha'labī, *'Arā'is al-maǧālis*, p. 365; Dutch translation by Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 138.

[132] Perhaps a corruption of *nāmūs*, cf. EI² *s.v.* (M. Plessner).

[133] Meant is *kalṭatriyāt*, from Greek *phylakterion* "magical sign, amulet", cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 141 n. 119; it is perhaps a reference to the inscription on the barrier, known to the *Alexander Legend* and also mentioned by Sallām.

> be carried by a number of men. He made a copper lock for it [the key], with which he locked the gate and said: "When the promise of God the Exalted is fulfilled" [Koran XVIII:97] and He orders to open it, this [key] will open it. We make it so peculiar that people will be astonished at it" When he had finished the gate, had closed, fortified and consolidated it and covered it with magical signs against which neither iron nor fire nor any other material had the power to undertake anything, he placed an inscription in Greek over the gate, the same as the inscription on the lighthouse in Alexandria [with the following text]: "At all times, in all periods, in every year people will try to open the gate. They will leave no stone unturned, and will even lick at it with their tongues which are as sharp as a serpent's tongue, but they will not succeed in opening it until the moment has come in which God will order it. This will be in the year 864 of the last thousand years" [134]

There is a striking resemblance between this Arabic text and that of the Syriac *Alexander Legend*, even though it is not a literal rendering. This Arabic account of the construction of the barrier also resembles that found in Sallam's travel account.

The *Shahname* of the famous Persian poet Firdawsi (d. 1020)[135] contains a section entitled "How Sikandar went to the East, saw wonders, and built a barrier against Gog and Magog" His construction of the barrier (two walls) is described as follows:

> Across the mountain-pass from base to crest,
> One hundred royal cubits broad, one cubit
> Of charcoal, one of iron, in between
> Strewed copper, and showered sulphur in the midst,
> Such is the craft and subtlety of kings!
> He laid thus his materials course on course,
> And when from top to bottom all was set,
> They mixed much ghee and naphtha, poured it over
> Those substances, and on the top shot charcoal
> In ass-loads. Then the Shah bade fire the whole,
> And five score thousand smiths blew up the flames
> It was five hundred cubits high,
> About one hundred broad.[136]

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[134] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 141-142.

[135] EI² *s.v.* Firdawsī (Ferdosi) (Cl. Huart–H. Massé).

[136] A.G. and E. Warner (transl.), *The Shahnama of Firdawsi*, London 1884 (Reprint: 2000), p. 163-165.

The barrier against Gog and Magog are the theme of a number of illuminations in the *Shahname*. One is found in a Persian anthology dated 1407, executed in the Iranian town of Yazd, and published by S. Okasha, *The Muslim painter and the divine.*

al-Biruni describes the construction of the barrier as follows:

> Having seen all this, 'the two-horned one' went to the gorge situated between the two escarpments of the mountain and measured the distance which separated them; it was the dividing line between the land

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The Persian impact on Islamic religious painting, London 1981, p. 104 and plate 19; cf. I. Stchoukine, *Une khamseh de Nizami, illustrée à Yazd entre 1142-1144*, in: *Arts Asiatiques*, 12 (1965), p. 3-20 ; id., *La peinture à Yazd au milieu du XVe siècle*, in: *Syria* 40 (1964), p. 139-145, and 43 (1966) p. 99-109: 'The two-horned one', represented as a crowned king on a black horse, rides in from the left and looks up at the barrier. Behind him a courtier on a white horse holds an umbrella over him. On the other side of a flowering tree stands an officer who wears a Mongolian cap and holds a sword and a golden mace, the head of which rests on the foot of the tree. The wall is represented as a dam of brick between the cliffs of a deep valley, which can be seen at the top. Its lower part is concealed by a facing—or curtain—wall of blue-glazed tiles, topped by a decorative freeze. The three figures standing over the unfinished part of the wall apparently represent the builders, working on the other side of it. The white material in front of them probably is mortar. The wall fills the greater part of a frame at whose top appear strange-looking figures, tribesmen of Gog and Magog, wearing only skirts and hats of sewn leaves. The tall figures in the middle and to the right are perhaps their leaders, the figure to the right showing a distinctly Far-Eastern physiognomy. In the next illustration two such figures do not seem to belong to Gog and Magog for they find themselves on the "good" side and just watch 'the two-horned one' directing the construction of the wall; see plate ■■.

The other illustration, more vivid and dramatic, is found in the so-called *Demotte Shahname* (around 1335-40), cf. O. Grabar–Sh. Blair, *Epic Image and Contemporary History. The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama*, Chicago 1980, p. 130 no. 37; G.D. Lowry–S. Nemazee, *A Jewellers Eye. Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection*, London 1931, no. 12. The 'two-horned one', again represented as a king, this time with a halo, rides up from the left accompanied by two horsemen with Far-Eastern features, representing his innumerable troops. With his left hand he gives instructions to a chiseller wearing a Mongolian cap, who stands on the other side of the wall, unfinished at this spot. Next to him is a workman whose eyes are fixed on the king. Apparently with some effort, he lifts a tile to be placed on the wall before him. Other workmen are busy in front of the horses. Two of them look towards the king; one has a staff which ends in a loop, the other holds his tool, possibly a ladle, in the fire for the melting process. The chains near the fire are mentioned in Sallām's travel account (cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■). The figure behind them is turned towards the fire. The one with the Mongolian cap is a blacksmith, swinging a heavy hammer over his head, his body turned backwards to enforce his hammering on what must be an anvil on top of a furnace. To the right is a workman holding a pair of bellows to fan the fire. In the lower right corner another blacksmith, also with a Mongolian cap, turns away from the others, holding a hammer in his left hand to forge a tile which he holds with a thong. Over him appears a porter with a conical hat carrying a yoke. To his left are two stout figures, one over the other, with a Far-Eastern physiognomy who look towards the king and hold what looks like large round shields. To the right of the chiseller the rampart, with its merlons, is finished. The various physiognomies, headgears and costumes indicate the variety of the workers' origin. In the upper left, four shaggy creatures peer two by two down from the rocks. They hardly look like human beings and represent Gog and Magog.

> of the Turks and the regions neighbouring to the east; he thus found between them the distance of one parasang, that is to say three miles. He then had foundations dug until water was reached, and fixed the width of the barrier at one mile; the heavy work was made of iron pieces similar to rocks; by way of mortar, copper was melted which was run over the iron, and this became like a subterranean mountain vein; then he erected the barrier, crenelated it with pieces of iron, melted copper and put veins of yellow copper in the interstices; one would have said, it was a beautifully executed striped fabric, because of the yellow and the red due to the copper, and the black due to the iron. Then, having finished that solid construction, 'the two-horned one' undertook the return journey.[137]

The Ottoman poet Ahmadi[138] (d. 1413) describes the construction of the barrier as thus clearing reflecting the Syriac tradition even if indirectly :

> 'The two-horned one' proceeding from China, comes to a place where there are two great mountains with a gap between them, and between which dwells a feeble and timid folk. In reply to the King's [Alexander's] question, they [i.e. the folk] tell him that they live in terror of Gog and Magog, two barbarous tribes who dwell on the other side of the mountains and ever and anon descend upon them through the gap and hurry and lay waste their land. In response to their prayer for aid, Alexander gets together a vast array of workmen and blocks up the gap through which the savages come, by building in it a huge dyke or rampart. When this has reached the summits of the mountains, he covers it over with pieces of metal which he then melts by means of blasts from innumerable furnaces, so that, when the metal has cooled, mountains and dyke present one solid mass which nothing can penetrate. As this charitable action was done for the love of God, Alexander put much gold and silver among the metal of the dyke.[139]

The narrator of the *hadith Dhi l-Qarnayn* (Leyenda de Alejandro) describes the construction of the barrier quite similar to the *Syriac Alexander Legend* as follows:

> At that time he [Alexander] ordered three thousand iron workers and three thousand copper workers; they founded copper and iron and assembled one with the other as if they were clay. Arriving at the gate between the two mountains, he built there a gate of thirty cubits wide and ten cubits high. Then he constructed a threshold for this gate and placed it under the two posts which closed the mountains in such a

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[137] al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-aṯār al-bāḳiya*, p. 41.

[138] EI² *s.v.* Aḥmadī, Tādj al-Dīn (G.L. Lewis).

[139] E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, i, London 1900, p. 277ff.

way that they were well established; on its extremities he poured copper and iron. Then he riveted behind that gate a couple of iron beams to consolidate it. The narrator said: once having done this, he ordered five thousand men to close the gate by fixing its extremities into the mountains and put other beams behind the gate. Then he asked for a number of nails, each ten cubits long and five and a half thick. With these he nailed the gate by hammering them into the beams. And he said: "This will resist the cavalry of all the inhabitants of the earth and all the nations" He immediately soldered the gate with iron and copper, and covered the nails and beams with moulted copper and iron. Finally he made a bolt of twenty cubits with which he bolted the beams, and an iron key with twelve teeth, and also an iron bar which he also placed on the gate.[140]

Mirkhwand describes the construction of the barrier thus:

When the dominion, oppression and despotism of Gog and Magog had endured for a long time, and the tongue of complaint was stretched out on account of their enmity and violence, 'the two-horned one' issued a mandate that the passages between the two mountains through which the enemy used to enter, would be dug until water was reached. Then large rocks were placed for a foundation up to the level of the soil; after that the barrier was built of pieces of iron, copper and lead, placing them upon each other like bricks. Fireplaces were so arranged as to heat the interstices into which the fire was blown until the whole melted together and became one compact mass. The work was continued in this manner until the top of the mountain had been reached, when the holes left in the walls by the scaffolding were filled in with molten copper and brass. The length of this barrier is said to extend to a distance of one 150 parasangs; the breadth of it is 50 miles, and its height 100 cubits. al-Farghani, the astronomer, and various learned men of later times have denied this statement, and asserted it to be false; but as it is laid down in this manner in historical books, the author of this work considers it his duty to follow the ancients and, by agreeing more or less with them, has obstructed the way of contradiction. When the building was completed, 'the two-horned one' offered thanks to the Almighty, saying: "This is mercy from my Lord; but when the prediction of my Lord shall come to be fulfilled, He shall reduce the barrier to dust; and the prediction of my Lord is true" [141]

And Amin Razi writes:

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[140] García Gomez, *Un texto arabe occidental*, p. 52-53 (ed.), p. 78-79 (transl.); Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 39ff.

[141] Mīrkh"ānd, *Rawdat al-safā'*, p. 124. Then follows a passage on the "City of Copper", cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 119 n. 2; 197 n. 90.

> Historians report that the barrier of Gog and Magog was built by 'the two-horned one' the Greater. Some however are of the opinion that it is one of the creations of 'the two-horned one' the Lesser. He is the same person as Iskandar b. Dara b. Bahman b. Isfandiyar, who is also called Eskender-i Rumi. Whatever the case, Alexander ordered to make bricks of iron. They built the barrier with those bricks over which they poured molten copper. It is reported that the length of the barrier is 100 parasangs and its width 500 parasangs. Its foundation was constructed in such a way that it reaches the [ground] water. Its height is as high as a mountain. They made a gate with two doors; the width of each door amounts to 60 cubits and its length is 70 cubits; [...] of each door is five cubits, made of copper. They made a lock on the gate whose length is seven cubits. It has also a key with the size of seven cubits and with 24 notches. Each notch is as big as a mortar. The king [i.e. the commander] who is in those outskirts has arranged to go there every Friday with a group of strong-bodied men, and that they take heavy axes with them. With one blow of those axes they hit the door and make the locks shudder in order to prove that this door is guarded.[142]

Abu 'l-Ghazi Bahadur Khan[143] (d. 1663), ruler of Chiwa and historian of the Caghatayids, combines the various elements of the story of Gog and Magog and links them with the history of China and Mongolia. He distinguishes the barrier of Alexander from the wall built by Khosrew Anushirwan. He seems to consider the Great Wall of China as that barrier, and mentions the guards:

> The inhabitants of Khitay [China][144] had built a huge wall around their land, the extremities of which touch the sea, and which no one had been able to destroy or knock down. For the passage of caravans, one or two exits had been left, which were closed with enormous iron gates. Such a wall is called sadd in Arabic, turqurqa in Turkish, and ongu in the Khitay language. Iskandar constructed a wall against *Gog and Magog*. Anushirwan constructed a wall at Kemakh [Ani][145] which is now called Timur kapi "the gate of Timur" [Tamerlane]. The princes of Khitay proposed to some Turkish families that they should assume the task of guarding those gates in return for a certain sum which they committed themselves to pay annually. The Turks accepted, and since then they take charge of guarding these gates, from father

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[142] Ibid.

[143] EI² *s.v.* Abu 'l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān (B. Spuler); J.J.P. Baron Desmaisons (ed./transl.), Abu 'l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān, *Histoire des Mongols et des Tatares*, ii, St. Pétersbourg 1871-1874, p. 47-48; cf. R. Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppes. Attila, Gengis-Khan, Tamerlan*, Paris ⁴1960, p. 287.

[144] EI² *s.v.* Karā Khitāy (C.E. Bosworth).

[145] EI² *s.v.* Kemākh (C. Imber).

to son. That is why they are called Ongut. Since that wall is called ongu, those who guard it are called Ongut[146] i.e. sadji "employee at the barrier"

[146] In Mongolian the final *t* is the sign of the relative adjective. On the Ongut Turks, cf. Yule, *The book of Marco Polo*, i, p. 285, 294.

GOG AND MAGOG AND THE BARRIER IN ARAB POETRY, *ADAB* LITERATURE, POPULAR EPICS AND ANECDOTES

In Islam, the motif of Gog and Magog and the barrier is not only treated as a religious subject, with a heavy eschatological undertone. It is also a theme in more profane genres. Koran and Tradition had made Muslims familiar with it, and Muslim-Arabic poetry had quickly embraced it. Arabic, Persian and Turkish *belles letters* and popular epics did not neglect it either.

1. *Arabic Poetry*

The episode of Gog and Magog and the barrier is found in the poetical work of two contemporaries of the prophet Muhammad, Hassan b. Thabit and 'Alqama b. Dhi Jadan. The earliest Arabic poet to make 'the two-horned one', his barrier and Gog and Magog the subject of a poem was Hassan b. Thabit (d. around 659).[1] He witnessed the rise of Islam in Medina, and became known as the poet-laureate of Muhammad. He undoubtedly contributed to the spread in early Islam of the Syriac-originated stories around Alexander 'the two-horned one', which some two centuries later were to find their way into the collections of Islamic traditions. His poem on Gog and Magog and 'the two-horned one' goes as follows:

> Ours the realm of Dhu 'l-Qarnayn the glorious,
> Realm like his was never won by mortal king.
> Followed he the sun to view its setting
> When it sank into the sombre ocean spring;

EI² *s.v.* Ḥassān b. Thābit (W. 'Arafat); cf. also Chapter 8, p. ■■. 'Arafat is quite critical about the authenticity of a great number of Ḥassān's poems. For references, see 'Arafat's article in EI² and the bibliography given there. The authenticity of the poem on *Dhu 'l-Ḳarnayn*, however, does not seem to be doubtful. The Arabic text of Ḥassān's poem was published by Von Kremer, *Altarabische Gedichte*, p. 15 no. viii (see also id., *Über die südarabische Sage*, p. 68-71) and by Walīd N. 'Arafat, *Dīwān of Ḥassān Ibn Thābit*, (new edition), 2 vols., (Gibb Memorial Series. n.s. 25), London 1971, no. 303, p. 472 (where l. 14 must be interchanged with l. 15).

Up he clomb to see it rise at morning,
From within its mansion when the East it fired;
All day long the horizons led him onward.
All night through he watched the stars and never tired.
Then of iron and of liquid metal
He prepared a rampart not to be o'erpassed,
Gog and Magog there he threw in prison
Till on Judgement Day they shall awake at last.[2]

'Alqama b. Dhu Jadan[3] (8th c.), also a contemporary of Muhammad, writes about the journey of 'the two-horned one' and of his rampart:

Even he, who reaches all places on earth where the sun rises
And where it sinks, places which are not populated –
Death grasped even him and made him a target!
And he followed it and went away, as if he never had been mentioned.
He built against Gog a rampart and strengthened it with liquid metal[4]
So that it never would be undermined or overcome.[5]

At the turn of the 7th century the Arab poet Abu 'l-Sha'tha' 'Abdallah b. Ru'ba al-'Ajjaj flourished in Basra (d. 715).[6] In an eschatological *rajaz* poem he describes the coming of Gog and Magog and the end of time:

Is not a day, named outlet's day,
The worst, its uproar the greatest?
Snatching away every suckling woman's child
And bringing every pregnant woman in premature labour?

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[2] Translated by R.A. Nicholson, *A literary history of the Arabs*, Cambridge 1956, p. 18; German translation by Von Kremer, *Über die südarabische Sage*, p. 71. For *ḳarn* in the sense of "ray" or "beam" see I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie*, Leiden 1896-99 (Reprint: Hildesheim 1982), i, p. 114.

[3] See on him EI[2] (engl. ed.), viii, col. 980a (W.W. Müller); Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Kātib (ed.), al-Hamdānī, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan. *al-Iklīl min akhbār al-Yaman wa-ansāb Ḥimyar*, Beirut 1987 (reimpr.), ii, p. 300-301; cf. O. Löfgren, *'Alqama Ibn dhi Éadan und seine Dichtung nach der Iklīl-Auswahl in der Bibliotheca Ambrosiana*, in: R.G. Stiegner (ed.), *al-Hudhud, Festschrift für Maria Höfner*, Graz 1981, p. 199-209. The authenticity of 'Alqama's verses is doubtful, cf. EI[2] *s.v. al-Mathāmina* (Ch. Robin).

[4] *ḳaṭr/ḳiṭr*; the text has *ḳaṣr*, which does not make sense, cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 138, 139, 140, 143.

[5] Arabic text in Von Kremer, *Altarabische Gedichte*, p. 16; cf. D.H. Müller, *Südarabische Studien* (Sitzungsberichte d. phil.-hist. Kl. d. Akad. d. Wiss. 86), Wien 1877, p. 198 n. 2; id. *Auszüge aus dem VIII. Buche des Iklīl*, Wien 1899.

[6] EI[2] *s.v.* al-'Adjdjādj, Abu 'l-Sha'thā 'Abdallāh b. Ru'ba (Ch. Pellat).

The sober one gets drunk and gets confused.
That day derides whatever place the pilgrim goes to,
It disgraces heaven, and the zodiac's signs.
You see how its cover is torn up entirely!
Then he makes the diviner come into action.
That day releases Gog and Magog
Who behind their barrier are tightly locked.
Ambivalent is that day's promise:
Some go to paradise, highly praised,
Drinking honey, blended and chilled
With snow and water, that flows from clouds.
Others cry in horrible voices.
You hear the roaring fire heating them.[7]

The famous satirist and panegyrist al-Farazdaq of Basra (d. 728)[8] sees Gog and Magog as metaphors for hungry soldiers:

Upon your life!
There is no table more generously laid than the table of 'Udhafir.
Even if the dajjal came to him as a guest and requested his hospitality, and even if he let his army loose on his ['Udhafir's] bakers,—hungry soldiers as numerous as Gog and Magog—'Udhafir's lunch would feed them for a whole month.[9]

Ru'ba b. al-'Ajjaj (d. 762),[10] the son of Abu 'l-Sha'tha', was not only the greatest rajaz poet, but also the oracle of the Basra and Kufa philologists, and a transmitter of hadith in his own right. When poets like the two al-'Ajjaj find inspiration, probably in current traditions, for taking Gog and Magog as metaphors for huge numbers, we may surmise that the theme was well known in the cultural milieus, especially of Basra. He names Gog and Magog as units of a symbolic army of apocalyptical and supernatural enemies:

Even if Gog and Magog together
And all units of men as their allies,

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[7] 'Abdallāh b. Ru'ba al-'Adjdjādj, *Dīwān 'Adjdjādj, riwāyat 'Abd al-Malik b. Kurayb al-Aṣma'ī wa-sharḥuhu*, ed. 'Arafat, Beirut 1995, p. 345-346. The English text is based on Claudia Ott's German translation.

[8] EI² *s.v.* al-Farazdaḳ, Tammām b. Ghālib (R. Blachère).

[9] al-Farazdaḳ, *Dīwān*, Cairo 1936, p. 296, quoted by al-Djāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-bukhalā'*, ed. al-Ḥādjirī, Cairo 1948, p. 226; 'Abdallāh b. Muslim Ibn Ḳutayba (d. 889), *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī al-'Afawī, Cairo 1925-30, iii, p. 240; al-Ḥusrī, *Kitāb Djam'i*, p. 80.

[10] EI² *s.v.* Ru'ba b. al-'Adjdjādj (W.P. Heinrichs).

> And 'Ad were to return and Tubba'[11] were to arm for war,
> And all the power of the jinns be gathered
> Against Tamim,[12] they would nonetheless refuse to submit.[13]
> And elsewhere:
> Even if Gog would lead against us
> Magog and the jinns with all their armies
> We would bring over their huge number a terrifying disaster.[14]

The poet Abu 'l-'Atahiya of Kufa (d. 825)[15] considers the barrier as an insurmountable obstacle: *Oh! If only the barrier of Gog and Magog were between you and me!*[16] And Sibt Ibn al-Ta'awidhi (d. 1188)[17] sees both as metaphors of wickedness:

> My Lord, to You I complain about a group of people whose faithfulness is mixed with treacherousness. Their crimes surround even the remotest countries as if, in wickedness, they are Gog.[18]

This early Islamic poetry, in contrast to the metaphors quoted above, underlines the eschatological role of Gog and Magog. It is clearly-linked to pre-Islamic, in this case Syriac Christian motifs.

2. *Adab literature*

al-Jahiz of Basra (d. 869) approaches Gog and Magog in two different ways. In his scientific *Book of the Animals* he brings them in connection with the *nasnas* and other such beings,[19] but in his satire *Book of Misers* he uses them as literary motifs. The barrier serves as a metaphor for impenetrability, as al-Jahiz relates in a story about a stingy person who says:

Name of a dynasty of Himyarite rulers, cf. EI² *s.v.* (A.F.L. Beeston); see Chapter 8, p. ■■.

[12] *Tamīm b.* (or *bt.*) *Murr*, a Northern tribe before Islam and in its early days, cf. EI² *s.v.* (M. Lecker). It should be noted that Ru'ba himself was a Tamīmī.

[13] Ru'ba b. al-'Adjdjadj, *Dīwān*, ed. W. Ahlwardt, Berlin 1905, no. 33, lines 194ff.

[14] Ibid., no. 19, lines 30ff.

[15] EI² *s.v.* Abu 'l-'Atāhiya (A. Guillaume).

[16] Abu 'l-'Atāhiya, *Dīwān*, ed. Sh. Fayṣal, Damascus 1965, App. no. 216, 4.

[17] EI² *s.v.* Ibn al-Ta'āwīdhī, Sibṭ (J.C. Vadet). The name of Magog is left out for metrical reasons.

[18] Sibṭ Ibn al-Ta'āwīdhī, *Dīwān*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, Cairo 1903, p. 75. The name of Magog is left out for metrical reasons.

[19] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (1a).

> If I were to give you a single dirham, I would open a door to my possessions which neither mountains nor sands could dam, even if I were able to build before them a barrier like the barrier of Gog and Magog.[20]

The land behind the barrier, i.e. the realm of Gog and Magog, is also used in *Adab* literature as a metaphor. Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (d. 1023)[21] speaks of four "clever persons" who discuss their heroic deeds. One of them boasts about being able to reach even the remotest regions on earth:

> Send me to Qaf,[22] to [what lies] behind the rampart, to the barrier, to Gog and Magog, to a place even 'the two-horned one' did not reach and al-Khidr never knew about.[23]

3. *Epic literature*

Until quite recently, the texts of the epic literature dealing with 'the two-horned one' (*Sirat al-Iskandar*) were only accessible in manuscript form.[24] This situation has now been redressed by F. Doufikar-Aerts. In the manuscripts Paris BN ar. 3682 (fol. 332r-333v) and London BL Add. 5928 (fol. 22v-26r), Gog and Magog are in general described along the same lines as in Tradition, for the various genres ultimately all depend on the same sources: Koran and Tradition. Only the textual insertion *qala al-rawi* ("the story-teller says"), typical for popular epic literature,[25] reminds us of the fact that the story told is not a story found in a collection of Traditions. The above mentioned Paris manuscript even gives some parallel variants of the same passages. They are separated from each other by the formula *qila* ("it is said").[26]

While the text in ms. Aya Sofya 3004 is anonymous, the only identifiable person being the story-teller, the text of the Paris manu-

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[20] al-Djāḥiz, *Kitāb al-bukhalā'*, ed. Taha al-Hajiri, Cairo 1958, p. 208.

[21] EI² *s.v.* Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (S.M. Stern).

[22] *Ḳāf* is the mountain range surrounding the terrestrial world, cf. EI² *s.v.* (M. Streck–A. Miquel).

[23] al-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-baṣā'ir*, iv, p. 158.

[24] Cf. EI² *s.v.* Sīra sha'biyya, section Sīrat Iskandar (P. Heath); The manuscripts are listed in Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 339.

[25] Cf. C. Ott, *From the Coffeehouse into the Manuscript: The Storyteller and his Audience in the Manuscripts of an Arabic Epic*, in: *Oriente Moderno*, n.s. 22 (2003), p. 443-451.

[26] ibid., fol. 33r, l. 4ff.

script names Wahb (b. al-Munabbih)[27] as transmitter. The *hadith Dhi 'l-Qarnayn* (Leyenda de Alejandro)[28] names the transmitters Rabi'a, on the authority of Abu 'l-Hasan and Abu 'Umar al-Bahili. The London manuscript BL Add. 5928 appears to be a composite[29] based on *hadith* traditions collected by 'Umara b. Zayd,[30] which go back to Ali b. Abi Talib, Ibn 'Abbas and other authorities.

An important exception is ms. Aya Sofya 3004, which gives a quite vivid story of the frequent contacts between "Muslims" and individual "Magogians" (*majuji*), and of diplomatic exchanges between 'the two-horned one' and Gog and Magog before the barrier was built. The story-teller is aware of the fact that these contacts took place before the "millat Ibrahim" period i.e. in pre-Islamic times. It would also seem that he had some knowledge of what Ibn Hawqal writes about the human aspects of Gog and Magog.[31] Their speech, described as "the inaccessible language of the Turks, which is incomprehensible",[32] is translated into Arabic by al-Khidr:

> After the battle they came back [to al-Iskandar] and brought him a prisoner. He [al-Iskandar] said to al-Khidr: "Abu l-'Abbas, ask this prisoner about their empire and about what they worship" The story-teller said: al-Khidr—peace be upon him—had heard from the Magogians about their languages and had learned their language from them while they were fighting against each other. Now al-Khidr addressed the prisoner in this language and the Magogian felt sympathy for him. This language is the inaccessible language of the Turks, which is incomprehensible. The Magogian then answered [the questions]. al-Khidr—peace be upon him—asked: "My dear, what do you worship and what is the name of your king?" The other said: "Oh you with your lovely face! We worship the sun and the moon, and the name of our king is Qanun. He reigns over seven valleys,[33] each of which is one hundred parasangs long. We sow and eat all kinds of grain, and in our valleys we have water, trees, birds and fruits.

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[27] Cf. Chapter 4, p. ■■ (n. 38).

[28] García Gomez, *Un texto arabe occidental.*

[29] W. Cureton–Ch. Rieu, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium qui in Museo Brittanico asservantur*, ii: Codices Arabicos, London 1846, p. 170f.

[30] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 29ff; cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■.

[31] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (i.)

[32] Ms. Aya Sofya 3004, fol. 154. l. 2.

[33] A reference to the region of the Yeti Su or "seven rivers" in Central Asia? Cf. EI² *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth).

Twice a year Gog and Magog make inroads upon the neighbouring land of Asatin,[34] whose king Watid Qanatir[35] asks al-Iskandar to erect a barrier against them.
Like Gog and Magog, the people of Asatin belong to the ethnic Turks:

> He [al-Khidr] asked him [the Magogian prisoner]: "You are Turks and the people of Asatin are Turks too. Why is it then that you fight them?" He said: "Our fight against them has a very important reason. It is because our king had asked them to worship sun and moon, but they refused. This is why we fight them".[36]

In a letter Alexander (al-Iskandar) and al-Khidr then invite king Qanun to renounce his false religion, to worship the only true God and to embrace the religion of Ibrahim. After a long diplomatic exchange, in which the king and Gog and Magog refuse to embrace the monotheistic religion, but agree to pay back the tributes they had received from Watid Qanatir and to pay an annual *jizya*,[37] al-Iskandar starts to erect the barrier, but does this only after Gabriel has revealed to al-Khidr God's eschatological plan concerning Gog and Magog:

> Before al-Khidr had finished his prayer, Gabriel—peace be upon him—came down to our lord al-Khidr and said to him: "God has decided over this people that they shall kill each other with your swords [...] and that they shall rage against each other until the end of time. And when there will be many inroads into Syria from the East, God will allow our lord al-Khidr to tear down this rampart and Gog and Magog will come out.[38]

Popular epic literature thus underlines the human character of Gog and Magog, already known from Tradition and early geographers like Ibn Hawqal. In the course of time Gog and Magog—in the early 'Abbasid period still identified with enemies from the East—became less demonized, but they kept the apocalyptical role assigned to them in the Koran.

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[34] Aṣāṭīn or Aṣāṭīr.
[35] Watīd Ḳanāṭīr.
[36] Ms. Aya Sofya 3004, fol. 153v -154r.
[37] A poll-tax which, according to Muslim law, is levied on non-Muslims in Muslim territory.
[38] Ms. Aya Sofya 3004, fol. 157r, l. 4-8.

4. *Anecdotes on the paired names of Gog and Magog*

The paired names of Gog and Magog are subject of several anecdotes.[39] According to an anecdote ascribed to Ibn al-Jassas (d. 827)[40] which is first documented by al-Husri (d. 1022)[41] in his *Collection of anecdotes*, at a funeral a simpleton confuses the names of Gog and Magog with those of the death angels Munkar and Nakir[42] and with other assonant pairs of names:[43]

> He came to one of his sons who had just died. He wept at his head and said: "Oh my little son! May God spare you tonight the trouble of Harut and Marut!" The bystanders said: "Why Harut and Marut?" He said: "May God curse my forgetfulness! I meant Gog and Magog" The bystanders said: "Why Gog and Magog?" He said: "Then [I mean] Talut and Jalut [Saul and Goliath]" The others said: "Did you perhaps mean Munkar and Nakir?" He said: "By God! I did not mean anybody other than anybody except them!" But he wanted to say: "I did not mean anybody else but them".[44]

Variants of this anecdote are given by al-Tawhidi (d. 1023),[45] al-Abi (d. 1030)[46] and al-Nuwayri.[47] All of them ascribe the anecdote to Ibn Khalaf al-Hamadhani. Ibn al-Jawzi gives the same anecdote in a chapter on "complete simpletons".[48] The following somewhat similar anecdote on a nonsense-talking judge in Abbadan is related by al-Abi:

> I heard a kadi in Abbadan say: "Oh God! Let the dead gain the shahada!" and also: "Oh my brothers! Pray for God's blessings on Gog and Magog!" Then, chasing a fly away from his nose, he said: "May God let the graves increase with you!".[49]

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[39] Cf. U. Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, Frankfurt/M. 1992, p. 128, no. 510.
[40] EI² *s.v.* Ibn al-Djaṣṣāṣ (Ch. Pellat).
[41] EI² *s.v.* Abū Isḥāḳ Ibrāhīm al-Ḥuṣrī (Ch. Bouyahia).
[42] EI² *s.v.* Munkar wa-Nakīr (A.J. Wensinck).
[43] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (9).
[44] al-Ḥuṣrī, *Kitāb Djamʿi*, p. 250.
[45] EI² *s.v.* al-Tawḥīdī, Abū Ḥayyān (S.M. Stern); *Kitāb al-baṣāʾir*, vii, Beirut 1988, p. 112.
[46] al-Ābī, Abū Saʿīd Manṣūr, *Kitāb nathr al-durr*, ed. ʿUthmān Būgānimī, Tunis 1983, iv, p. 284.
[47] EI² *s.v.* al-Nuwayrī, Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (M. Chapoutot-Remadi).
[48] Ibn al-Djawzī, *Kitāb akhbār al-ḥamḳa wa 'l-mughaffalīn*, Beirut [s.d.], p. 168.
[49] al-Abī, *Kitāb nathr al-durr*, iv, p. 284.

Another confused character draws a playful but absurd comparison between the two elements of the paired names:

> I heard him claiming that Munkar was more excellent than Nakir, Gog more excellent than Magog, and Harut better than Marut. He even claimed that the right hand side is more excellent than the left hand side.[50]

In all these anecdotes accent is laid on paired-named figures: the death angels Munkar and Nakir, the fallen angels Harut and Marut, Talut and Jalut, and the eschatological peoples Gog and Magog. Their threatening character is attenuated by the humour evoked by confusing their names with others. Like the prose-writers mentioned in the previous chapter, Arab poets and writers of *Adab* literature use Gog and Magog as metaphors for great numbers, smallness of stature and destructive power. The barrier against them serves as a metaphor for impenetrability, and their lands are the farthermost imaginable places on earth.

In the following story related by al-Husri, Gog and Magog are metaphors for smallness of stature:

> A man was whipped by a policeman. The whipper was short while the whipped was tall. The whipper said to the other: "Make yourself short, so that you are well hit by the lashes of the whip" The other answered: "Is it your intention to invite me for a meal of marzipan? By God! I wish you were smaller than Gog and Magog, and I taller than a palm-tree".[51]

A popular anecdote about a mad person is found in the *Nawadir* of al-Qalyubi (d. 1659):[52]

> A crazy person who passed in the street is said to have been the aim of children's mockery and stones. Close to him passed an amir with a headgear to which two long horns were attached. The crazy person hung on to him and implored his help, saying: "Oh you with the two horns! Save me from Gog and Magog" People who heard him, laughed at his joke.[53]

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[50] al-Tawāḥidī, *Kitāb al-baṣā'ir*, iii, p. 133.

[51] al-Ḥusrī, *Kitāb Djam'i*, p. 338.

[52] EI[2] *s.v.* al-Ḳalyūbī, Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. Salāma, *Kitāb al-nawādir* i, p. 414 (C. Brockelmann).

[53] al-Ḳalyūbī, *Ḥikāyāt gharība wa-'adjība wa-laṭā'if wa-nawādir wa-fawā'id wa-nafā'is* (usually quoted as *Nawādir al-Ḳalyūbī*, "The Book of Anecdotes, Wonders, Pleasanteries, Rarities and Useful and Precious Extracts"), ed. W. Nassau Lees–Mawlawī

5. *Some modern works in Arabic on Gog and Magog*[54]

Several recently published books show that the themes of Gog and Magog and the barrier of 'the two-horned one' are still studied in the Muslim-Arab world of today.:

- Abu l-Kalām Āzād (d. 1958),[55] *Wa-yas'alūnaka ʿan Dhi 'l-Ḳarnayn*, Cairo n.d. (1972) [*And they will ask you about 'the two-horned one'*];
- al-Shāfiʿ al-Māḥī Aḥmad, *Yaʾdjūdj wa-Maʾdjūdj: fitnat al-maḍī wa l-ḥāḍir wa l-mustaḳbal*, Beirut 1996 [*Gog and Magog: the past, present and future trial*];
- Kāmil Saʿfān, *al-Sāʿa al-khāmisa wa 'l-ʿishrīn: al-Masīḥ, al-Dadjdjāl, Yaʾdjūdj wa-Maʾdjūdj, al-Mahdī al-muntaẓar*, Cairo 1995 [*The twenty-fifth hour: the Messiah, the Antichrist, Gog and Magog, the expected Mahdi ("restorer")*];
- ʿUkāsha ʿAbd al-Mannān al-Ṭībī, *Yaʾdjūdj wa-Maʾdjūdj: ṣifatuhum wa-adaduhum wa-makānuhum wa-ḳiṣṣat Dhi l-Ḳarnayn maʿahum*, Cairo 1989 [*Gog and Magog: their characteristics, numbers, locations, and how 'the two-horned one' dealt with them*];
- Hishām Kamāl ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, *Yādjūdj wa-Mādjūdj ḳādimūn. Man hum Yādjūdj wa-Mādjūdj? Wa-mā hiya djudūruhum? Wa-hal hudima sadd Dhi 'l-Ḳarnayn? Wa-mā dhā ḳālat al-kutub al-samāwiya wa 'l-tārīkhiyya ʿanhum?* Cairo n.d. [*Gog and Magog: their coming. Who are Gog and Magog? What are their walls like? Was their barrier of 'the two-horned one' pulled down? What do the heavenly and historical books say about them?*];
- Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm, *Yaʾdjūdj wa-Maʾdjūdj. Min al-wudjūd ḥattā al-ḍanā'*, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo 2004 [*Gog and Magog: from creation to extinction*].

Kabīr al-Dīn, i, Calcutta 1864, p. 414, cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, ii, p. 364, Suppl., p. 492; R. Basset, *Mille et un contes, récits et légendes arabes*, i, Paris 1924, p. 401.

[54] EI² *s.v.* Yādjūdj wa-Mādjūdj (E. van Donzel–C. Ott).

[55] EI² Suppl. *s.v.* Āzād (A. Guimbretière).

PART TWO

CHAPTER SEVEN

SALLAM'S TRAVEL ACCOUNT TO THE BARRIER OF GOG AND MAGOG

The second part of the present work deals with the location and the search for the barrier of Alexander, 'the two-horned one', as reported by Sallam the Interpreter and preserved by Ibn Khurradadhbih.

1. *Sallam al-Tardjuman—Interpreter and Traveller*

Factual information about Sallam the Interpreter (*al-tardjuman*) is very scanty. We only know that he was considered in Samarra as a sort of language genius, that he was ordered by the Caliph al-Wathiq to go and look for the barrier of 'the two-horned one', and that he wrote a report for the caliph, which was dictated to Ibn Khurradadhbih. It is most natural to think of him as an Arab,[56] but it is not excluded that he was a Khazar who had taken service with the caliph. It seems even more likely than not that he indeed was a Khazar. It is said that he was known to the Turkish general Ashnas. Consequently, he was also known to the latter's companion Aytakh al-Turki, a Khazar military slave, who were both instrumental to Sallam's journey.[57] Sallam being a Khazar would explain his knowledge of Turkish, attested by Ibn Rusta, and lend some background to the thirty languages he was said to know. This number, exaggerated as such, may stand for a great number and refer to various forms of Turkish with which Sallam, because of his background, may have been familiar. His assignment by the caliph for a mission into regions where several such forms were spoken, seems then a rather obvious choice. Moreover, as a Khazar he may have been more acceptable for his fellow tribesmen in the land of the Khazars than an Arab would have been. He may even have been a Jew, as such having easier access to Khazar authorities who were Jews themselves.

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[56] Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 193.

[57] Cf. Chapters 9, p. ■■, and 10, p. ■■.

Even the name Sallam is an indication for this, for it was usually carried by Jews.[58]

2. *Sallam's travel account—Text and Translation*

The text of Sallam's travel account, translated here, is taken from Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Book of Routes and Kingdoms*, as published by M.J. de Goeje.[59]

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صفة سُدّ ياجوج وماجوج

فحدّثنى q سَلّام التُّرْجُمان ان الواثق بالله لمّا رأى فى منامه r كأنّ 15
السُّدّ الذى بناه ذو القَرْنَيْن بيننا وبين ياجوج وماجوج *قد انفتح s
فطلب رجلا يخرجه الى الموضع فيستخبر خبره فقال أَشْنَاس t ما هاهنا

[58] On the name Salām/Sallām see Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, p. 159; cf. Carra de Vaux, *Livre de l'avertissement*, p. 340: Zaynab bt. al-Hārith was a Jewish woman, who tried to poison the Prophet. She was married to a Jew named Sallām b. Mishkām.

[59] *BGA*, vi, p. 162/l. 14–170/l. 6. On the Arabis manuscripts, see below.

Description of the Barrier of Gog and Magog[60]

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Sallam the Interpreter told me [Ibn Khurradadhbih]: when al-Wathiq bi-llah saw in his dream that it was as if the barrier, which 'the two-horned one' had built between us and Gog and Magog, had opened, he looked for a man whom he could send out to the place [of the barrier] in order to seek information about it.[61] Ashnas then said:

[60] The Arabic text of Ms. A has been translated into French and Dutch by De Goeje, in: *BGA*, vi, p. 124-131; id., *De muur*, p. 103-109; into English by Wilson, *The Wall of Alexander*, p. 592-596; into French by Wiet, *Les atours précieux*, p. 167-172, and Miquel, *Géographie*, ii, p. 498-503.

The page numbers in the margin indicate the pages of De Goeje's Arabic text edition. al-Idrīsī's variants with this text are given in the notes. The reasons for referring to the variants of al-Idrīsī which are of a much later date, are given below.

[61] al-Idrīsī omits: *he looked ... about it.*

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g) B قال ابو القسم حدثنى. *r*) B النوم; C, Mokadd. ٣٦٢ et Jâk. III, ٥٦ المنام, Ibn R. f 172 om. *s*) B مفتوح, C مفتوحا. In seqq. hi et alii textum breviorem habent, notabo tantum varias lectiones alicujus ponderis. *t*) A اشتاس.

a) A قسبان. *b*) B بالحجارة ut quoque codd. Ibn al-Fak. et Ibn R. (qui addit ايضا). *c*) In B praec. قال ابو القسم. Seqq. in A ut versus scribuntur. *d*) B et C ins. من. Ibn al-Fak. ٢١٢, 18 ut rec. *e*) Dîwân I, p. ١.٦. *f*) Jâk. I, ٤٢٨, 6 حُوبٌ. *g*) Id. 14 صنعوه. *h*) In B excidit ut quoque جور. *i*) B qui hos versiculos quoque habet اوايل. *k*) B رشد. *l*) B بالحجارة. *m*) Ibn R. ins. منصوبة بين الحجرين. *n*) B وملاص, C وبلاط. *o*) C وحوف, Ibn R. وصورة. Cf. Ist. ٢٠٣, 5 مكان يشبه الغار فيه عين ماء تجرى. *p*) C et Ibn R. و. *q*) B قال ابو القسم حدثنى. *r*) B النوم; C, Mokadd. ٣٦٢ et Jâk. III, ٥٦ المنام, Ibn R. f 172 om. *s*) B مفتوح, C مفتوحا. In seqq. hi et alii textum breviorem habent, notabo tantum varias lectiones alicujus ponderis. *t*) A اشتاس.

"There is no one here [in Samarra] // able [to fulfil the task] but p. 163
Sallam the Interpreter: he speaks thirty languages".[62]

He [Sallam] related: al-Wathiq summoned me and said: "I want you to go out to the barrier in order to examine it and report to me about it". He [al-Wathiq] gathered fifty strong young men for me [Sallam][63] and gave me 5000 dinars, and 10000 dirhams as blood-money. He ordered that each one of the fifty men be given 1000[64] dirhams, and means of living for a year. He also ordered that felt cloaks covered with leather, saddle-cloths of fur, and wooden stirrups be prepared for the men.[65] He also gave me two hundred[66] mules to carry provisions and water.

We set out from Surra man ra'a [Samarra] with a letter from al-Wathiq bi-llah for Ishaq b. Isma'il, the governor of Armenia, who was in Tiflis when we arrived there.[67] Ishaq wrote for us to the ruler of Sarir,[68] and the ruler of Sarir wrote for us to the king of the Alans, and the king of the Alans wrote for us to the filan-shah, and the filan-shah wrote for us to Tarkhan, the king of the Khazars. We stayed a day and a night with the king of the Khazars,[69] until he[70] had found five guides[71] for us.

From him we travelled for twenty-six days[72] and then came to a black,[73] fetid region. Before entering it, we had supplied ourselves with vinegar[74] to sniff at against the evil odour. We travelled for ten days in that region.

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[62] al-Idrīsī omits: *Ashnās languages.*
[63] al-Idrīsī omits: *strong young men for me.*
[64] al-Idrīsī: *5000.*
[65] al-Idrīsī omits: *He also ordered ... for the men.*
[66] al-Idrīsī: *one hundred.*
[67] al-Idrīsī adds: *that he should see to it that we were forwarded from there.*
[68] al-Idrīsī adds: *and sent us on to him.*
[69] al-Idrīsī omits: *and the fīlān-shāh wrote for us ...with the king of the Khazars.*
[70] al-Idrīsī: *the fīlān-shāh.*
[71] al-Idrīsī adds: *who should guide us on the route we were about to start upon.*
[72] al-Idrīsī: *for twenty-seven days on the boundaries of the land of the Basdjirt.*
[73] al-Idrīsī adds: *large, wide.*
[74] al-Idrīsī: *[with] certain things which we could enjoy, for fear of damage by its evil smell;* cf. Chapter 10, p. ■■ (n. 29).

١٣٦

احد يصلح الّا سَلّام الترجمان وكان يتكلّم بثلثين لسانا، قال فدخا
فى الواثق وقال اريد ان تخرج الى السدّ حتّى تعاينه وتجيئنى بخبره *a*
وضمّ الىّ خمسين رجلا شباب اقوياء ووصلنى بخمسة آلاف دينار
واعطانى دينى عشرة آلاف درهم وامر فأُعطى كلّ رجل من الخمسين
* الف درهم *b* ورزق سنة وامر ان يهيّأ للرجال اللبابيد وتُغشى بالاديم
واستعمل لهم المستبقات بالغراء والركب للخشب واعطانى ماتتى بغل
لحمل الزاد والماء *c* فشخصنا (138) من سرّ من رأى بكتاب من الواثق
بالله الى اسحاق بن اسماعيل صاحب ارمينية وهو بتَفْليس فى انفاذنا
وكتب لنا اسحاق الى صاحب السَّرِير وكتب لنا صاحب السرير الى
ملك اللّان وكتب لنا ملك اللان الى فيلّان شاه وكتب لنا فيلان شاه
الى طَرْخان ملك الخَزَر فاقمنا عند ملك الخزر يوما وليلة حتّى وجّه *d*
معنا خمسة ادلّاء فسرنا من عنده ستّة *e* وعشرين يوما فانتهينا *f* الى
ارض سوداء منتنة الرائحة وكنّا قد تزوّدنا قبل دخولها *خلّا نشمّه *g*
من الرائحة المنكرة *h* فسرنا فيها عشرة ايّام، ثمّ صرنا الى مدن
خراب فسرنا فيها عشرين *i* يوما فسألنا عن حال تلك المدن فخُبّرنا
انّها المدن التى كان ياجوج وماجوج ينطرّقونها فخرّبوها، ثمّ صرنا *k*
الى حصون بالقرب من الجبل الذى فى شُعبة منه *l* السدّ وفى تلك

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a) **Mok. hic ins.** وكان الواثق وجّه محمد بن موسى الخوارزمى المنجّم الى طرخان ملك الخزر وضمّ اليه. **Deinde male** *b*) **C** دينه. *c*) **Ibn R. f 170 r. ins.** والعلف. *d*) **B** توجه **et mox** بخمسة. *e*) **B** بسعة. **Edr. II, 417 textus sec. Nowairî Cod. Lugd. 273 p. 97 seq.** سبعة وعشرين يوما فى بلاد بساجرت. *f*) **B, C et alii** ثمّ صرنا. *g*) **Ibn R.** شيبا نشمه **Edr. quoque** خوفا نشمه شيبا. *h*) **B, C et alii** المكروهة. *i*) **B, C et alii** سبعة وعشرين (**B** بسعة), **Edr.** مدة شهر. *k*) **Edr. add.** وذلك فى سنة ايلم. **Pro** حصون **C et Jâk.** حصن, **sed in C mox** حصون **et Jâk. deinde nonnullis verbis additis correxit.** *l*) **A om. Inserendum esse patet quia cod.** شعبه

Then we came to ruined towns[75] among which we journeyed for twenty days.[76] We asked[77] what had happened to those towns. We were told that they were the towns which Gog and Magog had invaded and destroyed.

Then[78] we came upon fortresses near[79] the mountain in a gorge of

[75] al-Idrīsī adds: *a region of ruins whose buildings had been obliterated: nothing remained of them but traces which could give information about them.*

[76] al-Idrīsī: *one month.*

[77] al-Idrīsī adds: *those who were with us.*

[78] al-Idrīsī adds: *after six days.*

[79] al-Idrīsī: *westward of.*

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الحصون قوم يتكلّمون بالعربيّة والفارسيّة *a* مسلمون يقرءون القرآن لهم كتاتيب ومساجد فسألونا *b* من اين اقبلنا فاخبرناهم انّا رسل امير المؤمنين *c* فاقبلوا يتعجّبون ويقولون امير المؤمنين فنقول نعم فقالوا شيخ *d* هو ام شابّ فقلنا شابّ فتعجبوا *e* ايضا فقالوا اين يكون فقلنا بالعراق في مدينة يقال لها سرّ من رأى فقالوا ما سمعنا بهذا قطّ *f*، وبين كلّ حصن من تلك الحصون الى الحصن الآخر فرسخ الى فرسخين اقلّ واكثر، ثمّ صرنا (139) الى مدينة يقال لها ايكة *g* تربيعها *h* عشرة فراسخ ولها *i* ابواب حديد يرسل الابواب من فوقها وفيها مزارع وارحاء داخل المدينة وهي التي كان ينزلها ذو القرنين بعسكره بينها وبين السدّ مسيرة ثلثة ايّام *k* وبينها وبين السدّ حصون وقرى حتّى تصير الى السدّ * في اليوم *l* الثالث، وهو جبل مستدير ذكروا ان ياجوج وماجوج فيه وهما صنفان ذكروا ان ياجوج اطول من ماجوج ويكون طول احدهم ما بين ذراع الى ذراع ونصف واقلّ واكثر، ثمّ صرنا الى جبل علٍ عليه حصن *m* والسدّ الذي بناه

(Edr. شعبه sine منه). B habet ut rec., ceteri شعب. Apud omnes (A et Edr. exceptis) السد ponitur. post الذي.

a) Edr. ins. وهناك مدينة يدعى ملكها خاقان (بن) ادكش واهلها. *b*) B ins. عن حالنا و. *c*) Edr. add. الواثق بالله. *d*) B اشيخ. *e*) B et C فتعجبوا. *f*) Edr. h. l. habet quae incolae narraverunt de sua conversione ad Islâmum. Seqq. ad ثمّ صرنا الى جبل in solo A. *g*) Cod. s. p. Voc. conj. apposui. Nam videtur esse Igu, hodiernum Hami (Richthofen I, 540). *h*) Cod. تربيعه. *i*) Charta agglutinata prohibet efficere utrum olim ولا scriptum fuerit (cf. تربيعه), an post ولها exciderit numerus portarum. Superest enim s. *k*) Sic cod., sed Edr. فسرنا عن المدينة نحوا من فرسخين. *l*) Conjectura supplevi, in codice post السد est signum aliquid omissum fuisse, sed margo lacera est. *m*) B, C et ceteri جبل املس ليس عليه خضراء; codd. Mokadd. habent حصن, sed Jâk. واذا جبل مقطوع بواد عرضه Pro seqq. iidem عليه من النبات شيء (Ibn R. add. مقدار) مائة وخمسون ذراعا واذا عضادتان مبنيتان

which the barrier is found. In those // fortresses were people who p. 164
spoke Arabic and Persian;[80] they were Muslims who read the Koran and had Koran schools and mosques.[81] They asked us from where we came and we told them that we were envoys of the Commander of the Believers.[82] They were astonished and asked: "The Commander of the Believers?" We said "Yes" They asked: "Is he an old man or a young man?" We said: "A young man".[83] They were again astonished and asked: "Where does he live?" We said: "In Iraq, in a city called Surra man ra'a. They said: "We never heard of it".[84] From each of these fortresses to the next the distance is one to two parasangs, more or less.[85]

Then we came to a town called Igu.[86] Its quadrangle is ten parasangs, and it has iron gates. These gates are closed from above. Inside the town are fields and mills. It was in this town that 'the two-horned one' used to dress his camp with his army.

The journey between this place and the barrier is three days [stages], and between it and the barrier are fortresses and villages, until one arrives at the barrier on the third day [stage]. It is a circular mountain-range. People relate that Gog and Magog dwell in it, and that the two are of two kinds. People say that Gog is taller than Magog, and that one of them has a length of between one cubit and one cubit and a half, more or less.

Then we came to a high mountain on top of which was a fortress.

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[80] al-Idrīsī adds: *there was here a town whose king was called khaḳān of the Adhkash.*

[81] al-Idrīsī omits: *who read the Ḳur'ān ... mosques.*

[82] al-Idrīsī adds: *al-Wāthiq.*

[83] al-Wāthiq died in 847 at the age of 32 (or 34 or 36). In 843-44 he thus was around 30 years old.

[84] al-Idrīsī adds: *We in our turn asked them about the way in which Islam had come to them, and who had taught them the Ḳur'ān. They said: "Many years ago there came a man to us, riding on an animal with a long neck, with long forelegs and hindlegs, with a hump on the place of its back"—we understood that they were describing a camel. They said: "He settled among us and spoke to us in a language which we could understand. He taught us the prescriptions of Islam and its consequences, and we accepted it. He also taught us the Ḳur'ān and its meaning. We studied it and learned it by heart, on his authority".*

[85] al-Idrīsī omits: *From each ... less.*

[86] See the facsimile of fol. 69v line 1, and De Goeje's text edition, p. 164, note g. The reading Igu (De Goeje reads *'ikka*) is acceptable for two reasons: 1. it renders Chinese Iwu; 2. in the manuscript the *yā'* is quite often written without dots, see e.g. *yādjūdj* in lines 5 and 6; the upper right stroke of the *kāf* is often missing, see e.g. *bi-'ashkarihi* in line 3, and the first *dhakar* in line 5; see plate ■■.

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ذو القرنين هو فجّ *a* بين جبلين عرضه مائتا ذراع وهو الطريق الذى يخرجون منه فينتشرون فى الارض فحفر اساسه ثلثين ذراعا الى اسفل وبناه بالحديد والنحاس حتّى * ساقه الى *b* وجه الارض ثمّ رفع عضادتين عما يلى الجبل من جنبتى الفجّ عرض كلّ عضادة خمس *c* وعشرون ذراعا * فى سمك خمسين ذراعا *d* الظاهر من تحتهما *e* عشر اذرع خارج الباب وكلّه بناء *f* بلبن من حديد مغيّب فى نحاس تكون اللبنة ذراعا ونصفا فى ذراع ونصف فى سمك * اربع اصابع *g* ودَرْوَنْد حديد طوله على العضادتين طوله مائة *h* وعشرون ذراعا قد رُكّب على العضادتين على كلّ واحدة بمقدار عشر اذرع فى عرض خمس اذرع وفوق الدروند (140) بناء بذلك اللبن الحديد *i* فى النحاس الى رأس الجبل وارتفاعه مدّ البصر يكون البناء فوق الدروند نحوا من ستّين ذراعا وفوق ذلك شُرَف حديد فى طرف كلّ شرفة قرنتان تنثنى كلّ واحدة منهما على الاخرى *k* طول كلّ شرفة خمس اذرع فى عرض اربع اذرع وعليه سبع وثلثون شرفة، واذا *l* باب حديد مصراعين *m*

(نحن بعضادتين مبنيتين Ibn R. عما يلى الجبل من جنبى الوادى عرض الخ Pro جنبى B et Ibn al-Fak. جنبتى, C عما يلى.

a) In marg. هو الوادى. *b*) A سامى et وجه superscriptum est. *c*) A خمسة ut saepius in seqq. talia vitia occurrunt. *d*) Haec apud B, C, et alios (excepto Ibn R.) inepto loco inserita sunt. *e*) C et ceteri تحتها; B tantum منها. *f*) Mokadd. et Jâk. مبنى, B om. habens وكل ذلك. *g*) Ibn R. شبر. Ceteri haec inde a وتكون alio loco habent, h. l. addunt فى سمك خمسين ذراعا. Deinde iidem واذا دروند. In Edr. additur explic. والدروند للعتبة العليا. *h*) A add. وخمسة cum signo delendi. *i*) Edr. ins. المغيّب, Dimaschkî المغموسة ٣١. *k*) C et ceteri (B et Mok. يثنى, Ibn R. قد شد) قرنان ينثنى كل واحد الى صاحبه. B ut rec. nisi quod habet صاحبها (sic). Seqq. ad واذا in solo A sunt. *l*) Abû Hâmid al-Andalosî Cod. Havn. 92 f. 11 وبين العضادتين. *m*) B مصراعان, C et Jâk. بمصراعين, ceteri ut rec.

The barrier built by // 'the two-horned one' is [in] a pass between p. 165
two mountains, 200 cubits wide. That is the road along which they [Gog and Magog] will come out and spread over the earth.[87]

He ['the two-horned one'] dug its foundations to the depth of 30 cubits; he made them of iron and copper and brought them up to the surface of the earth. Then he raised two side-pillars near to the mountain on both sides of the pass, each side-pillar being 25 cubits *wide and 50 cubits high. Under both pillars 10 cubits [of* the foundation] jutted out beyond the gate. The entire construction is built with iron bricks covered with copper.[88] There is an iron lintel whose extremities rest on the two side-pillars; it is 120 cubits long and is mounted on the two side-pillars, on each of them 10 cubits; it is 5 cubits wide. On top of the lintel is a construction made of those iron bricks with copper, reaching to the top of the mountain, its height extending as far as the eye reaches: the construction above the lintel is some 60 cubits [high].

On top are iron merlons; on the edge of each merlon are two horns, each bent towards the other. The length of each merlon is 5 cubits, its breadth 4 cubits. There are 37 merlons on it.[89]

The iron gate has two hanging // leaves, each 50 cubits wide, 75

[87] al-Idrīsī omits: *Then we came to a town ... over the earth.* Instead he has: *After this we went out to the barrier to examine it. From the town we travelled for about two parasangs and arrived at the barrier. It is a mountain [pass], cut out by a wadi, one 150 cubits wide. In the middle of this interspace is an iron gate, 50 cubits wide, enclosed by two side-pillars, each 15 cubits wide.*

[88] al-Idrīsī adds: *One brick is a few cubits long, and a few span high.*

[89] al-Idrīsī omits: *The length ... on it.*

١٤٩

معلّقين *a* عرض كلّ مصراع خمسون *b* ذراعا فى ارتفاع *خمس وسبعين *c* ذراعا فى تخن خمس انرع. وقائمتاها *d* فى دَوّارة على قدر الدرونك *لا يدخل من الباب ولا من الجبل ريح كانه خُلق خلقةً *e* وعلى الباب قفل طوله سبع انرع فى غلظ *f* باع فى الاستدارة *والقفل لا يحتضنه رجلان *e* وارتفاع القفل من الارض خمس وعشرون ذراعا وفوق القفل بقدر خمس انرع عَلَقٌ طوله اكثر من طول القفل وثقبزاه كلّ واحد *g* منهما ذراعان وعلى الغلق مفتاح معلّق طوله ذراع ونصف وله اثنتا عشرة دَنْدانَكة *h* كلّ دندانكة *فى صفة نَسْتَج الهواوين *i* *واستدارة المفتاح اربعة اشبار *e* معلّق فى سلسلة *ملحومة بالباب *e* طولها ثمانى اذرع فى استدارة اربعة اشبار والحلقة التى فيها السلسلة مثل حلقة المناجنيق وعتبة الباب عرضها *k* عشر انرع فى بسط *l* مائة ذراع سوى ما تحت العضادتين والظاهر منها خمس انرع (141) وهذه الذراع كلّها *m* بالذراع السوداء *n*، ومع *o* الباب حصنان *يكون كلّ واحد منهما مائتى ذراع فى مائتى ذراع وعلى باب هذين الحصنين

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a) A a. p., B et Ibn R. ut rec.; ceteri مغلقين. *b*) Ibn al-Fâk. et Jâk. ستون. *c*) C, Mok. et Ibn al-Fâk. خمسين, Jâk. سبعين. B et Edr. non habent. *d*) B وقايماها, C وقايمتاها ut Jâk. *e*) E solo A. *f*) A عرض et mox على pro فى. Recepi lectionem ceterorum, quia haec in charta agglutinata scripta sunt et post in hac charta على partim superesse videtur. *g*) B واحدة quod vitium irrepsit Mokadd. l.l. ult. *h*) C دندانجه, Edrisi دنداجة. *i*) B (corrupte), C et Ibn R. كدستج اعظم ما يكون من الهواوين. Mokadd. id., sed كبير pro كدستج; Ibn al-Fak. كدستج كاغلظ ما يكون من دساتج الهواوين, Edr. الهاون om., Jâk. وارتفاع عتبة. Post عتبة Edr. ins. السفلى. *l*) Mokadd. بسمك, Ibn R. بسمك, Edr بسطة. *m*) C كله وهذا الذراع, B ut Jâk. كله وهذا الذرع, Mok. وهذا كله. *n*) B بذراع السوداء, Mok. et Jâk. بذراع السواد, Edr. بالذراع السوداوى. *o*) A وعلى (in charta agglutinata). Omnes (A excepto) hanc pericopem ponunt infra post وبالقرب الخ.

cubits high[90] and 5 cubits thick. The uprights of the two leaves are p. 166
fixed in pivots which are in proportion to the lintel. Air cannot penetrate by the gate nor by the mountain-side; it is as if it [the barrier] is created in one piece.[91]

Over the gate is a bolt, 7 cubits long, 1 cubit thick, 1 fathom around. Two men cannot embrace the bolt;[92] it is 25 cubits above the ground.

5 cubits above the bolt is a lock, which is longer than the bolt. Each of its two staples is 2 cubits long.[93]
Over the lock a key is suspended, one cubit and a half long, with 12 wards, each ward like the pestle of a mortar. The key is 4 spans around and[94] is suspended from a chain which is riveted to the gate;[95] it is 8 cubits long and 4 span around. The ring to which the chain is attached is like the ring of a balista.

The threshold of the gate is 10 cubits wide and extends over 100 cubits, not counting the space under the two side pillars. The visible part of it is 5 cubits. All these cubits are black cubits.

Near the gate are two fortresses, each of them two hundred by two hundred cubits. At the gates of these two fortresses are two trees // and

[90] al-Idrīsī omits: *75 cubits high.*
[91] al-Idrīsī omits: *Air ... piece.*
[92] al-Idrīsī omits: *Two men ... bolt.*
[93] al-Idrīsī omits: *Each ... long.*
[94] al-Idrīsī omits: *is 4 spans and.*
[95] al-Idrīsī omits: *which ... gate.*

١٩٧

شجرتان وبين الحصنين عين عذبة *a* وفى احد الحصنين انية البناء التى بُنى بها *b* السدّ من القدور الحديد والمغارف الحديد *c* على كلّ دِيكْدان *d* اربع *e* قدور مثل *f* قدور الصابون وهناك بقيّة من اللبن الحديد قد التزق بعضه ببعض من الصدأ، ورئيس تلك الحصون يركب فى كلّ يوم اثنين وخميس وهم يتوارثون ذلك الباب كما يتوارث الخلفاء الخلافة يجىء راكبا *g* ومعه ثلثة رجال على عنق كلّ رجل مرزبّة ومع الباب درجة فيصعد على اعلى الدرجة فيضرب القفل ضربة فى أوّل النهار فيسمع لهم جلبةٌ مثل كور الزنابير ثم يخمدون فاذا كان عند الظهر ضربه ضربة اخرى ويصغى باذنه الى الباب فتكون جلبتهم فى الثانية اشدّ من الاوّلة ثم يخمدون فاذا كان وقت العصر ضرب ضربةً اخرى فيضجّون مثل ذلك ثم يقعد الى مغيب الشمس ثم ينصرف الغَرَضُ فى قرع القفل ان يسمع مَن وراء الباب فيعلموا ان هناك حفظة ويعلم هؤلاء ان هاولئك *h* لم يحدثوا فى الباب

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a) A sed partim in charta agglutinata وعين بينهما قبة يكون كلّ واحد من الحصن شجرتان. Ceteri ut rec., nisi quod فى ماتتى ذراع apud C et Mokadd. desideratur. Pro وعلى باب B habet وعلى كل واحد من ابواب, Jâk. وعلى بابى. *b*) A, C et Mokadd. به — الذى, Ibn R. عليه — الذى. *c*) Ibn R. ins. والديكدانات, Edr. والقدور فوق ديكدانات. *d*) C داكدان, B دكان. *e*) A et C اربعة. *f*) B ins. اكبر ما يكون من. *g*) A راكب. *h*) B, C et ceteri pro his: ورئيس تلك الحصون يركب فى (B om.) كلّ جمعة فى عشرة فوارس مع كلّ فارس مرزبة (ارزبة Edr.) من (B, Mok. et Jâk. om.) حديد فى كلّ واحدة (مرزبة B) خمسون امناء (B خمسة امناء; Edr. ap. Now.) فيضرب القفل (والباب Ibn al-Fak. et Jâk. ins.) بتلك المرزبات (الارزبات Edr.) فى كل يوم (كل رجل B om.; Mokadd. *) ثلاث ضربات (Jâk. et Ibn al-Fak. مرات, Ibn R.) كل واحد منهم مرارا B) ليسمع من وراء الباب (من وراثه B) الصوت فيعلموا (B, C et Jâk. فيعلمون) ان هناك حفظة ويعلم هؤلاء ان اولئك الخ

between the two fortresses[96] is a spring of sweet water. In one of the p. 167
fortresses are the tools for the construction with which he ['the two-horned one'] built the barrier: among other things the iron cauldrons and iron ladles, four cauldrons on each forge; they are like soap-kettles. There are here also the remainders of the iron tiles;[97] they are sticking together with rust.[98]

The commander of these fortresses rides out every Monday and Thursday.[99] They inherit [the custody of] that gate in the same way as the caliphs inherit the caliphate.[100] He rides out accompanied by three men,[101] each carrying an iron rod[102] on his neck. At the gate is a ladder.[103] He climbs to the top of the ladder and strikes the bolt once at the beginning of the day.[104] He hears them [Gog and Magog] making a noise like a hornets' nest,[105] after which they are quiet. At midday he strikes it [the bolt] a second time and bends his ear towards the gate. The second time their noise is stronger than the first time; after that they are quiet. In the afternoon he strikes again, then they are noisy in the same way. After that he sits down until sunset and then leaves.[106] The purpose of knocking against the bolt is that those who are on the other side of the gate, [Gog and Magog], hear it and realize that there are guards on this side, and that the latter know that the others have not been up to something unexpected at the gate.[107] // In the neighbourhood of this place is a large

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[96] al-Isṛīsī omits: *are two trees [...] two fortresses.*

[97] al-Idrīsī adds: *with which he built the barrier.*

[98] In al-Idrīsī the whole paragraph: *Near the gate are two fortresses together with rust,* comes after the next paragraph (the striking of the gate).

[99] al-Idrīsī has: *every Friday.*

[100] al-Idrīsī omits: *they inherit the caliphate.*

[101] al-Idrīsī: *ten horsemen.*

[102] al-Idrīsī adds: *weighing five talents.*

[103] al-Idrīsī omits: *At the gate is a ladder.*

[104] Instead of: *once at the beginning of the day,* al-Idrīsī has: *three times every day.*

[105] al-Idrīsī omits: *like a hornets' nest.*

[106] al-Idrīsī omits: *The second time then leaves.*

[107] Instead of: *The purpose the gate,* al-Idrīsī has: *When the bearers of the iron rods knock against the bolt, they put their ears [against it] to overhear what is going on behind the gate, so that they hear what sound there is inside the gate; [if there is any] it indicates that there is evil behind it.*

۱۹۸

حدثنا *a*، وبالقرب من هذا الموضع حصن كبير يكون عشرة فراسخ فى عشرة فراسخ *b* تكسيره مائة فرسخ، قال سلام *c* فقلت لمن كان بالحضرة من اهل الحصون (142) هل عاب من هذا الباب شىء قطّ قالوا ما فيه الّا هذا الشقّ والشقّ كان بالعرض مثل الخيط دقيق فقلتُ تخشون عليه شيعا فقالوا لا ان هذا الباب ثخنه خمس اذرع بذراع الاسكندر يكون ذراعا ونصفا *d* بالاسود كلّ ذراع واحدة *e* من ذراع الاسكندر قال فدنوتُ واخرجتُ من خُفّى سكّينا فحككت موضع الشقّ فاخرج منه مقدار نصف درهم واشدّه فى منديل لأُريه الواثق بالله، وعلى فرد مصراع الباب الايمن فى اعلاه مكتوب بالحديد *f* باللسان الاوّل فَاِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى حَقًّا *g* وننظر الى البناية واكثره مخطّط ساف اصفر من نحاس وساف اسود من حديد، وفى الجبل *h* محفور الموضع الذى صُبَّ فيه الابواب وموضع القدور التى كان *i* يخلط فيها النحاس والموضع الذى كان يغلى فيه الرصاص والنحاس وقدور شبيهة بالصفر لكلّ قدر ثلث عُرى فيها السلاسل والكلاليب التى كان يمدّ بها النحاس الى فوق السور، وسألنا من هناك هل رأيتم من ياجوج وماجوج احدا فذكروا انهم رأوا مرّة عددًا فوق الجبل *k* فهبّت ريح سوداء فالقتهم الى جانبهم *l* *وكان مقدار الرجل فى رأى العين شبرا ونصفا *m*، والجبل من خارج

a) Hic iidem add.: واذا ضرب اصحابنا (Ibn R. اصحابهم, C et Jâk. ضربوا) اصحاب الارزبات (Edr. القفل) وضعوا آذانهم (Ibn R. ins. على) الباب يتسمعون (Ibn R., Ibn al-Fak. et Edr. فيسمعون) لمن (من) داخل دويّا. *b*) B مثلهم l. مثلها. Jâk. يكون فرسخا فى مثله. *c*) Seqq. ad وسالنا in solo A. *d*) Cod. نكون ذراع ونصف. *e*) Cod. واحد. *f*) A ins. من لباب. *g*) Koran. 18 vs. 98. *h*) Littera ل fere evanuit, ut primo obtutu اجبل legendum censeas. Idem accidit litterae م vocis seq. *i*) Cod. كانت. *k*) B السور, C et alii omnes الشرف. *l*) Edr. فرمت منهم ثلثة الى ناحيتنا. *m*) Haec in A non sunt. Post الرجل Ibn R., Jâk. et Edr. ins. منهم. Pro ونصفا plerique ونصف, sed Ibn R. add. شبر. Pro شبرا Edr. habet شبرين. Seqq. ad فلما in solo A.

fortress of ten parasangs by ten, its area being one hundred para- p. 168
sangs.[108]

Sallam said: "I asked the people of the fortress who were present whether the gate had ever sustained any damage. They said: Not at all, except this crack" The crack now was as wide as a thin thread. I then asked: "Are you afraid that anything might happen to it?" They said: "No, because this gate is 5 cubits thick, cubits of Iskandar that is; every cubit of Iskandar equals one black cubit and a half" He [Sallam] said: "I approached, took a knife out of my boot, scraped at the spot of the crack, took out as much as half a dirham, and tied it up in a piece of cloth in order to show it to al-Wathiq bi-llah.

At the top of the right leaf of the gate is written in iron [letters] in the primordial language: "When the promise of my Lord comes, He will level it; and the promise of my Lord is true" [Koran XVIII:98]. We were looking at the construction: the greater part of it is striped, a yellow row of copper alternating with a black row of iron.

In the mountain the place was dug out in which the gates had been cast, and the place of the cauldrons in which the copper used to be mixed, and the place in which the lead and the copper used to be blended. There were cauldrons which looked like brass; each cauldron had three handles to which the chains and hooks were attached by which the copper was raised to the top of the wall [sur].[109]

We asked the people who were there:[110] "Have you seen anyone of Gog and Magog?" They recalled that they once[111] had seen a number of them on the mountain,[112] but a black[113] wind had blown and thrown them[114]back to their side [of the barrier]. The size of the men, as it appeared to the eye, was one[115] span and a half.

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[108] al-Idrīsī: *three hundred mīl.*

[109] al-Idrīsī omits the 3 sections: *Sallām said: I asked the people of the fortress to the top of the wall.*

[110] al-Idrīsī: *the people of that place with whom we had spoken.*

[111] al-Idrīsī omits: *once.*

[112] al-Idrīsī: *on the top of the rampart.*

[113] al-Idrīsī adds: *violent.*

[114] al-Idrīsī: *three of them.*

[115] al-Idrīsī: *two.*

ليس له متن ولا سفح ولا عليه نبات ولا حشيش ولا شجرة ولا غير ذلك وهو جبل مُسْلَنْطِح *a* قائم املس ابيض ❁

(143) فلمّا انصرفنا اخذ الادلّاء بنا الى ناحية خراسان *b* وكان الملك يسمّى اللب ثمّ خرجنا من ذلك الموضع وصرنا الى موضع ملك يقال له طبانُوبَن *c* وهو صاحب الخراج فاقمنا عندهم ايّاما وسرنا من ذلك الموضع حتّى وردنا سمرقند فى ثمانية اشهر ووردنا على أَسْبِيشَاب وعبرنا نهر بلخ *d* ثمّ صرنا الى شَرُوسَنَة والى بُخارا والى تِرْمِذ ثمّ وصلنا الى نيسابور، ومات من الرجال الذين كانوا معنا ومن مرض منهم فى الذهاب اثنان وعشرون رجلا من مات منهم دُفن فى ثيابه ومن مرض خلّفناه مريضا *e* فى بعض القرى ومات فى المرجع *f* اربعة عشر رجلا فوردنا نيسابور ونحن *اربعة عشر *g* رجلا وكان اصحاب الحصون زوّدونا *h* ما كفانا، ثمّ صرنا الى *i* عبد الله بن طاهر فوصلنى بثمانية آلاف *k* درهم ووصل كلّ رجل معى بخمس مئة درهم واجرى للفارس *l* خمسة دراهم وللراجل ثلثة دراهم فى كلّ يوم الى *m* الرىّ ولم يسلم من البغال

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a) Cod. s. p. et littera ل fere evanuit. *b*) Omnes sic habent, pro seqq. tantum scribentes (Edrîsîo excepto) فسرنا اليها حتى خرجنا خلف سمرقند بسبعة فراسخ. Sed tamen lectio (in charta agglutinata scripta) suspecta est, nisi nonnulla exciderint, nam requiritur locus ubi degit rex qui appellatur اللب. Edrîsî II, 420 (coll. 413 et 415) primam stationem appellat لخمان (Nowairî تحتان). Secunda apud eum est غريان (Now. عرنان), forte urbs principis Turcarum Kharlokh quam p. 411 vocat غوران, tertia نُوشَجَان (vers. Jaub. برساجان, Now. بُرسجان), quarta طَبَاز (Jaub. طران, Now. ان ضرار et in cod. 2 *a* انطرار), deinde Samarkand. *c*) Cod. s. p. *d*) Aut lectio falsa est, nam Jaxartes, non Oxus h. l. convenit, aut verba وعبرنا النخ post ترمذ collocanda sunt. *e*) Cod. مريض. *f*) Cod. المحر s. المحد. *g*) Cod. اربعشر sed in charta agglutinata. *h*) B et C كل زودنا الحصون (B رئيس) صاحب. *i*) B ins. ابى العباس. *k*) B et C بمائة الف et sic Ibn R. et Edr. *l*) B على الفارس et mox وعلى الراجل. *m*) B حتى بلغنا.

The mountain on the outer side // has neither slope nor foot, nor p. 169
are there plants, herbs, trees or anything else of the kind. That mountain is[116] perpendicular, smooth, white.[117]

When we departed, the guides[118] took us in the direction of Khurasan. There was the king called al-Lub. Then we left that place [of king al-Lub] and arrived at the place of a ruler called Tabanuyan who is inspector of the land-tax. We stayed with them for some days. We departed from that place [travelling] until we arrived at Samarkand in eight months. We came to Asbishab[119] [Isfijab], crossed the river of Balkh, and then came to Sharusana [Usrushana], Bukhara and Tirmidh. Then we arrived at Nisabur [Nishapur].

Of the men who were with us, [a number] had died: on the outward journey twenty-eight fell ill; those of them who died were buried in their clothes, and those who fell ill we left behind in villages. On the return journey fourteen men died, and so we arrived at Nisabur with fourteen men. The commanders of the fortresses used to supply us with sufficient provisions.

Then we visited 'Abd Allah b. Tahir.[120] He gave me 8000 [121] dirhams, and 500 [122] dirhams to each man who was with me. To the horsemen he paid five dirhams, and to the foot-men three dirhams for every

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[116] The Arabic text has *muslanṭiḥ*, translated by De Goeje as "*s'étend au loin*". Wilson, *The Wall of Alexander*, omits the expression.

[117] al-Idrīsī omits: *perpendicular, smooth, white.* The same author begins the next section with: *Sallām the Interpreter said: 'I wrote down all these peculiarities and took them with me'.*

[118] About the return journey al-Idrīsī only writes: *Then we departed with the guides, taken from the people of those fortresses, to the town of Lakẖmān, to the town of Ghuriyān, to the town of Barsadj̄ān, to al-Ṭarāz, to Samarḳand.*

[119] On fol. 71r the word is squeezed in at the end of line 4, and is followed by *wa-ghayrihā.* The latter word, however, is crossed out and replaced by *wa-'abarnā*, followed by the letters *ṣ ḥ* meaning "this is the correct reading"

[120] al-Idrīsī adds: *and stayed with him for a couple of days.*

[121] al-Idrīsī: *100000.*

[122] al-Idrīsī: *5000.*

١٧.

التى كانت معنا الّا ثلثة وعشرون بغلا a، ووردنا سُرَّ من رأى فدخلت على الواثق فاخبرته بالقصّة واريته الحديد الذى كنت حككتُه من الباب فحمد الله وامر بصدقة يُتصدَّق بها واعطى الرجال كلّ رجل الف دينار b، وكان وصولنا الى السدّ فى ستّة عشر شهرا ورجعنا فى اثنى عشر (144) شهرا وايّام ☆

فحدّثنى سلّام الترجمان بجملة هذا الخبر ثمّ c املاه علىّ من كتاب كان d كتبه للواثق e بالله ☆

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a) Haec in solo A sunt. Pro seqq. ad وايام B, C, Ibn R. et Edr. habent: فرجعنا (ورجعت B, Ibn R. et Edr. انى سر من رأى بعد خروجنا (Ibn R. et Edr. add. عنها) بثمانية وعشرين شهرا. b) Cod. دمرا. c) B و. In C haec non sunt. d) B om. e) A et B الواثق.

day till al-Rayy.[123] From the mules we had // with us only twenty- p. 170
three had survived.[124]

We arrived at Surra man ra'a. I was admitted to al-Wathiq, told him the story and showed him the iron which I had scraped from the gate. He praised God, ordered alms to be distributed and gave every one of the men 1000 dinars.[125]
We had reached the barrier in sixteen months, and had returned in twelve months and some days.[126]
Sallam the Interpreter told me [Ibn Khurradadhbih] this entire story. Afterwards he dictated to me from the report which he had written for al-Wathiq bi-llah.[127]

3. *Sallam's travel account in Arabic sources*

In order to show how Sallam's travel account was read, judged and passed on by early Arab geographers, it seems useful to deal with the various manuscripts in detail. The existing versions make it clear that the travel account was an important source of information for later Arab geographers and was even known to the Persians and the Turks. Moreover, the various versions must be taken into account in order to reconstruct Sallam's itinerary. So far, the following authors are known to give an Arabic version of Sallam's travel account:

- Ibn Khurradadhbih
- al-Jayhani and al-Idrisi
- Ibn Rusta
- Ibn al-Faqih
- al-Ya'qubi and Ibn Hawqal
- al-Muqaddasi

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[123] al-Idrīsī has only: *Then we came to al-Rayy.*
[124] al-Idrīsī omits: *To the horsemen ... survived.*
[125] al-Idrīsī omits: *I was admitted 1000 dinars.*
[126] al-Idrīsī: *The journey lasted twenty-eight months.*
[127] al-Idrīsī omits: *Sallām the Interpreter al-Wāthiq bi-llāh.* Instead he writes: *All this Sallām the Interpreter related as information about the barrier, about the regions he had traversed, the peoples he had met on his route, and what had been said between himself and the people he had met.*
This passage might confirm De Goeje's suggestion that there indeed may have existed (and still exists?) a more complete text of Ibn Khurradādhbih's Kitāb al-masālik, cf. below.

- al-Tha'labi
- Abu Hamid
- Ibn al-Jawzi
- Yaqut
- al-Nuwayri

Ibn Khurradadhbih

Ibn Khurradadhbih, Abu 'l-Qasim 'Ubayd Allah[128] is without any doubt the primary source for Sallam's travel account. Not only did he learn about the traveller's journey from him personally, the report which Sallam had drawn up for the caliph was also dictated to him. Ibn Khurradadhbih is said to have been born in 820 or 826, probably in Khurasan. According to Katib Chelebi,[129] he died in 912-13. If these dates are to be believed, Ibn Khurradadhbih must have reached the age of 92 or 86. If he was born in 826, he was only seventeen or eighteen years old when Sallam returned to Samarra in 844-45. He was then not too young for a conversation with the traveller, particularly in view of the careful education he was receiving at or near the caliphal court, but probably not yet in a position for Sallam's official report to be dictated to him. He therefore may rather have been born in 820, but in that case he is likely to have died before 912-13.

His interview with Sallam must have taken place at Samarra after December 844–January 845 (Rabi' I–Rabi' II 230), the date of Sallam's return. Ibn Khuradadhbih's testimony of his interview with Sallam, and of the dictation of the official report to him, are strong arguments in favour of the historicity of Sallam's journey, or at least of the text of his travel account. Ibn Khurradadhbih has composed his *Book of Routes and Kingdoms*, in which Sallam's travel account is found, between 846-47 and 873-74, during the period in which he was director of post and intelligence in the province of Jibal (Northwestern Persia).[130] At present, however, we know that, after this first public function, Ibn Khurradadhbih was promoted to the position

[128] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Khurradādhbih (M. Hadj-Sadok); Barbier de Meynard, *Le livre des routes et des provinces*, p. 9-14. The author's Iranian name was read as *Khordādhbeh* "excellent gift of the sun", or as *Khurradādhbih* "created by the excellent sun"

[129] Ḥadjdjī Khalīfa (Kātib Čelebī), *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī 'l-kutub wa 'l-funūn*, in: G. Flügel (ed./transl.), *Lexicon bibliograficum et encyclopaedium*, vol. ii, Leipzig–London 1837, p. 101.

[130] EI² *s.v.* Djibāl (L. Lockhart).

of director-general of the same department, located first in Baghdad and then in Samarra, after the caliphal court had been transferred there in or around 834-35. We do not however know at what date these functions were entrusted to him. It seems logical to assume that the interview with Sallam, and the dictation of his report, took place not long after his return, but also at a time when Ibn Khurradadhbih had already become director, probably at an early age. At a later date Ibn Khurradadhbih became vizier and head of the caliph's treasury.[131] In view of his position, Ibn Khurradadhbih received much information about countries which lay far outside of the boundaries of the caliphate. The original source of Ibn Khurradadhbih and other Arabian geographers was the work of the traveller Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, who lived two years in Qimar, i.e. Cambodia.[132]

The manuscripts of Ibn Khurradadhbih's Book of Routes and Kingdoms

As for the manuscripts of the *Book of Routes and Kingdoms* De Goeje writes that the one kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, published and translated by Barbier de Meynard and indicated as ms. B,[133] is full of errors and mistakes: many proper names are mutilated, there are lacunae, more than one passage is misplaced, and the manuscript evidently was copied from a wrongly bound volume. De Goeje was able to make some corrections, and a fragment of another Bodleian manuscript provided some new material, but this was not enough for a new edition. It was, according to De Goeje, the work of a clumsy abbreviator. All efforts to find another and better manuscript remained fruitless until Count Carlo de Landberg in 1883 found and bought in Alexandria a manuscript which contained many more details than ms. B. In 1886, at the Congress of Orientalists in Vienna, Count Carlo presented the manuscript to the Imperial Library of the Austrian-Hungarian capital, with the proviso that De Goeje be allowed to use it for his edition of the text.[134] Barbier de Meynard fully agreed with the plan, and offered to assist with the French translation. It is this manuscript, called ms. A, which was published

[131] al-Muḳaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taḳāsīm*, p. 362.

[132] Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 27.

[133] Barbier de Meynard, *Le livre des routes et des provinces*, p. 6-8. He also mentions a manuscript in Istanbul which he calls C. De Goeje, however, was unable to trace it.

[134] Cod. Vienna arab. 783.

by De Goeje in the sixth volume of the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* and used here.[135]

In his Preface to the edition De Goeje remarks that the date found in the manuscript is illegible. The work, nevertheless, cannot have been written after 864-65. The data collected led De Goeje to the conclusion that Ibn Khurradadhbih composed his work around 846-47, and that, at a later stage, he added to the manuscript. The result was a second edition of the manuscript which was not completed before 885-86. "Since none of the passages which necessarily are posterior to 848-49 are found in ms. B, it is very probable that the latter abbreviated text was made on the basis of the work as it had been published in the final years of Caliph al-Wathiq or in the beginning years of al-Mutawakkil's reign. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the following fact: the B version of Sallam's travel account is the one which became the most widely spread. Already in the last quarter of the 9th century it was reproduced by Ibn al-Faqih and Ibn Rusta, and later by al-Muqaddasi and many others. Only al-Jayhani seems to have had at his disposal a text which was similar to ms. A, and even more complete".[136]

Ms. A has 77 folios, 154 pages. Three different hands can be distinguished: one wrote fols. 1-9 and also additions found on the places which have been glued over on fols. 69-77; a second hand wrote fols. 10-77, and a third wrote marginal glosses and additions on fol. 64v. Sallam's account, therefore, was interfered with in this manuscript, but this does not as yet lead to any conclusion as far as the text is concerned. As indicated above, ms. A does not contain the full text of Ibn Khurradadhbih's work either, because al-Jayhani (through al-Idrisi) gives a number of details which are missing in this manuscript.

The above-mentioned omissions and displacements in ms. B are probably due to the fact that more than one copy of Ibn Khurradadhbih's book was in circulation. The first of these copies must have been the most complete, while the copy containing ms. A probably was executed when part of the sheets containing additions to the autograph had disappeared. Compared with ms. A, the following items are missing in ms. B:

– the Turk Ashnas and his remarks on Sallam;

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[135] *BGA*, vi, p. 162/l. 14–170/l. 6 (= ms. A pages 137-144 = fols. 68v-72r).

[136] De Goeje in: *BGA*, vi, p. XVI-XVIII.

- the accoutrement of the riding animals;
- the towns of Tiflis and Igu—essential for the reconstruction of Sallam's itinerary;
- the hereditary character of the commander's office at the barrier and Sallam's conversation with him;
- the material taken from the crack in the barrier, the stripes of the latter;—the final audience with the caliph;
- for the return journey only the names of Khurasan, Rayy (near Teheran) and Samarra are found, not that of Nishapur, the residence of the Tahirid 'Abd Allah b. Tahir, though the latter's name is mentioned;
- the numbers of men, dinars, dirhams and days of travel needed for certain distances also differ considerably.
- Ibn Khurradadhbih's description of the barrier of Gog and Magog is preceded by a passage which deals with a number of constructions considered, in both pre-Islamic and Islamic times, as belonging to the thirty odd wonders of the world. Of these wonders Ibn Khurradadhbih mentions:
- the palace of al-Khawarnaq[137] near al-Najaf in modern Iraq, built by the Lakhmid prince al-Nu'man for the Sasanian king Bahram V (reign. 420-38), also known as Bahram Gur;[138]
- the castle of Sadir, near Karbala, also in Iraq, perhaps identical with al-Ukhaydir;[139]
- the grotto of Shibdaz, or Shabdaz, in the mountain of Bisutun,[140] at about 30 km from Kirmanshah, known for the relief of Darius the Great;
- the barrier of Gog and Magog.
- The description of the barrier is followed by a section entitled "About some natural marvels of the countries" Ibn Khurradadhbih, who evidently did not doubt Sallam's reliability, thus counts the barrier against Gog and Magog among the wonders of the world, which he enumerates without any further comment. He seems to suggest that the barrier is located somewhere east of Bisutun.

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[137] EI² *s.v.* Khawanak (L. Massignon).
[138] EI² *s.v.* Bahrām (Cl. Huart–H. Massé).
[139] EI² *s.v.* al-Ukhaydir (A. Northedge).
[140] EI² *s.v.* Bīsutūn (E. Herzfeld–R.N. Frye).

al-Jayhani/al-Idrisi[141]

At first sight it does not seem obvious to bring al-Idrisi's (d. 1165) version of Sallam's travel account in relation with that of Ibn Khurradadhbih: three centuries, and opposite ends of the Muslim world, separate the two persons. Yet, both are so to speak linked by al-Jayhani, who knew Ibn Khurradadhbih's work and was himself used by al-Idrisi.[142] The latter's text, therefore, is essential for our purpose, not only because he used a version of Ibn Khurradadhbih's text which was different from ms. A, but above all because through him we have access to al-Jayhani's work.

The identity of the al-Jayhani in question is not clear. Between 921-22 and 978 three individuals of this name served as vizier under the Samanids: (I) Abu 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Nasr;[143] (II) Abu 'Ali Muhammad b. Muhammad (d. 941-42); (III) Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Nasr (replaced in 978). Göckenjan and Zimonyi opt for (I) as author of the *Book of Routes and Kingdoms*.[144] Pellat, to whom this seems unlikely, suggests, as a hypothesis, that this book was a family work, begun by (I), continued by (II) and completed by (III) of the al-Jayhani.[145] In this context it should be remarked that al-Idrisi names Abu Nasr al-Jayhani as the author of the work he used for his text of Sallam's account.[146] There is no Abu Nasr among the al-Jayhanis mentioned above, unless one of them was also known under this *kunya*.[147]

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[141] EI² *s.v.* al-Idrīsī (G. Oman).

[142] al-Idrīsī does not mention the title of al-Djayhānī's work, but he may well have used the latter's Kitāb al-masālik. Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 13, remarks that it is difficult to determine whether indeed it is his work which is identical with the text of Ibn Khurradādhbih (ms. A). It may be another, more elaborate, work of al-Djayhānī, entitled "The book of the genealogies of the Persians and their colonies".

[143] He was replaced, no doubt in 922-23, by Bal'amī, Abu 'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd Allāh, cf. EI² *s.v.* (D.M. Dunlop). If these dates are correct, the first al-Djayhānī held power for only one year.

[144] Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 2.

[145] EI² in Suppl. *s.v.* al-Djayhānī (Ch. Pellat).

[146] According to Jaubert, *Géographie*, ii, p. 416, 438, Abū Naṣr al-Djayhānī is mentioned twice in al-Idrīsī's *Nuzhat al-mushtāḳ*, but the index of al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtaḳ*, p. 5, 76, 934 and 961, mentions him four times under the name Abū Naṣr Sa'īd al-Djayhānī.

[147] EI² *s.v.* ism (H. Fleisch).

al-Jayhani's work is partly preserved by the Persian mathematician, astronomer and geographer al-Kharaqi[148] (d. 1138-39), but its exact relation with the work of Ibn Khurradadhbih can of course only be established when, if ever, the complete texts of both works come to light. One would hope that they still survive in some library or private collection, for they certainly would shed light on the history of Transoxania and East Turkistan, and on itineraries in the 10th century. al-Jayhani's work is said to describe the route between Tashkent and Changan, the then capital of China. al-Muqaddasi writes: *From Tunkath*[149] *one travels for 140 days to the capital of China, as the envoys told al-Jayhani. He has described the itinerary in detail in his work.* In the library of the Buyid 'Adud al-Dawla[150] (d. 983), al-Muqaddasi (d. after 990) saw al-Jayhani's *Book of Routes* in seven volumes, but without the author's name. In Nishapur he saw two abridged editions with the same title, one attributed to al-Jayhani, the other to Ibn Khurradadhbih. The contents of both were probably identical, except that the edition attributed to al-Jayhani was somewhat larger. al-Jayhani wrote his work on the basis of data collected by himself, but also used, to a considerable extent, Ibn Khurradadhbih's work.[151] al-Muqaddasi himself used a text which resembles ms. B.[152]

Since no direct text of al-Jayhani is available, al-Idrisi is our second best source of Sallam's travel account. Evidently, the *variae lectiones* between the texts of Ibn Khurradadhbih and al-Idrisi cannot all be attributed to al-Jayhani's influence on the latter alone. But the details in al-Idrisi's text concerning Sallam's homeward journey, which are missing in Ibn Khurradadhbih, may well come from al-Jayhani, who gives information on the towns lying along the northern highway from Tashkent to China.

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[148] EI² *s.v.* al-Kharaḳī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad (E. Wiedemann–J. Samsó); cf. also C.A. Nallino, *al-Batānī sive Albatenii opus astronomicum*, Milano 1899-1907 (Reprint: Hildesheim 1977), ii, index *s.v.*

[149] Near Marghīnān in Farghāna, 90 km from Tashkent, cf. EI² *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth); De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 124.

[150] EI² *s.v.* 'Aḍud al-Dawla (Būyid) (H. Bowen).

[151] Ibn al-Faḳīh says that al-Djayhānī inserted the entire work of Ibn Khurradādhbih into his own (De Goeje, in: *BGA*, v, p. vii; *BGA*, iii, p. 241 [Arabic text]). But Ibn al-Faḳīh, who lived in the 9th c., cannot have made such a remark on al- al-Djayhānī's work, for the latter lived in the 10th c.

[152] Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 11-13.

After his remarks on the appearance and location of Gog and Magog,[153] al-Idrisi writes: *As for the rampart of Gog and Magog, it is mentioned in books and is successively confirmed by histories. Part of that is what Sallam the Interpreter has related. On his authority 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Khurradadhbih reports [about it] in his book, and Abu Nasr al-Jayhani reports the same about it.*[154] The "books" and "histories" mentioned by al-Idrisi may well refer to the works of Ibn Rusta, Ibn al-Faqih and al-Muqaddasi.

Ibn Rusta

Ibn Rusta (d. after 912)[155] was a geographer and historian who, likely enough, may have known, and met, Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam, his older contemporaries. He had read Sallam's travel account in Ibn Khurradadhbih's work, perhaps in a version resembling ms. B.[156] Ibn Rusta's *Book of the precious fineries*,[157] contains a section (according to the manuscript BL Add. 23378) which is entitled "The story of Gog and Magog".[158] It says:

> Ibn Khurradadhbih said: Sallam the Interpreter—he used to translate documents of the Turks on governmental affairs which reached al-Wathiq bi-llah—said: "When al-Wathiq bi-llah saw that it was as if the barrier which 'the two-horned one' had built between us and Gog and Magog, was open, he said: examine it and bring me information about it', and he gave me fifty men" [...].

Ibn Rusta's information about Sallam's activities as translator of Turkish documents is not found elsewhere. For the rest, his text shows great resemblance with ms. B but also, interesting enough, with al-Idrisi's text. As compared with ms. A, the following items are missing in ms. B, in Ibn Rusta (ms BL Add. 23378) and in al-Idrisi:

- the mention of the Turk Ashnas;
- the thirty languages;

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[153] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■

[154] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, p. 934.

[155] EI² *s.v.* (S. Maqbul Aḥmad); Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 166-169.

[156] In his EI² article, S. Maqbul Aḥmad writes that Ibn Rusta may have utilized the more complete edition of Ibn Khurradādhbih. But Ibn Rusta's text, at least the one kept in ms. BL Add. 23378 is less complete than the one of Ibn Khurradādhbih published by De Goeje.

[157] Kitāb al-aʿlāḳ al-nafīsa.

[158] Ms. BL Add. 23378, fol. 170a/b, cf. Rieu, *Catalogue*, ii, no. 1410.

– the accoutrement of the caravan;
– the passage: *Then we travelled to the town of Igu* [...].

Quite remarkable are the similarities between the BL manuscript and al-Idrisi's text. After the quotation "*We never heard of it*",[159] the BL manuscript continues: *then we came to a bare mountain on which there was no vegetation. It was a mountain cut by a wadi, 150 cubits wide.*[160] As in al-Idrisi's text, the commander of the fortresses rides out every Friday with ten horsemen, each with an iron rod weighing five talents. The commander's hereditary function is not mentioned, nor is there a reference to the caliphate. The gate is struck three times every day, and the rod-bearers listen at the bolt. Like al-Idrisi's text, the BL manuscript shows the displacement, while the paragraphs "*Sallam said: I asked the people of the fortress to the top of the wall*",[161] including the iron-dust episode, is missing in the three texts.

The endings of these B manuscripts, however, show considerable differences. As compared with al-Idrisi, Sallam's account ends in the BL manuscript as follows:

> When we departed, the guides took us in the direction of Khurasan. And we travelled to it until we came out behind Samarkand in seven parasangs; the commanders of the fortresses provided us with what we needed. Then we arrived at ʿAbd Allah b. Abi Tahir. ʿAbd Allah gave us 100000 dirhams, and to every man who was with me he gave 500 dirhams, and to the horsemen he gave 5 dirhams, and to the foot-men 3 dirhams, as far as al-Rayy. We returned to Samarra twenty-eight months after we had left it.[162]

In his edition of Ibn Rusta's *Book of the precious fineries*, De Goeje omits Sallam's travel account altogether. The most important *variae lectiones*, he gave in his text edition of Ibn Khurradadhbih. He apparently considered it redundant to publish Sallam's account for a second time.[163] Two remarks are in place here. It must be remarked that

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[159] Cf. above n. ■■ 29.
[160] fol. 170a/l. 13ff; cf. above n. ■■ 32.
[161] Cf. above n. ■■ 53.
[162] fol. 172a/l. 5ff.
[163] According to present-day standards, there should be no interference with the text of a manuscript itself, and remarks are given outside the text. De Goje, however, inserted into the printed text itself (*BGA*, vii, p. 149/l. 4) the Arabic abbreviation: *wa-ḍammi ilk̲h [...]* i.e. "and adds etc. [...]". In a footnote he remarks that he has left out what follows until almost the end of fol. 172v, i.e. Sallām's entire travel account. For *ilk̲h*, a contraction of *ilā ākhirihi*, lit. "to the end of it", i.e. "etc.", cf. W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, ii, Cambridge 1962, p. 146.

De Goeje, by omitting Ibn Rusta's version of Sallam's account and, to explain this omission, by referring to Ibn Khurradadhbih's text, indicates that for him Ibn Rusta's text, as found in the BL manuscript is practically the same as that of Ibn Khurradadhbih. This however is not the case. The differences between ms. A and the BL manuscript (as well as ms. B) are substantial indeed, much greater than De Goeje wants us to believe. He himself underlined the differences between mss. A and B, but apparently did not notice, at least not note down, the similarities between ms. B and the BL manuscript and, consequently, the differences between these manuscripts and ms. A. The impression is that De Goeje did not have a close look at the BL manuscript, at least not in the case of Sallam's account. Yet, the differences stand out, especially at the various endings: in the BL manuscript, after the passage "*We returned to Samarra twenty-eight months after we had left it*", we read: *Ibn Khurradadhbih said: Sallam the Interpreter told me this entire story. Then he dictated it to me from the report he had written on that [story] for al-Wathiq.*[164] Ms. B has almost the same ending as the BL manuscript but for a very few quite unimportant *variae lectiones*. The only point of interest is the *kunya* of the Tahirid governor, 'Abd Allah b. Tahir.[165]

De Goeje's dealing with the text of the BL manuscript comes as a surprise. He published Ibn Khurradadhbih's *Book of Routes and Kingdoms* in 1889, and Ibn Rusta's *Book of the precious fineries* in 1892. In neither of these editions does he mention what Ibn Rusta writes at the very end of his version of Sallam's account. After the words "*Then he dictated it to me from the report he had written on that for al-Wathiq*", Ibn Rusta continues: *And we [Ibn Rusta] in our turn have written it [the account] down in order that information be given about the medley and confusion it contains. For things like these cannot be accepted as authentic. I have found it [this text] in accordance [with the original].*

Already in 1888, one year before the edition of Ibn Khurradadhbih, and four years before that of Ibn Rusta, De Goeje knew of the existence of Ibn Rusta's text in the BL manuscript. For in 1888 he wrote in his article *De muur*: "Even Ibn Rusta, the earliest [writer] to take over, still in the 9th c., Ibn Khurradadhbih's story, indicates that he at first had difficulties in accepting it as trustworthy".[166] In fact, Ibn

[164] fol. 173b.

[165] Cf. Barbier de Meynard, *Le livre des routes et des provinces*, p. 192 (text), p. 102. (transl.).

[166] De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 103.

Rusta did not just take over Ibn Khurradadhbih's text, certainly not the version of ms. A. And there is no sign whatsoever that he, after some reluctance, finally considered Sallam's account as trustworthy. On the contrary, he speaks of medley and confusion, and gives the text only for the sake of completeness. It is difficult to understand how De Goeje, if indeed he read the BL manuscript carefully, could interpret Ibn Rusta's words in the way he did in his article *De muur*.

Our conclusion must be that De Goeje's interference with text has to do with the similarities between the BL manuscript, ms. B, and al-Idrisi's text, at least as far as Sallam's travel account is concerned. These similarities suggest that there must have been a common source for these three versions. At some point one of them may have been combined with al-Jayhani's *Book of Routes*, producing the al-Idrisi version we know. The two other manuscripts do not show any trace of al-Jayhani's work. Our conclusion must then be that De Goeje did not do justice to Ibn Rusta's text and that he did not clarify the relation between the various versions of Sallam's account.

Ibn al-Faqih

Ibn al-Faqih, probably a younger contemporary of Ibn Khurradadhbih, Sallam and Ibn Rusta, was an Iranian geographer who wrote in Arabic. Sallam's travel account is found in his *Compendium of the Book of the Countries*.[167] De Goeje again leaves Sallam's account out from his edition of Ibn al-Faqih's work. Here, his reason is that al-Muqaddasi's version (published in 1877) was not surpassed by the others (except by Ibn Khurradadhbih in ms. A). And so De Goeje writes in a note: "This text [of Ibn al-Faqih] is shorter than the one in al-Muqaddasi. It does not offer *variae lectiones* of any importance.

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[167] EI² *s.v.* Ibn al-Fakīh al-Hamadhānī (H. Massé). His Kitāb al-buldān has survived in abbreviated form (*mukhtaṣar*), transl. by Massé, *Abrégé*. According to Ibn al-Nadīm's Fihrist, the complete text of Ibn al-Fakīh's Kitāb al-buldān comprised 1000 folios and also contained a compilation of al-Djayhānī. For his translation of Ibn al-Faqih's text, Massé, *Abrégé*, used a manuscript kept in Mashhad. But Pellat notes that the text of the Mashhad manuscript shows a *lacuna* [after the passage "Sallam the Interpreter related that al-Wathiq bi-llah ..."], which De Goeje renounced to fill in and for which the Mashhad manuscript is of no help at all. The copyist of this manuscript apparently had a text which contained Sallām's account, but which he, for an as yet unknown reason, left out.

We therefore say with Yaqut: *tarkuhu awla, 'leaving it out is preferable'*".[168]

al-Ya'qubi and Ibn Hawqal

It is remarkable that Sallam's account is not mentioned by al-Ya'qubi,[169] the well-known Arab historian and geographer. He was born in Baghdad in the 9th century and was a contemporary of Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam. He may have known, and even met one, or both, of them, for he received training as secretary. In his youth he went to Armenia and later served the Tahirids in Khurasan until their fall in 872. He thus may have met Sallam in Samarra, probably in Armenia, and also in Nishapur when the traveller arrived at the Tahirid court in 844 on his homeward journey. One might suppose that al-Ya'qubi, in view of his activities, was interested in Sallam's journey. It is therefore remarkable that he, while writing about 'the two-horned one',[170] mentions neither Sallam nor the barrier. Whether this silence conceals a negative judgement on Sallam's account cannot be determined.

In his *The Configuration of the Earth*,[171] the geographer Ibn Hawqal (d. after 973) expresses his high appreciation for Ibn Khurradadhbih's work, as well as for those of Jayhani and of Qudama b. Dja'far.[172] On his manifold journeys he carried their works with him. He went to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Khwarazmiya and Transoxania, regions Sallam had also passed through. However, his work does not contain any reference to Sallam or the barrier.

al-Muqaddasi

al-Muqaddasi was "the best representative of Arabic geography in the second half of the 10th century".[173] His *Best division for the knowledge of the provinces*, contains, under the heading Khurasan, a section called

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[168] *BGA*, v, p. 301, note h, repeating his *ilkh*, i.e. "etc.", see above n. ■■108. De Goeje continues: "Sallam said: We left Samarra and returned to it, after we had left, in twenty-eight months" The Mashhad manuscript instead has: "He [Sallām] said: We left al-Wathiq at Samarra and came back to him after an absence of twenty-eight months".

[169] EI² *s.v.* al-Ya'ḳūbī, Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad (M.Q. Zaman).

[170] Cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 17.

[171] *Kitāb ṣurat al-arḍ*.

[172] Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, p. 322.

[173] EI² *s.v.* al-Muḳaddasī, Shams al-Dīn (A. Miquel).

"The barrier of 'the two-horned one'".[174] The author says that he read the story of this barrier in the book of Ibn Khurradadhbih and others; that the story was based on one text (only) and on the words and authority of Ibn Khurradadhbih, because the latter was the vizier of the caliph and the most knowledgeable in handling the treasury of the Commander of the Believers. It is interesting to note that al-Muqaddasi knew only one single text of Ibn Khurradadhbih's work. This text was also that of others authors, probably his predecessors Ibn Rusta and Ibn al-Faqih. In view of the similarities between the texts of these three authors in so far as Sallam's account is concerned, it would seem that the version of ms. A either did not yet exist in their days, or had not come to their knowledge.

To a very large extent, al-Muqaddasi's text is that of the BL manuscript and ms. B discussed above: the name of Ashnas, the passage on Igu, on the material scraped from the barrier, and the details of Sallam's homeward journey are missing. There is no trace of influence by al-Jayhani, even though al-Muqaddasi knew the latter's book.[175] al-Muqaddasi's text ends as follows contesting the location of the barrier with Andalusia: *Then the guides led us in the direction of Khurasan, and we came out behind Samarkand in seven parasangs. The commanders of the fortresses had provided us with what we needed. Then we reached al-Wathiq and informed him. This [account] refutes the one which pretends that it [the barrier] is in al-Andalus.*

al-Tha'labi

Sallam's account was not limited to the field of geographers but was also taken up by story-tellers. al-Tha'labi (d. 1035) won great fame in the Arab world with his collection of stories of prophets, called *Highlights (lit. brides) of the edifying recitations: Lives of the prophets.* The work contains "A description of the barrier of 'the two-horned one' and everything connected with it".[176] The description of Gog and Magog is clearly influenced by the stories found in Tradition and in al-Tabari. The barrier, which is compared with a yellow-streaked garment, is said to lie behind Zakhrud near the western part of the world; a journey between it and the Khazars lasts seventy-two days. Sallam's travel account is limited to forty-two lines. In connection with Armenia a new name props up in what seems to be a confused

[174] al-Muḳaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taḳāsīm*, p. 362-365.
[175] *BGA*, v, p. VIIf.
[176] al-Tha'labī, *'Arā'is al-maǧālis*, p. 614-616.

text: *The king of the Alans wrote for him [Sallam] to al-Azali, the tal-jund*[177] *in the land of filan-shah, the king of the Khazars.* According to al-Thalabi Sallam took fifty guides. The evil smell is said to come from dead people, and the Commander of the Believers belongs to the 'Abbasids in Iraq. After a shortened description of the barrier, the text ends in the same way as that of Ibn Rusta and ms B.

Abu Hamid

Abu Hamid (d. 1169) was a great traveller from Granada,[178] who went as far as Bukhara and Nishapur. Not a geographer but a story-teller, he is said to relate what he sees and hears. His summary of Sallam's account is very short, thirteen lines only. Under the heading "Section on the buildings", he writes that the barrier which 'the two-horned one' built against Gog and Magog belongs to the imposing buildings. Sallam's name is not mentioned in this section, but occurs in the chapter "Sea of the Khazars" i.e. the Caspian Sea:

> Sallam the Interpreter, the envoy of al-Wathiq bi-llah, Commander of the Believers, to the king of the Khazars, said: "We saw an island between the Khazars and the Bulgars, on which there are mountain sheep resembling locusts. They are not able to flee because they are so numerous. When ships approach that island, as many of them are caught as Allah permits. The ewes and lambs are fat indeed. I did not see any other animal on that island. There were springs on it and herbs and many trees; praise be to Him Whose blessings are uncountable".[179]

There is little doubt that the Sallam mentioned here is our traveller. However, Abu Hamid's version of Sallam's account is the only one to have a reference to a journey by water. This passage is unlikely to have been part of any written version of Sallam's account. It seems rather that such details in the course of time were attached to Sallam's report, as was probably the case with what we might call "the Caspian girl".[180] Such stories may also have been circulating in Baghdad and Samarra in connection with Sallam's journey and have been the reason for Ibn Rusta's criticism.

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[177] *ṭal* + *ǧund* (army), a Persian military title?

[178] EI² *s.v.* Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnaṭī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (E. Lévi-Provençal).

[179] G. Ferrand, *Le* Tuḥfat al-albāb *de Abū Ḥāmid al-Andalusi al-Çarnāṭī*, in: *Journal Asiatique* 207 (1925), p. 233 (text), p. 242ff. (trad.)

[180] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■ (n. 27).

Ibn al-Jawzi

Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1200)[181] was a jurisconsult, traditionist and preacher who, among so many other works, wrote *Enlightening the early morning twilight: the good qualities of the Blacks and the Abyssinians.*[182] In his preface he relates that the Abyssinians in Baghdad complained to him about being discriminated because of their black colour. He wanted to encourage them and wrote a work in which he highlights what was believed to have been the prominent role played by the Abyssinians, in fact by the *najashi*[183] or negus, in early Islam. The title of chapter thirteen is a rhetorical question: "Were there Blacks among the prophets?" The answer, affirmative as expected, is based on a tradition ascribed to 'Ali b. Abi Talib, who had declared that 'the two-horned one' was black. In support of this statement, Ibn al-Jawzi gives twenty-five traditions, but after that seems to forget the theme of the blackness of 'the two-horned one'. He goes on with the story of the latter as it is told in Sura XVIII, and adduces twelve reasons why he was given this epithet. In a separate section the author asks how 'the two-horned one' proceeded in building the barrier. The answer he finds in Sallam's travel account.

al-Jawzi's *Enlightening* gives two versions of this account, both based, according to the author, on traditions transmitted by Abu 'l-Hasan b. al-Munadi. The first and shorter version deals with the building of the barrier and shows influence of the *Alexander Romance* and the Syriac tradition. It runs as follows:

> How he ['the two-horned one'] built the barrier. Abu 'l-Hasan b. al-Munadi related: When 'the two-horned one' decided to travel to the place where the sun rises and sets, he took his way via Kabul and India. The kings came out with presents and goods to meet him. Finally, he arrived at mysterious castles in which only a few [people] had remained. These people requested him to build a barrier. He went down together with the craftsmen. They took large iron cauldrons and iron ladles. He ordered them to put 4 of these cauldrons together on a fireplace, each of them being 5 cubits wide. He ordered the craftsmen to make iron tiles. They made them, each tile being one and a half cubits long and one handbreadth thick. After that they built the barrier and erected in its middle a giant door, with two leaves, each 50 cubits long. On top

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[181] EI² *s.v.* Ibn al-Djawzī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī (H. Laoust).

[182] *Tanwīr al-ghabash fi fadl al-sūdān wa l-ḥabash*; cf. W. Pertsch, *Die arabischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha*, iii, Gotha 1881, ms. no. 1692, p. 288-290.

[183] EI² *s.v.* al-nādjāshī (E. van Donzel); cf. E. van Donzel, in: *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica s.v.* Nägas.

of it was a castle of about ten cubits. When they had finished building the barrier, he laid fire against it, and it melted together so that it became like one single stone.[184]

The second version (according to ms. Gotha 1692) follows immediately after the first one. It comes close to ms. B, and reads as follows:

Abu 'l-Husayn [Abu 'l-Hasan] b. al-Munadi said: An account reached me on the authority of Ibn Khurradadhbih, who said: Sallam the Interpreter transmitted to me: al-Wathiq once dreamed that the barrier built by 'the two-horned one' had opened. He then turned to me and said: "Go investigate it and report to me about it'. He provided me with fifty men, presented me with fifty dinars and gave me 10000 dirhams as blood-money. He also gave me sustenance for six months and two hundred mules to carry food and water. We left Samarra with a letter from al-Wathiq for Ishaq, the governor of Armenia. Ishaq wrote for us to the Master of Sarir, who wrote for us to the king of the Alans, who wrote for us to the Filan-shah, who wrote for us to the king of the Khazars. We stayed with the king of the Khazars for one day and one night, then he provided us with fifty tractable men. From him we travelled for twenty-five days until we arrived in a region with black soil and fetid wind. Before entering that region we had provided ourselves with perfume, at which we could sniff against the unpleasant smell. In this region we travelled for ten days. We then came to ruined towns. There we travelled for seven days. We made enquiries about these towns and were told: 'Gog and Magog have entered these towns and destroyed them' We then came to castles near the mountain in whose gorge the barrier is found. There are people living there who speak Arabic and Persian, who are Muslims, read the Koran and have Koran schools and mosques. They asked: 'Where do you come from?' We said: We are messengers of the Commander of the Believers'. They were astonished and said: 'The Commander of the Believers?' We said: 'Yes' They said: 'Is he an old man or a young man?' We said: 'A young man' They said: 'Where does he live?' We said: 'In Iraq, in a city called Samarra' They said: 'We never heard anything about it' Then we came to a barren mountain on which was no green and which was cut by a wadi, 150 cubits wide. On both sides of the wadi two posts had been constructed against the mountain. Both posts were 25 cubits wide, while underneath 10 more cubits were visible on the outside of the gate. On top of it he ['the two-horned one'] erected a building with iron tiles, covered with brass, 50 cubits thick. There is also an iron lintel whose extremities rest on the two posts. The lintel is 120 cubits long and it rests on each of the two posts, jutting out ten cubits [on each side]. On top of the lintel is an iron construction

[184] Ms. Gotha 1692, fol. 23b/l. 7–fol. 24a/l. 2.

covered with brass and reaching to the top of the mountain, as high as the eye can see. On top of it are iron merlons and on each merlon are two horns facing each other. The gate is made of iron. Its two leaves are closed. Each of them is 50 cubits wide, 50 cubits high and 50 cubits thick. The hinges of the leaves hang in roundings which are as large as the lintel. On top of the gate is a padlock, 7 cubits long and one cubit thick in its rounding. The padlock is 25 cubits above the ground. 5 cubits above the padlock are a bolt, which is longer than the padlock, and a spring. Each of them is 2 cubits long. On the padlock hangs a key, one and a half cubits long, with 12 teeth. Each of them is about a handbreadth, they may even be larger than a mortar. The key hangs on a chain which is 8 cubits long, and on a rounding of 4 span. The ring to which the chain is attached is [as strong as] the ring of a snapshot. The threshold of the gate is 20 cubits [wide]. It extends over one 100 cubits, the part under the two posts not included. The visible part of the threshold is 5 cubits. The cubits are all to be understood as black cubits. The commander of these [buildings] rides out every Friday with ten horsemen, every horseman carrying an iron rod weighing fifty men[185] each. With these rods they strike the padlock every Friday, so that those behind the gate hear the sound and know that the guards are there. And so the latter know that the others are not committing misdeeds at the gate. Having struck the padlock, our people put their ear [against the gate] and hear an echo from the inside. In the neighbourhood of this place is a large fortress, which is ten parasangs long and has a surface of one hundred parasangs. Close to the gate are two fortresses, each of which measures 200 by 100 cubits. At the gates of these two fortresses is a well with sweet water. In one of the fortresses is the building equipment with which he ['the two-horned one'] built the barrier, namely the iron cauldrons and ladles. On each of the fireplaces are four cauldrons as big as soap kettles. There also remain some tiles stuck together from having been stored. Each tile measures one and a half cubits and is one span thick. They asked the people who were there whether they had seen someone of Gog and Magog. They remembered having once seen a number [of them] above the merlons, but a black wind had blown and thrown them to their side [of the barrier]. As far as one could see, the size of those men was one span and a half. Sallam the Interpreter said: When we left, the guides led us towards the region of Khurasan. We travelled until we came out seven parasangs behind Samarkand. The commanders of the fortresses had provided us with enough sustenance. Then we arrived at ʿAbd Allah b. Tahir. Sallam the Interpreter said: He [ʿAbd Allah] gave me 100000 dirhams, and to every man who was with me 500 dirhams. In my turn I paid five dirhams to every horseman, and three dirhams to every footsoldier per day, as far as Rayy. Then we

[185] One man = two raṭl = ca. 6 kg. Depending on the place where it is used, one raṭl weighs between half a kilo and two and a half kilos.

returned to Samarra, twenty-eight months after we had left. Ibn Khurradadhbih said: Sallam the Interpreter transmitted this entire account to me. Afterwards he let me read [it] from a document which he had written for al-Wathiq.[186]

Yaqut

Yaqut (d. 1229) was a great traveller who wrote a famous geographical dictionary, called *Dictionary of the Lands*. In the first volume he quotes Ibn Fadlan's story of "the Caspian girl", and in the third volume he summarizes what in his days was known about Gog and Magog and the barrier of 'the two-horned one'.[187] Yaqut gives the version of the ms B and the BL manuscript, but adds some details not found there, such as:

- the Caliph al-Wathiq was frightened by his dream;[188]
- the caliph's letter ordered Ishaq b. Isma'il, the governor of Armenia, to assist the caravan and to write to the kings along the route it was to take;
- the vinegar for the fetid land was taken at the advice of the guides;
- and it were the latter who were questioned about the ruined towns;
- the fortresses were not passed without difficulties;
- Sallam was not only asked from where he came but also where he was going;
- the Muslims travelled with him and his party to the bare mountain.
- The passage ends with a remark indicating the time of his travel: *When we left, the guides took us to Khurasan. We travelled until we came out behind Samarkand in seven parasangs. He [Sallam] said: Between our*

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[186] Ms. Gotha 1692, fol. 24a/l. 3—fol. 26a/l. 9.

[187] Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, iii, p. 53 (*sadd Yādjūdj wa-Mādjūdj*). He also gives a long exposé on the *tinnīn*, but at the end states that he has transmitted it as he found it, adding that it is preferable to let it be (*wa-lākin tarkuhu awlā*).

[188] Ibn Khaldūn who knew Ibn Khurradādhbih's Kitāb al-masālik probably followed Yāḳūt's version of Sallām's account. He says: *Ibn Khurradadhbih wrote that al-Wathiq saw in a dream that the barrier had opened. Frightened, he awoke and sent Salam [sic] the Interpreter to investigate the barrier and to bring back information about it and a description of it, which he did. This*, Ibn Khaldūn adds, *is a long story that has nothing to do with the purpose of the 'Muḳaddima'* (Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, i, p. 163).

The only author who, besides Ibn Khaldūn, gives this detail of the Caliph's fear is Yāḳūt. It is therefore possible that the latter was Ibn Khaldūn's source for his story.

departure from Samarra and our return to it were 18 months. This indication apparently is a mistake, for all other texts have 28 months.

At the end Yaqut indicates how he proceeded: *From the account of the barrier I took what I found in the books. I have not cut in the truth of what I found to be in accordance with the stories. God knows best about its veracity, and about every situation. There is no doubt about the veracity of the item of the barrier [itself], for it is mentioned in the Noble Book.*

al-Nuwayri

al-Nuwayri[189] (d. 1333) was an Egyptian historian, famous for his encyclopaedia in thirty volumes. His text of Sallam's account is that of al-Idrisi, whose name is not mentioned. For Sallam's homeward journey, al-Nuwayri gives two place-names which are not found in al-Idrisi, namely Bukhtan and Intiraz: *The guides took us in the direction of Khurasan. We travelled to the town of b.kh.tan, to Ghuriyan, to the town of Barskhan, to 'n.t.raz, to Samarkand. And we came to 'Abd Allah b. Tahir*[190] etc. According to al-Nuwayri, Sallam's homeward journey took place on the northern highway which led from China to Tashkent via Bukhtan, Ghuriyan, Barskhan, Intiraz (Taraz ?) and Samarkand. These names are probably found in al-Jayhani's book, and seem to be a confirmation of our supposition that Sallam indeed travelled homeward along this northern highway.[191] al-Nuwayri further quotes that the *Tafsir* of al-Qurtubi (d. 1272),[192] a famous Andalusian expert on *hadith* and well-known for his Koran commentary, makes some short remarks on the length and breadth of the barrier.[193]

4. *Sallam's travel account in Persian sources*

Two Persian authors, Hamd Allah Mustawfi al-Qazwini and Amin Razi give a version of Sallam's travel account. They both refer to Ibn Khurradadhbih; Amin Razi even explicitly to the *Book of Routes and Kingdoms*. In his geographical *Hearts' Bliss*, al-Qazwini has a section called "The rampart of Gog and Magog" After a short

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[189] EI² *s.v.* al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad (M. Chapoutot-Remadi).
[190] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat*, i, p. 374-379.
[191] Cf. Chapter 12, p. ■■.
[192] EI² *s.v.* al-Ḳurtubī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad (R. Arnaldez).
[193] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat*, i, p. 378.

introduction on the location of the rampart and on 'the two-horned one', follows a version of Sallam's travel account which shows similarities to both ms. B and al-Idrisi:

> The rampart of Gog and Magog. Of the seventh clime, in longitude 1090 30', and latitude 730. It was built by 'the two-horned one', and it is so recorded for a witness in the Koran [XVIII:93] as has been already mentioned. By some accounts the builder was 'the two-horned the Great', that is to say 'the two-horned one', son of Rumi son of Lanti son of Yunan son of Tarakh son of Japhet on of the prophet Noah; but according to another account this 'the two-horned one' was Alexander son of Darius son of Artaxerxes son of Bahman son of Isfandiyar. Ibn Khurradadhbih, when giving a description of the rampart, states that the Abbasid Caliph al-Wathiq, having seen in a dream that the rampart had been burst through, despatched in the year 228 [843 A.D.] Sallam the Interpreter, with fifty men, provisioned and mounted, in order to investigate the condition of things. From Samarra he travelled forth, and first presented himself before the governor of Armenia and Abkhaz, from whence he passed on to Filan-shah, the chief of Shirvan, and then on to the king of Alan. Thence he went to the chief of Sarir, who is king of Bab al-Abwab. From him he passed on to Tarkhan Malik, king of the Khazars. This Tarkhan then sent guides with them. After travelling twenty-six days they came to a country where there was an evil smell, and going on ten days further they came to a city and a country which had been of old the dwelling place of Gog and Magog, but it was now gone to ruin. Through this land they travelled for twenty-seven days more, coming finally to several castles near a mountain across the gorge of which is the rampart. The men in these castles spoke both the Persian and Arabic languages, and professed Islam, but they knew nothing concerning the caliphate and were much astonished that there was any caliph living. They conducted Sallam the Interpreter before the rampart, and he saw here a mountain, bare and precipitous, which overhung a river gorge, and upon that mountain no plant grew. The gorge was 150 ells across, and at the mouth of the gorge were set two towers, built of iron bricks jointed with lead, and each tower was 25 ells square. The rampart went from the summit of these towers, and water, flowing from the spring head above the gorge, entered and passed down and out between them. As to the towers, from the water level to the crown of the arch was nearly 10 ells of height, and more than this in depth was covered by the water. Joining the summits of the towers, by means of an arch, they had made a gangway five ells broad, going along the front of the rampart, and the face of the rampart was so high that from below a man upon the battlements appeared but as a five or six year old child. The line of the face of the rampart goes up above the towers for near 300 ells in length; and there, where there battlements, it is double. Over the mountain from the summit of the battlements it goes down straight as

a plumb-line, so that in no wise is it possible to climb it. The breadth of the rampart behind the battlements is such that five or six men abreast can pass along. In the midst of the rampart is a gateway, fashioned with double iron gates, 25 ells across, near 50 ells in height, and two ells in thickness. On this gate when closed are set, in their proper place, padlocks, each padlock seven ells long, with the middle thickness thereof two ells; further there is a key with twelve teeth, each like the pestle of a mortar, and the length of the key is four ells. It is hung from a ring 25 ells away from the gate. The rampart too, like the towers, is built of bricks of iron jointed with lead and brass, all made as in a piece, and each of those bricks measures an ell and a half, by an ell and a half, and a span of thickness. Further, many more of the bricks and the furnaces for making them are still to be seen lying about there. Every Friday the governor of the district comes forth with ten men, each man bearing in hand a battle-axe of twenty men's-weight. When they come to the gateway each man strikes three blows with all his strength on the gate, in order that the people of Gog and Magog may know that the watchmen of the rampart are alert. In the neighbourhood of the rampart is a fortified castle, and the dwelling-places of the guards of the rampart have each some cultivated ground round about, with gardens, and the living of the people there is derived from their produce. Then the governor of the country provided Sallam the Interpreter with guides and provisions and beasts of burden, sending him on his way; whereby, as on the outward journey, in the course of two months going seven leagues a day, he reached Samarkand and inhabited country. By the Khurasan road he came again to Samarra and gave his account of the rampart to the Caliph Wathiq. The full time that Sallam the Interpreter was absent on this journey was two years and four months.[194]

In his *Seven climates*, Amin Razi has a much shorter, and in details, different version of the travel account:

In [the book] "The Routes and the Kingdoms" it is written that the confidant of the caliph dreamt how the barrier of Gog and Magog was opened. Whatever the case, he sent Sallam the Interpreter with fifty men to examine the barrier. Sallam went from Samarra to Armenia, from there to the lands of Arran, from that district to Bab al-Abwab, and from Bab al-Abwab to the region of the Khazars. The king of the Khazars, called Tarkhan, took care of the men who were with Sallam. The group from among the Khazars travelled for twenty-six days until they reached a land where a bad smell was constantly permeating the noses. For another ten days they roamed through that land until they reached a place from where they could see a mountain on which was a fortress. But they did not find traces of population in that region.

[194] Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-ḳulūb*, p. 236-237.

> The caliph's men passed that dwelling and travelled past seven other dwellings until they reached a couple of fortresses close to a mountain. The rampart of Gog and Magog was situated in the ravine of that mountain. Although its territory was small, there were many deserts and places. The whole of that land was filled with a strongly fortified fortress where the guardians of the barrier of Gog and Magog lived. They were Muslims and knew Arabic and Persian, but were ignorant of the ruling Abbasid caliphs. However this may be, they kept Sallam for the day, and the next day they took him and agreed to bring him to the barrier. Sallam saw a mountain and a river. On the mountain nothing was growing and the front of the river was covered with bricks [...] The fortress was built so high that it could not be any higher. After that he raised the flag of relaxation and emptied his mind of the thought that the barrier of Gog and Magog was broken. He spurred the reins of return into the direction of the caliph. It is said that the period of Sallam's travelling lasted two years and four months.[195]

5. *Criticism on Sallam's travel account by some Arab and Western authors*

Although Sallam's journey remained popular long after it had taken place, it was already severely criticized by his contemporary Ibn Rusta. Whether Ibn Khurradadhbih was indirectly implicated in the criticism is hard to say. Against Ibn Rusta's criticism it may be remarked that, apart from the description of the barrier, Sallam's account, as we know it, is vague and incomplete rather than being a mishmash full of exaggerations.

al-Mas'udi, after mentioning the width of the barrier between the two mountains[196] seems to criticize such stories, not openly but by agreeing with the criticism of others. Many people, he writes, who are devoted to study and research, consider this story as absurd, among them al-Farghani the astronomer:[197] he contested this story, argued against it and took pains to show its falsity. al-Mas'udi's criticism of Ibn Khurradadhbih is much milder. He remarks that Ibn Khurradadhbih's work is an inexhaustible mine, but later he says that he does not like this type of work, because Ibn Khurradadhbih's indeed carefully, noted distances between places are only useful for couriers.[198]

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[195] Rāzī, *Haft Iḳlīm*, p. 515-518.

[196] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 731.

[197] Cf. Chapter 10, p. ■■ (n. 12).

[198] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 9, 503. Wiet, *Les atours précieux*, p. 172 n. 1, remarks that Ibn Khurradādhbih occasionally is taken to task in the *Kitāb al-aghānī*, v, p. 155-157

Criticism of stories around 'the two-horned one' and of Sallam's account is also expressed by al-Biruni. Writing about wide-spread ridiculous stories, he quotes a tradition according to which 'Umar b. al-Khattab, when hearing how people entered into profound discussions on 'the two-horned one', said: *Was it not enough for you to plunge into the stories on human beings, that you must pass into another field and draw the angels into the discussion?*

al-Biruni gives two other reasons for doubting the authenticity of Sallam's account. The first is that the Muslims mentioned in the travel account had no connection with the civilized (i.e. the Muslim) world, from which they were separated by a vast, black and fetid region.[199] The second reason is that these Muslims were totally ignorant of the name of the caliph and of the caliphate as such:

> whilst we know of no other Muslim nation which is separated from the territory of Islam, except the Bulgars and the Sawars,[200] who live towards the end of the civilized world in the most northern part of the seventh clime. And these people do not make the least mention of such a rampart, and they are well acquainted with the caliphate and the caliph, in whose name they even read the khutba;[201] they do not speak Arabic, but a language of their own, a mixture of Turkish and Khazari. If, therefore, this report [of Sallam] rests on testimonies of this sort, we do not wish to investigate thereby the truth of the subject. This is what I wished to propound regarding 'the two-horned one' Allah knows best![202]

al-Biruni's arguments are surprising. That people who said they were Muslims could not be Believers because they were living far away from "the civilized world" i.e. Iraq and other great centres of Islam, shows a rather surprising ignorance of the way Islam had spread already for centuries. It is as if al-Biruni was not aware of the fact that Muslim merchants, travelling far and wide, spread Islam as they

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(I. Guidi, *Tables alphabétiques du Kitab al-aghānī*, Leiden 1900); M. Reinaud–St. Guyard, *Aboulféda, Géographie*, Paris 1848, p. LVI, quotes Mīrkh"ānd's *Rauḍat al-ṣafā'* (cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■(n. 23), who adds to his description of the barrier: *Though the astronomer Muḥammad al-Farghānī and other modern scholars have tried to show that all those details [of Sallām's description of the barrier] are false, I have not felt free to reject them because they have been transmitted to us in the ancient historical works. Therefore I have reported them faithfully.*

[199] See above p. ■■ (translation).

[200] or Suwārs i.e. Sabirs, Volga Bulghārs, cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 455; Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 61 n. 62, 220 n. 256.

[201] *khuṭba*, sermon or address pronounced during the Friday-service or at special occasions, cf. EI² *s.v.* (A.J. Wensinck).

[202] al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-athār al-bākiya*, p. 50-51.

went, and settling, sometimes temporarily, in remote places on their routes such as Chinese Igu and Dunhuang. Sallam may well have been met the kind of merchants mentioned by Ibn Hawqal.[203] And it is but natural that, at a specific moment, such traders did not know about the name of the reigning caliph.

Among modern scholars it is Reinaud, who considers Sallam's account overcharged with fabulous stories. From the beginning, he remarks, it provoked the mistrust of the Muslims themselves. It seems that the caliph, ashamed of his weakness, devised with Sallam a scheme in order to get round his earlier fears and to reassure the Muslims for the future; or else that Sallam, to make himself important, invented the account which circulates under his name.[204] Minorsky too was rather sceptical about Sallam's journey.[205] Yet, there does not seem to exist a serious reason for not agreeing with De Goeje,[206] that no reasonable doubt can be brought forward against Ibn Khurradadhbih's text. There are hardly any fabulous stories to be found in the account, and Sallam nowhere gives the impression of having undergone "the toughest strain", even if this occasionally may have been the case. His itinerary agrees with that given by the geographer Ibn Rusta, his contemporary. It may even be that his account contributed to the latter's text. The following chapters with the reconstruction of his outward and homeward journeys will demonstrate the reliability of Sallam's travel account.

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[203] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (p. 19 (i).

[204] For his remark that Sallām's account raised mistrust among the Muslims themselves, Reinaud refers to C. Baron d'Ohsson, *Des peuples du Caucase et des pays au nord de la mer Noire et de la mer Caspienne dans le dixième siècle*, Paris 1828, p. 39.

[205] Minorsky, *History of Sharvan*, p. 101.

[206] De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 111. Cf. Tomaschek's review on *De muur*, in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 3 (1889), p. 103-108, who does in no way doubt the historicity of Sallām's account: "Das Hauptresultat der hier besprochenen Arbeit, der Nachweis das Sallam's Bericht auf Wahrheit beruht, und das sein Reiseziel das Nordwestende der sinischen [chinesischen] Mauer gewesen sei, wird nicht mehr können umgestoßen werden".

GOG AND MAGOG AND THE BARRIER: THE ORIGIN OF SALLAM'S DESCRIPTION

The description of the barrier as given by Sallam shows a remarkable resemblance with those found in the Syriac texts. These descriptions, separated in time and *Umwelt*, are clearly interconnected, but so far no endeavour seems to have been made to explain this. It may be done by showing that an uninterrupted line of transmission of the Gog und Magog and barrier motif joins the Syriac tradition of the 6th century with Sallam's days. Two important groups witness to this phenomenon: Arab poets and transmitters of Islamic traditions.

1. *Early Arabo-Muslim poets: links with the Syriac tradition*

In chapter 6 we have seen that between the 7th and 8th centuries the following poets have dealt with the motif:

– Hassan b. Thabit. As far as the motif is concerned, he embodies so to speak the transition of the Syro-Christian to the Arabo-Muslim world. Born into the Khazraj tribe in Yathrib, the later Medina, in the pre-Islamic period,[1] he probably died around 659, surviving Muhammad by some 27 years. He already had an established reputation at the rise of Islam, and became known as "the poet laureate" of the prophet Muhammad. It cannot be decided whether or not his eschatological poem[2] on Gog und Magog and the barrier of 'the two-horned one' was composed before or after the revelation of Sura xviii:83-98. But its relation with these verses on the one hand and with the Syriac texts on the other, is undeniable. He had visited the courts of the Christian Ghassanids at al-Jabiya south of Damascus and of the Christian Lakhmids at al-Hira, near al-Najaf in modern Iraq. These towns had been in former days important centres of Syriac Christian culture. Hassan may well have heard stories about

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[1] Called *ǧāhiliyya* or "time of ignorance" by the Muslims, cf. EI² *s.v.* (Ed.).

[2] Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

the apocalyptic people and Alexander's barrier, and may have brought them back to his native town.

- 'Alqama b. Dhi Jadan (7th c.), a contemporary of Muhammad.
- Abu 'l-Sha'tha' 'Abdallah b. Ru'ba al-'Ajjaj of Basra (d. 715).
- al-Farazdaq of Basra (d. 728).
- Ru'ba b. al-'Ajjaj of Basra (d. 762).
- Abu 'l-'Atahiya of Kufa (d. 825).

There are no indications that these poets who mention Gog und Magog and the barrier were aware of the Syriac Christian origin of the stories around Alexander 'the two-horned'. But it seems clear that these poets between the rise of Islam and Ibn Khurradadhbih's and Sallam's days were the link between Syria and Arabia and between Christian and Muslim culture as far as these stories are concerned. Sallam's description thus does not come as a surprise.

2. *Islamic traditionists: links with the Syriac tradition*

Doufikar-Aerts' investigations[3] show that already before Sallam's days there existed several Arabic texts which contain versions of the Syriac Alexander tradition:

- 'Umara b. Zayd al-Madani, who lived from 767 till ca. 815.[4] He was the author of *The story of Alexander and the wonderful things it contains*.[5]
- Pseudo-Asma'i. From around 850, i.e. shortly after Sallam's journey was perhaps composed the book with the biographies of the kings, called *The final aim*, dealing with the stories of the Persians and the Arabs.[6]

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[3] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 23ff., 29ff., 50ff.

[4] Cf. Ibn Ḥadjar, *Tahdhīb*, vii, p. 449; Friedländer, *Die Chadhirlegende*, p. 129ff., and Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, index *s.v.* 'Umara.

[5] *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar wa-mā fīhā min al-amr al-'adjīb*.

[6] *Kitāb siyar al-mulūk al-musammā bi Nihāyat al-'arab fī akhbār al-Furs wa 'l-'arab*; cf. M. Grignaschi, *La* Nihāyatu-l-Arab fī Aḫbāri-l-Furs wa-l-'Arab, in: *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 22 (1969), p. 15-67; 26 (1973), p. 83-185. The Nihāyat contains a chapter called "The story of Alexander and his wondrous deeds" (*Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar wa-'ajā'ibuhu*). The Egyptian blacksmiths, known from the Syriac Alexander Legend, as well as Gog und Magog are mentioned here, cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 26f.

– The anonymous *The biography of King Iskandar 'the two-horned one'*.[7] The work was copied by Yusuf b. 'Atiya, known as Quzman. It is a complete Arabic version of the *Alexander Romance*, probably based on the Syriac translation of the *Romance*, the Syriac *Alexander Legend* and other not yet fully identified sources.[8]

For our endeavour to link Sallam, early Islam and beyond, 'Umara b. Zayd (d. ca. 815) is a primary source. One generation older than Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam, his chain of transmitters brings us back to the first years of Islam and to Mesopotamia. It is important to remark that the traditionist's primary concern is not historical truth but religious edification. He reflects what he himself, and the believers at large, considered important in religious matters. This, however, does not mean that the chain of transmitters of a Tradition (isnad, plur. asanid) is ipso facto unhistorical and therefore unreliable. 'Umara's work, even if it is no more than a compilation,[9] may thus be considered as a reliable tool to establish a link between Sallam's description of the barrier and the Syriac tradition, the more so because the transmitters themselves are historical persons. The authorities quoted by 'Umara for the story of the 'two-horned one' are in chronological sequence:

– Ka'b al-Ahbar (d. 652).[10] Like Hassan b. Thabit,[11] he was a younger contemporary of Muhammad and witnessed the rise of Islam and the revelation of Sura xviii. He was a transmitter of Jewish eschatological ideas. For the Koran commentators, it has been maintained, this Yemenite Jew, converted to Islam in 638, was the almost universal reference for all that had to do with Jewish revelation and with stories relating to the prophets.[12] But Lidzbarski cautiously concludes[13] that this opinion is not well-founded. This then implies that the Koranic story about Gog und Magog and the barrier cannot simply be referred back to Jewish eschatological traditions. Next to Ka'b other transmitters of the Gog und Magog theme are according to 'Umara:

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[7] *Sīrat al-malik Iskandar Dhi 'l-Karnayn.*

[8] Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 51.

[9] Friedländer, *Chadhirlegende*, p. 131.

[10] EI² *s.v.* Ka'b al-Aḥbār (M. Schmitz).
Cf. Chapter 6, p. ■■.

[12] Cf. G. Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner. Aus arabischen Quellen zusammengetragen und mit jüdischen Sagen verglichen*, Frankfurt 1845, p. 160.

[13] M. Lidzbarski, *De propheticis, quae dicuntur, legendis arabicis*, Leipzig 1893, p. 40.

- Ibn ʿAbbas (d. 686).[14]
- Ishaq b. Bishr (d. ca. 723).[15]
- Hasan al-Basri (d. 728)[16]
- Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 728).[17]
- Qatada b. Diʿama (d. 735).[18]
- Muhammad b. al-Saʾib al-Kalbi of Kufa (d. 763).[19]
- Ibn Ishaq (d. 767).[20]
- Abu Hudhayfa al-Basri (dates unknown).[21]
- Saʿid b. Abi ʿAruba al-Basri (d. ca. 773).[22]
- Saʿid b. Bishr (d. 784).[23]

On the basis of these data it is clear that there has existed an uninterrupted line of transmitters and poets who, from the very beginning of Islam down to the 9th century, wrote about Gog und Magog and the barrier of Alexander, 'the horned one'. It is important to note that the afore-mentioned towns, Basra, Kufa and al-Hira, and above all Baghdad, had been centres of Arabic and Syriac-speaking Christians. In Basra, since the 4th century bishops and convents are attested here.[24] Attached to churches and monasteries were libraries and schools which played an essential role for the initiation of the ʿAbbasid translation movement of Syriac-Arabic translations in the 9th century. Interactions between Christian and Muslim scholars were frequent.[25] In Sallam's days, the metropolitan of Basra was Isho'denah (ca. 846) who in his *Liber chastitatis* gives information about many convents around Basra and Baghdad.[26] By the 9th

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[14] EI² *s.v.* ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās (L. Veccia Vaglieri).

[15] Cf. Ibn Ḥaǧar, *Lisān*, i, p. 471 no. 3884.

[16] EI² *s.v.* Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (H. Ritter).

[17] EI² *s.v.* (R.G. Khoury).

[18] EI² *s.v.* Ḳatāda b. Diʿāma (Ch. Pellat); cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 31.

[19] EI² *s.v.* al-Kalbī (W. Atallah); cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 34.

[20] EI² *s.v.* Ibn Isḥāḳ (J.M.B. Jones).

[21] Ibn Ḥaǧar, *Lisān*, iii, p. 353 no. 3058. He is not to be confounded with Abū Hudhayfa Isḥāḳ b. Muḥammad al-Bukhārī (d. 821), cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 293.

[22] Cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, i, p. 91.

[23] Cf. Friedländer, *Die Chadirlegende*, p. 130 n. 3, p. 315.

[24] J.-M. Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus Novus. Répertoire des diocèses syriaques orientaux et occidentaux*, Beirut 1993, p. 59, 90.

[25] Cf. S.H. Griffith, *The Syriac letters of patriarch Timothy I and the birth of Christian Kalām in the Muʿtazilite milieu of Baghdad and Baṣrah in early Islamic times*, in: W.J. van Bekkum *et al.* (ed.), *Syriac Polemics. Studies in honour of G.J. Reinink*, (Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta. 170), Leuven 2007, p. 103-132.

[26] J.-B. Chabot, *Le Livre de la Chasteté composé par Jésusdenah, Evêque de Baçrah*, in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 16 (1896), p. 229, 231, 264.

century they had become leading centres of Arabo-Muslim learning and civilisation. Here traditionists, poets and even grammarians and lexicographers contributed to the transmission of Syriac tradition to Islam. The story of Gog und Magog and Alexander 'the horned one', as current in Syrian Christian communities in Mesopotamia, may well have spread in these towns. It is this cultural background which may explain the resemblance of Sallam's description of 'the two-horned' one's barrier with the Syriac Alexander tradition. The Arabic text of Sallam's travel account may be of Ibn Khurradadhbih himself, inspired by information provided by Sallam, but ultimately goes back to Syriac written and oral sources.

3. *The barrier as described in the Syriac tradition compared with Sallam's description*

A comparison between the description of Alexander's barrier-gate as found in the Syriac sources and those given by Sallam clearly shows that the latter's description depends upon that of the Syriac ones. It looks as if Sallam had some concrete information from one or several Syriac sources about the barrier, either before, during or after his journey.

	Alexander Legend	*Alexander Poem*	*Ps.-Methodius*	*Sallam*
mountain pass		12/22 giant cubits	12 cubits	150 cubits
Gate	iron, copper/ brass 12 c. long, 8 c. wide	iron, copper/ brass 12 giant c. wide, high, long	brass	iron, brass 50 c. wide
foundation				30 c. deep; iron and copper
2 side pillars of the foundation				25 c. wide, 50 c. high; under both pillars an extension of 10 c.

	Alexander Legend	*Alexander Poem*	*Ps.-Methodius*	*Sallam*
Lower threshold	12 c. long, 3 c. high	12 giant c.long, 4 giant c. high and wide		10 c. wide, extends over 100 c.
threshold over the gate	12 c. long	6 giant c. wide, 6 giant c. high		120 c. long, 5 c. wide;
on top of the treshold				construction 60 c. high
on top of the construc-tion				iron 37 merlons with horns, facing each other, 5 c. long, 4 c. wide
bolt over the gate	2 bolts of iron, each 12 c. long, 2 c. thick	immense, 12 c, long, 2 c. broad, 1,5 c. thick		7 c. long, 1 c. thick, 1 fathom around, 25 c. above the ground
two side pillars of the gate		iron and copper, giant, 12 c. long, 2 c. broad		each 15 c. wide
gate leaves				2 leaves + pivots, each 50 c. wide, 75 c. high, 5 c. thick so strong that they prevent even air and wind to pass
Locks	iron, copper nails of iron, a horse with rider cannot pass	several locks, so strong that prevent even wind to pass		5 c. above the bolt; 2 staples, each 2 c. long
second lock (s)		iron, brass (versio I, III)		
Key	12 c., iron			over lock: 11/2 c. long, 12 teeth, 4 span around

	Alexander Legend	*Alexander Poem*	*Ps.-Methodius*	*Sallam*
key-chain				8 c. long, 4 span around
ring of the chain				like a balista
inscription on the gate	prophecy of the invasion of the Huns (cf. Jerem. i:14-15)			Koran verse
coating of the gate (and posts)	amalgam of iron & copper/ brass		tasaqṭis, a substance indestructible by iron fire and demons	
2 fortresses near the gate				each 200 x 200 c.
tools for the construction				iron cauldrons and ladles

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN SAMARRA, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA IN THE 8TH AND FIRST HALF OF THE 9TH CENTURY

If Sallam indeed travelled to Central Asia in search for Gog and Magog's barrier, as we believe he did, an endeavour should be made to place his journey in the historical and geographical context of the day, focussing on the situation in the caliphal capital, in the Caucasus, in the steppes north of the Tianshan Mountains and in the Tarim Basin.

1. *Samarra**

Probably in 835 Caliph al-Mu'tasim transferred his court to Samarra situated on the Eastern bank of the middle Tigris at 125 km north of Baghdad. The most important reason for the move had been the serious conflicts which had arisen between the inhabitants of Baghdad and the caliph's Turkish slave soldiers from Central Asia. By that time, the Turkish soldiery indeed had a firm grip on the capital.[1] According to al-Ya'qubi, the Turk Wasif had a cantonment in the neighbourhood of the palace, while the Ushrusaniyya, a cantonment under the *afshin*[2] Khaydhar b. Kawus al-Ushrusani, was settled in a village called al-Matira, at 4 km south of modern Samarra.[3] The Turkish general Ashnas,[4] whose advice was decisive in Sallam's appointment for the journey, had a cantonment at 10 km north of the capital at Karkh Fayruz. There was also a cantonment of the *khaqan* 'Urtuj. Upon his succession to the throne in 842, al-Mu'tasim's

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* indicates a place-name mentioned in Sallām's travel account.

[1] U. Haarmann, *Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt ideology and history*, in: *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1988) p. 179-180.

[2] EI² *s.v.* Afshīn (Cl. Huart).

[3] al-Ya'ḳūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 235-268; Wiet, *Les pays*, p. 51. al-Ya'ḳūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 262 also reports that there was a street or quarter in Sāmarrā' where the Khazars lived near the Turks and the natives of Farghānā.

[4] Cf. Chapter 10, p. ■■ (4).

son al-Wathiq chose to stay in Samarra. What formerly had been a military camp became now the new centre of power, dominated by Turkish officers. Men like Aytakh al-Turki, Barmash, Sima al-Dimashqi, Bugha al-Kabir and Bugha al-Saghir had their own fortified residences in or near the capital. That of Aytakh lay outside the south gate of the caliphal palace, called Bab al-Bustan, but it was also known, quite significantly, as Bab al-Aytakh.

Among the military units in Samarra were the so-called al-Shakiriyya, private militias of commanders who in al-Wathiq's time were more often than not Turks. Other non-Arab units were formed by Egyptians, Khurasanians and Khazars.[5] One such leading commander was Khaydhar b. Kawus from the province of Usrushana (Ushrusana), the mountainous district between Samarkand and Khudjand[6] at the mouth of the Farghana valley, which Sallam was to pass through on his homeward journey. Kawus, the local prince who had accepted Islam in 821 after a second Arab expedition, bore the pre-Islamic title *afshin*. His son Khaydhar who became known as al-Afshin, led in 835 and 837 an uninterrupted campaign against Babak, the leader of the Khurrami rebels in the Arran region of Azerbaijan. Various Iranian anti-Arab sects, linked to the movement of Mazdak and influenced by extreme Shi'i doctrines, were known as Khurramiyya, who constituted a serious threat for the 'Abbasid power. During the 8th century the Khurramiyya had been active in Nishapur, Rayy and Transoxania, places and regions Sallam was to pass through on his homeward journey. The *tarkhan* of the Khazars had been one of the rebel leaders.[7] After insurrections in Rayy and Isfahan, the Khurramis of Gurgan in Northern Iran revolted in 796-98, followed in 808 by those of Azerbaijan and Hamadan. This rebellion was quickly suppressed, but in 816 Babak revived the rebellion in the mountainous region of Arran. It went on until 837, when al-Afshin defeated Babak. Captured by Smbat (Sahl-i Smbatean), the

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[5] Cf. O.S.A. Ismail, *The Founding of a New Capital: Sāmarrā'*, in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31 (1968), p. 8ff.

[6] EI² *s.v.* Usrūshana (J.H. Kramers).

[7] On the Khazar king see below. According to al-Ṭabarī, al-Afshīn himself also stood trial in Sāmarrā'. Caliph al-Mu'tasim sent his son (and later successor) Hārūn al-Wāthiḳ with a tray of fruit to the prison where al-Afshīn was taken after the trial of his former adjudant Bughā al-Kabīr. But al-Afshīn, fearing to be poisoned, refused to eat from the fruit. He died from starvation. His dead body was crucified and burned, cf. E.M. Wright, *Bâbak of Bagdhad and al-Afshin during the years 810-841*, in: *The Muslim World* 38 (1948), p. 57, 128.

Armenian prince of the Caucasian province Shakki,[8] Babak was handed over to al-Afshin, who brought him to Samarra, where he was put to death in the same year. Sallam may well have witnessed Babak's execution. Khaydhar, in his turn, had joined the revolt of Muhammad b. Kazim, the governor of Tabaristan, out of rivalry with the powerful governor of Khurasan. Charged with apostasy, Khaydhar had been starved to death in prison in Samarra in 841.

The animosity and even enmity between the inhabitants of Baghdad and the Turkish military leaders and their troops was no secret. It is then the more remarkable interesting that the famous al-Jahiz, who lived at the courts of Baghdad and Samarra, wrote quite favourably about the Turks.[9] In his *Risala* he refers to a well-known tradition recorded by his contemporary Abu Dawud and by al-Nasa'i according to which "the Muslims should leave the Turks alone as long as the latter would leave them alone".[10] This, al-Jahiz remarks, is a prescription for all Arabs. In his *Risala*, addressed to Caliph al-Mu'tasim but not delivered to him, he even refers to 'the two-horned one' when asking the caliph what he thinks of a people who had not been touched by 'the two-horned one', whereas the latter had conquered the entire world.[11]

2. *The Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia and the Ciscaucasus)*

Sallam apparently arrived in Tiflis at a moment of calm between two periods of heavy political unrest during the governorship of Ishaq b. Isma'il. This Ishaq, to whom Sallam handed a letter from Caliph al-Wathiq, is qualified by Ibn Khurradadhbih as the ruler (*sahib*) of "Arminiya", which in fact stands here for Georgia. He had made himself master of Georgia (Arminiya) during the reign of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Amin (regn. 809-13). Ishaq had married the

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[8] Toumanoff, *Christian Caucasian History*, p. 258 n. 362 and p. 352 n. 50.

[9] al-Djāḥiẓ, *Kitāb faḍā'il al-atrāk*, and *Risāla fi manākib al-turk wa 'ammat djund al-khilāfa*, ed. G. van Vloten, *Tria opuscula, auctore Abu Othman Amr ibn Bahr al-Djahiz Basrensi*, Leiden 1903; English. transl. by Walker, *Jahiz of Basra*, p. 688.

[10] *tarakū al-turk mā tarakūkum*, repeated among others by Ḳudāma b. Dja'far, in: *BGA*, vi, p. 262f (text), p. 204 (transl.); cf. E. van Donzel, *Leave the Ethiopians alone as long as they leave you alone—utrukū ḥabaša mā tarakūkum. Some reflections on a ḥadīṯ*, in: V. Böll (ed.), *Studia Aethiopica in Honour of Siegbert Uhlig*, Wiesbaden 2004, p. 109-114. Cf. I. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*. Erster Teil, *Excursus VI: Traditionen über Türken*, Halle 1888 (Reprint: Hidesheim 1971), p. 270-271.

[11] Walker, *Jahiz of Basra*, p. 689.

daughter of the Christian ruler of Sarir, i.e. the sovereign of the Avars in at present Daghestan. He also entertained close relations with neighbouring nations, which had submitted to him and paid the poll tax.[12] During the rule of Hasan b. 'Ali (regn. 833-35), the governor of Arminiya, Ishaq found himself in Tiflis in his quality of "Lord of Gurdjan (Georgia)" In about 833 he became quasi independent emir of Tiflis.[13] When he refused to hand the taxes over to the governor, the latter marched from Dvin in Armenia against Tiflis, upon which Ishaq bought off free departure. Ishaq also tried to make friends with Muhammad b. Khalid Bukhara-khuda, whom al-Afshin, in the beginning of 839, had entrusted with the governorship of Arminiya. In 842 Khalid b. Yazid, the father of Hasan and former governor of Arminiya led an expedition against Ishaq forcing him into submission. Khalid entered the country by the road of Arzan and the pass of Bitlis, and proceeded to Akhlat near lake Van, where many Armenians joined him. He then turned to Georgia and went to Akhalkalaki in the province of Javakhet'i. Khalid summoned Ishaq to deliver the inauguration gift in person and, when the latter refused, marched against Tiflis. But he fell ill and died when Ishaq was about to submit. Khalid's son, Muhammad, and appointed governor joined forces with the Armenian *kuropalates* Bagrat and put Ishaq to flight. But when in 842 Ishaq's brother Sahak annihilated the troops of the Byzantine emperor Theophilos near Kars, the Caliph al-Wathiq rewarded Ishaq by appointing him again governor of Arminiya.

Ishaq thus appears to have been very powerful at the moment of Sallam's arrival, reason for the Caliph al-Wathiq to be afraid of a possible confrontation with a quasi-independent governor in the Caucasus. In fact Khalid b. Yazid had been appointed governor of Arminiya before him to bring the obstinate local rulers in the Caucasus, especially Ishaq to obedience. Only in 852-53 was Ishaq defeated by the Turkish military commander Bugha and beheaded in Baghdad.[14] The mention of the rebel Ishaq b. Isma'il in Sallam's travel account[15] proves that this account of his journey is historical.

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[12] Laurent–Canard, *L'Arménie*, p. 394-396.
[13] Laurent–Canard, *L'Arménie*, p. 164, 221, 394.
[14] Laurent–Canard, *L'Arménie*, p. 164, 394.
[15] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (132).

*The Master of Sarir**

According to Ibn Khurradadhbih, Ishaq gave Sallam a safe-conduct for his son-in-law the *Master of Sarir*. What Sallam called Sarir indicates in fact an ancient Caucasian province, called Albania by the Greeks and at present part of Daghestan. According to Ibn Hawqal, Sarir was the name of a principality and a region, but the name was not applied to a people or to a single ethnic group. Elsewhere, however, he mentions the Sarir as a group among Armenians, Alans, Avars and other people. The *master* ruled over a people of mountaineers who occupied the valley of the central Qöy-su river in Northern Daghestan. His capital was called Khunzak, situated on a plateau above the left bank of the river and surrounded, according to Ibn Rusta, by a stone wall. The *master* and the inhabitants of the castle were Christians, but the inhabitants of the country-side were heathens.[16] The name Sarir ("throne") is said to derive from the golden throne which belonged to a Khosrew who had installed it for a relative representing him in these regions. Ibn Hawqal[17] does not say who this Khosrew was, but the reference probably is to Yazdagird III, the last Sasanid king. After his defeat by the Muslims (between 635-37), he sent his golden throne and other treasures to the *Master of the Throne*, who was said to be a descendant of the Sasanid king Vahram V (regn. 420-38).

Other titles of the *master* were *khaqan al-jabal* (the khaqan of the mountain), and *wahrazan-shah*,[18] titles granted by king Khosrew Anushirwan. According to al-Mas'udi, the Master of Sarir carried also the title of *filan-shah*, but Ibn Khurradadhbih (perhaps informed by Sallam), al-Baladhuri, the Hudud and Ibn Rusta make a clear distinction between the *filan-shah* and the *master of Sarir*.[19]

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[16] Cf. Minorsky, *History of Sharvān*, p. 155, 167-169; id., *Hudūd*, p. 447.

[17] Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, p. 384; cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 95ff.

[18] *wahrāzān-shāh*, which may refer to the Avars, to whom the people of Sarīr undoubtedly belonged; cf. EI² *s.vv.* Avars (H. Carrère-d'Encausse–A. Bennigsen), Dāghistān (W. Barthold–A. Bennigsen).

[19] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 478; Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 124; al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-buldān*, p. 196; Minorsky, *Hudūd*, p. 404; Wiet, *Les atours précieux*, p. 168; cf. Minorsky, *History of Sharvān*, p. 100, 155 n. 4.

*The king of the Alans**

From Sarir in Northern Daghestan, Sallam apparently travelled in western direction to the Ciscaucasian regions of the Alans,[20] bordering on the Sarir. As partly christianized since the early 7th century[21] the Alans were on friendly terms with both the Georgians and the people of Sarir. According to al-Mas'udi the rulers of the Alans contracted marriage alliances with Sarir. Their capital was Magas. The king of the Alans had an escort of 3000 cavalry and enjoyed a certain political authority over the other rulers. His territory was an uninterrupted string of inhabited villages, so close to each other that the cocks answered each other all over the kingdom.[22] According to Ibn Rusta one travels from the frontier for ten days among rivers and woods before reaching a fortress called Gate of the Alans (*Bab Allan*) in the middle Caucasus. It stands on the top of a mountain below which runs a road (the modern Georgian military road), and it is surrounded by high mountains. Its walls are guarded day and night by thousand men from among its inhabitants.[23]

al-Mas'udi, an almost contemporary of Sallam's time and therefore an important source for the political situation Sallam found during his journey, clearly distinguishes between the Alan capital Magas, which lay in the neighbourhood of the later Vladikavkaz (in modern North Ossetia), and the Gate of the Alans (al-Mas'udi: *Qalat Allan*), situated between the Alans and the Darial Pass: Between the kingdom of the Alans and the Caucasus, he writes, there is a citadel and a bridge over an important river (the Terek). The bridge is dominated by this citadel built on an immovable, impregnable rock, it cannot be conquered nor reached except by agreement with the garrison. On the highest spot of the rock is a spring of sweet water emerging in the centre of the fortress. Since the time of Caliph al-Maslama (d. 738) there was an Arab garrison in the citadel

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[20] At present known as Ossets, cf. EI[2] *s.v.* al-Lān (W. Barthold–V. Minorsky); Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 169; Minorsky, *Hudūd*, p. 444ff.

[21] Cf. V. Kouznetsov–I. Lebedynsky, *Les chrétiens disparus du Caucase. Histoire et archéologie du christianisme au Caucase du Nord et en Crimée*, Paris 1999, p. 25-52.

[22] *Murūǧ*, § 479-482. Magas means fly; on the interpretation of this word, cf. V. Minorsky, *The Alān capital Magas and the Mongol Campaigns*, in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14 (1952), p. 233, with a detailed map of the region (p. 238).

[23] Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 92-93; Minorsky, *History of Sharvān*, p. 169; cf. A. Alemany, *Sources on the Alans. A Critical Compilation*, (Handbook of Oriental Studies. VIII; Central Asia. 5), Leiden 2000, p. 260.

provisioned from the march of Tiflis which was at a five days' distance. The route, al-Mas'udi continues, was occupied by "infidels" (local Caucasian, non-Muslim population), but one single man, placed in that citadel, could block all military movements because of its aerial position, from which it commands the route, the bridge and the valley.[24]

Coming back to Sallam's journey in the Caucasus, it is quite probable indeed that he went from Tiflis in a northern direction; he crossed the Darial Pass and arrived at the Alan's territory. But he must have realized that the narrow gorge of the Darial Pass at the Gate of the Alans was not the barrier of Gog and Magog, for otherwise, having reached his destination, the caliph's envoy would not have continued his journey.

*The Filan-shah**

Minorsky speaks of the mysterious principality of Filan and is of the opinion that this kingdom or its remnants might be sought in southern Daghestan.[25] In fact Filan is a district of the eastern part of the land of the Christian Sarir.[26] In that case Sallam must have seen the famous Bab al-Abwab in Derbent. Yet, this gate is not mentioned in any version of Sallam's travel account. The conclusion must then be that he did not see this gate, and that he did not look for this gate as a possible candidate of the enclosure of Gog and Magog. In consequence the Filan-shah's territory must lie between the region of the king of the Alans and that of the Khazars. Sallam had to direct his way to their kingdom.

3. *The Khazars**

In Sallam's days two rival Turkish khanates had emerged in Western Eurasia: the Khazars and the Bulgars. From their capital Itil (Atil) on the lower Volga, the Khazars dominated the trade routes from the North Caucasian steppe lands to the middle Volga and from

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[24] Cf. Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 166; cf. Alemany, *Sources on the Alans*, p. 264.

[25] *History of Sharvān*, p. 101; id., cf.. id., *Studies in Caucasian History*, London 1953, p. 78 (map). The map in EI[2] *s.v.* al-Ḳabḳ (C.E. Bosworth) seems to follow Minorsky's view.

[26] Cf. al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 479, who refers to Ibn Khurradādhsbih, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 163.

Kiev to Khwarazmiya in modern Turkistan. Their hold over the North Caucasus, however, was disputed by the Arabs from 641 onwards. For over a century a series of wars had raged in the region. The possession of Derbent and of the Khazar towns of Balanjar and Samandar, perhaps the winter and summer quarters of the ruling clan, was the major aim of both parties. Since the *filan-shah* gave Sallam a letter for the king of the Khazars, some sort of contact must have existed between this Caucasian Avar and the Khazar ruler, whose territory extended to the east of the Caspian Sea, where Sallam was about to depart for.[27] By the time the caliph's envoy arrived in Khazaria, peace reigned between the Arabs and the Khazars, whose last major incursion into Arab holdings in the Transcaucasus had taken place in 799.[28]

The ruling house and the Khazars proper had been converted to Judaism but, according to Ibn Rusta,[29] this was only the case with the supreme chief and his ministers. However, the chief minister in

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[27] In the section on the "Sea of the Khazars" (the Caspian Sea), Ibn al-Wardī relates: "al-Samarkandi in his book told a story about men of 'the two-horned one' who sail during a whole year on the sea to find out about the shore. But they see only sea and sky. After an extra month they meet a ship full of men, but they cannot understand them. The sailors swap a man of their group against a woman. 'The two-horned one' marries her to one of his soldiers. The child who is born speaks the two [different] languages [of his parents]. Its father says that he was on sea for two years and two months". Ibn al-Wardī also remarks that many wonderful stories were told by Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnaṭī, the great traveller from Granada, who went as far east as Bukhārā and Nīshāpūr: "Sallam stayed with them [the Khazars] for a while and related that he saw them catching an enormous fish. The ear of the fish became inflated and a very beautiful girl came out of it, white and rosy, with long, black hair, a wonderful figure, long-legged; she was like the full moon. But she beat her face, tore out her hair, and screamed. Around her waist was a cover of flesh like a tight dress, from her navel to her knees wrapped tightly around her like a loincloth. She did not stop [crying etc.] until she died" (Ibn al-Wardī, *Kharīdat al-adjā'ib*, ed. Beirut, p. 151-152; Tornberg, *Margarita mirabilium*, p. 93-94, p. 128f.).

al-Ḳazwīnī relates that the Master of Sarīr made a fishing excursion in honour of Sallām who was there on his way to investigate the condition of the barrier against Gog and Magog (Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-ḳulūb*, cf. Le Strange, *Nuzhat al-ḳulūb*, p. 287]).

It is worth noting that Sallām's name apparently was known to story-tellers as late as the 15th c. But neither the passage on the fish and the "Caspian girl", nor that on the sea monster tinnin, which then follows in Ibn al-Wardi's text, are found in the versions of Sallām's text known to us.

[28] Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 184.

[29] *Kitāb al-a'lāḳ al-nafīsa*, p. 139; Wiet, *Les atours précieux*, p. 156. According to Ibn Ḥawḳal (Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, ii, p. 384) Samandar was governed by a Jewish king who was related to the king of the Khazars; cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 95.

Sallam's days was a Khwarazmian Muslim. Sallam, perhaps a Khazar Jew, was well received by the *tarkhan*, as he does not fail to note in his travel account. He stayed at the "tarkhan's house" The tarkhan, probably of pre-Turkic Altaic origin,[30] was a title rather than a proper name, used for subaltern or local emirs in the Khazar administration. Sallam does not mention the name of the tarkhan, which precede the title as in Hazar tarkhan or Ras tarkhan. Since the khaqan[31] held the highest position in the Khazar community, Sallam was not received by him but by his subordinate, the tarkhan, probably in Itil. Formerly the Khazar capital was the above mentioned Samandar[32] identified with present-day Kizlyar (Kizlar) on the river Terek, but Minorsky locates it at or near modern Turqu (Tarkhu) in the north-eastern Caucasus, not far from present-day Makhach-kala.[33] Around 723 however, under Arab pressure, the capital was moved to Itil in the Volga delta.[34] The new capital lay at a seven days' distance from Samandar. Next to Itil, another important town of the Khazars were Balanjar, west of the Surab river at the ruins of Endere near modern Andreyeva.[35]

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[30] Bosworth–Clauson, *al-Xwârazmî on the Peoples of Central Asia*, p. 11-12; Minorsky, *Hudūd*, p. 161, 451; G. Clauson, *An etymological dictionary of pre-thirteenth Turkish*, Oxford 1972, p. 539-540.

[31] Abu 'l-Fida writes (Reinaud–Guyard, *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, p. 304) that the royal dignity of the ḳaghan was reserved for certain families, who had neither authority nor power. When someone was elected to carry that title, he was installed independent from his former social status. However, only persons who professed Judaism were raised to the dignity of ḳaghan. The throne and the golden pavilion of the Khazars were reserved for the ḳaghan. His tents were placed above those of the tarkhan, and in the towns his residence dominated that of the latter. On the other hand, the ḳaghan received his dignity from the tarkhan.

al-Mas'ūdī (*Murūdj*, § 453) relates that the ḳaghan was confined to the interior apartments of his palace. He was not permitted to mount a horse or to show himself to the courtiers or the people. Living amidst his harem, he did not reign nor did he take part in any state affair. Nevertheless, the authority of the ruling ṭarkhān would be null and void if the ḳaghan were not with him in the capital and in his palace. If any disaster was threatening, and the people and notables remarked that the ḳaghan was of no use, they requested the ṭarkhān to kill him or deliver him to them so that they could kill him. This happened sometimes, but the ṭarkhān occasionally protected the ḳaghan.

[32] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 447. In his *Kitāb al-tanbīh* however, al-Mas'ūdī states that the Khazar capital at one time was Balandjar.

[33] *History of Sharvān*, p. 106 n. 3; cf. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, p. 234-237.

[34] Golden, *Khazar Studies*, p. 224-229.

[35] Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 49 n. 40; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, p. 221-224.

The Khazars were allies of the Byzantines and remained until the 10th century the cornerstone of the Byzantine defence network against the nomads of the Eurasian steppes. Islam however was prominent in the towns of the Khazar empire. Orthodox Christianity dominated in the regions which were under Byzantine influence. According to al-Mas'udi[36] the Muslims formed the royal army and were the bodyguards of the tarkhan. They were recruited from the Iranian As, nomads who lived in Khwarazm and were subject to the Khazars. They established themselves in the Khazar territory shortly after Islam had been introduced there. When settling in the Khazar empire, they stipulated that they should be free to profess their religion, to have mosques, public call for prayer, and that the minister of the tarkhan always be taken from among them. Whenever the tarkhan was waging war against Muslims, the Muslim soldiers in his army were exempted from fighting against their co-religionists.

Sallam might have been aware that the Khazars according to Christian and Muslim tradition occasionally were identified with Gog and Magog.[37] He may have met as well Uygurs, from whom the Khazars probably originated.[38] And he may have heard them mentioning a barrier or gate lying in the regions of their Central Asiatic relatives. He thus left Itil to continue his journey further eastwards. Ibn Rusta indeed, notwithstanding his negative judgement of Sallam's account,[39] writes a commentary on Sallam's journey beyond Itil (in opposite direction):

> Between the Pechenegs and the Khazars there is a route of ten days over steppes and through forests; there are no practicable and orderly roads, but the route of the traveller leads through forests and thickets.[40]

4. *The Bashkirts**

Although Ibn Khurradadhbih names only Tiflis and Igu as landmarks for Sallam's outward journey and no Turkish tribe at all, there

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[36] *Murūdj*, § 450.

[37] Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, p. 440; al-Muḳaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taḳāsīm*, p. 49; cf. Chapter 2, p. ■■ n. 91.

[38] Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 34ff.

[39] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■.

[40] *Kitāb al-a'lāḳ al-nafīsa*, p. 139, Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 51.

is no reason not to accept al-Idrisi's remark that our traveller, on leaving Itil, travelled along the borders of the Bashkirts,[41] probably remaining north of the Aral Sea (Ar. Bahr Khwarizm). The Turkish Bashkirts lived in the southern Ural, their territory perhaps stretching farther south than that of present-day Bashkiria. In order to distinguish them from the Magyars, Arab geographers indicate their territory as "inner Bashkirts" They were also considered as a colony of Khazars who had settled between the latter and the Kimäk.[42] On the other hand, the nearly contemporary writer of Sallam's time, al-Masʿudi,[43] is of the opinion that the Bashkirts lived next to the Pechenegs, whose king led a nomadic life and lived in peace with the ruler of the Khazars. It would thus seem that Sallam travelled in the regions of the Pechenegs as well, led by the tarkhan's guides.

5. *The Turks in Central Asia: Oghuz–Kimäks–Kipchaks–Türkesh*

After leaving the territory of the Bashkirts and the Pechenegs, Sallam found himself in the lands of the Ghuzz or Oghuz. In the 10th century, and probably already in Sallam's days,[44] they occupied a territory roughly bounded by the Aral Sea and the lower course of the Syr Darya, the river Ural, the lower Volga, the Caspian Sea, and the upper course of the Irtysh. Their neighbours to the north were the Kimäks, to the east the Qarluqs, to the west the Pechenegs and the Khazars. To the south and along the Syr Darya, they bordered on the Muslim world. On the Syr Darya boundaries were small fortified market-towns like Yanikant and Jand (near modern Perovsk). Part of the Oghuz embraced Islam in the first half of the 10th century.[45] It may well be that among the Muslims whom Sallam met in

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[41] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ n. ■■ 17.

[42] al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 225, 227; Ibn Ḥawḳal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ* (Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, ii, p. 389); cf. Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 69; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 319 n. 3; Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 65 n. 77, 127.

[43] *Murūdj*, § 493.

[44] EI[2] *s.v.* Ghuzz, I: In Muslim East (Cl. Cahen); cf. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 431.

[45] Mass conversions took place in the late 10th c., cf. Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 243 n. 11, 12.

the "fortified places", there were Muslim merchants from abroad as well as some local converts.[46]

The Kimäks, a branch of the Kipchaks,[47] lived in western Siberia on the lower course of the Irtysh and perhaps also around lake Balkhash. They formed an important tribal confederation.[48] According to al-Idrisi, probably on the authority of al-Jayhani, part of the land of the Kipchaks and of the Türkesh, including Alexander's barrier was located in the ninth section of the sixth clime. Bordering thus on Gog and Magog's land the country of the Kipchaks was, like that of the Türkesh, "a cold region with much rain and snow".[49]

The Türkesh (Türgesh)[50] are first mentioned in the 6th century. They may possibly be identified with the Az people who, in the 8th century, rebelled against the Eastern Turks near lake Kara-köl.[51] In the beginning of the governorship of Asad al-Qasri in Khurasan (724-27), Türkesh forces increased their pressure against the Arabs

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[46] According to a tablet kept in the Great Mosque in Changan (Xian) in 787, published by M. Broomhall, *Islam in China: a neglected problem*, London 1910 (Reprint: 1987), p. 83ff.: "the holy teaching [of the Prophet Muḥammad] was not known to China until the reign of Kai-Huang of the Sui dynasty" (regn. 581-601). This, of course, is an evident anachronism for it implies that Islam would have been introduced in China even before Muḥammad began his teaching around 610. The mosque is said to have been constructed in 742 under emperor Tien-Pao. Notwithstanding the evident anachronism in this inscription, some monumental texts may reflect as yet unclear historical facts. According to the Tang Records (Broomhall, *op. cit.*, p. 28) there were four thousand families of foreigners in Changan in 787. At various times they had come from Urumchi, Anxi and Kashgar, some as travellers, others in the suites of princes, still others as deputies. We may see here a confirmation of Sallām's note about the presence of Muslims near Igu (cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3). For the spurious inscription cf. also Ch. Schefer, *Notices sur les relations des peuples musulmans avec les Chinois*, in: *Centenaire de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes*, Paris 1895, p. 1-43.

[47] EI² *s.v.* Ḳıpčaḳ (G. Hazai).

[48] Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 101, 315-317; cf. Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 329 (Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 388).

[49] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtaḳ*, p. 924, Jaubert, *Géographie*, p. 410; cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (14).

It is worthwhile to note that in the Buttaman mountains, which separate Khuttal from the upper Zarafshan river valley, two fierce and predatory Turkish groups were dwelling, the Kumīdjīs and the Kandjīna, both probably remnants of Hephthalite peoples (cf. Bosworth–Clauson, *al-Xwārazmī on the Peoples of Central Asia*, p. 8-9). Were they at some point considered as personifications of Gog and Magog?

[50] EI² *s.v.* Turks, i, 2 ("The tribal history of the Central Asian Turks") (P.B. Golden).

[51] EI² *s.v.* Ḳara-köl (Ḳarakul) (C.E. Bosworth); V. Thomsen, *Alttürkische Inschriften aus der Mongolei*, in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 78 (1924), p. 154.

in Transoxania. In 729 al-Harith b. Surayj, the well known rebel from Khurasan,[52] participated in the battle against the forces of the khaqan at Paykand in Transoxania, but in 734 he rebelled against Asad, the governor of Khurasan, aided by the native forces of Juzjan, the region between the Murghab and Amu Darya rivers, who were governed by a khaqan. al-Harith laid siege to Tirmidh but had to retreat to Tokharistan. He then joined the khaqan of the Türkesh, but the latter was murdered in 737 after he had been defeated by Asad near Shibergan, the capital of Juzjan. The Türkesh forces collapsed, and Asad then led an expedition into Khuttal,[53] a region on the right bank of the upper Oxus. Against Asad's attack the local rulers in Khuttal called in the support of Sulu, the powerful khaqan of the Türkesh, who drove Asad back to Balkh. The joined forces of the Türkesh crossed the Oxus and made a raid in Khurasan, but they were defeated. The chief encampment of the Türkesh khaqan was in Suyab (modern Ak-Beshim) in the Yeti-su region, to the north of the Chu river valley on the border of modern Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The encampment was sacked by an incoming Chinese army in 748 and occupied in 766 by the Qarluqs when they migrated south- and westwards after the fall of the Western Turkish empire. The disintegration of Türkesh power in the Western Turkistan steppes was followed by the ascendancy of the Uygurs (Toghuz-ghuz).

In the context of Sallam's journey in Central Asia, it may be of interest to note that the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi (regn. 776-85) received homage of Central Asian rulers, such as the *afshin* of Usrushana, the prince of Farghana, the *ikhshid* of Sogdia, the *yabghu* of the Qarluqs and the *khaqan* of the Toghuzghuz. For lack of information it cannot be decided whether these homages had anything to do with Sallam's mission, nor whether they "cannot have meant much in practice", as Bosworth remarks.[54]

Of much greater consequence, and probably bearing directly on Sallam's mission, was the practice of taking Turkish troops into the caliph's guard and army. In 750 the 'Abbasids had owed their military success against the Umayyads to the Iranians from Khurasan who, until the beginning of the 9th century, were to remain the

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[52] Cf. EI² *s.v.* Ḥārith b. Suraydj (M.J. Kister).
[53] EI² *s.v.* Khuttalān (C.E. Bosworth); cf. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 301.
[54] EI² *s.v.* Mā warā' al-nahr (C.E. Bosworth).

backbone of the *régime*. But when Caliph al-Ma'mun granted autonomy to the family of the Tahirids, governors of Khurasan, the latter began to keep a large part of the Khurasani recruitment for themselves. Moreover, the Tahirids were responsible for keeping order in the capital as well. To check this cumulation of power, al-Wathiq's father, Caliph al-Mu'tasim (regn. 833-42), began to replace the Khurasanis by Turks, at first from Farghana, later also from farther away regions. He had 3000 Turkish slaves bought at Samarkand, who were to be the nucleus of his guard and new army. These slave soldiers[55] are said to have been the cause of the transfer of the capital from Baghdad to Samarra in 836. Sallam must have witnessed this dramatic event. The advice of the Turkish commander Ashnas to entrust the Khazar Sallam with the mission, may be seen as another sign of the influence of the Turkish commanders over state affairs.[56]

6. *The Uygur Empire*

The Uygur empire was founded by Kutlugh Bilga Kül (744-47). His rule extended from present-day Manchuria to the Altai Mountains and the region of the Qarluqs in the Tianshan Mountains.[57] It was consolidated by his son Moyencho, who built the Uygur residence Ordubalik (Mongol. Karabalghasun) in the upper Orkhon-Selenga in north-central Mongolia.[58] The empire reached its apex under the khaqan Muyu, who in 762 converted to Manichaeism and imposed the new faith upon his people, thus increasing the influence of Manichaean Sogdians on Uygur culture. The Uygur invasion of China in 779, instigated by the Sogdians, led to great unrest. The Uygur khaqans received investiture from the Chinese emperors, but on the other

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[55] EI² *s.vv.* Djaysh (Cl. Cahen), Ghulām I (D. Sourdel).

[56] Between 716 and 758, twenty embassies from the Arabs are mentioned in Chinese sources. The record stops at 758, but according to Gibb, *Chinese records*, p. 620f., such embassies undoubtedly continued for many years. One of the objectives may have been an alliance or understanding of both Arabs, in particular the governors of Khūrāsān, and the Chinese against the common enemy, the Western Turks.

[57] Hamilton, *Les Ouïghours*, p. 4; for a list of the Uygur khaqans, see ibid., p. 139-144.

[58] Cf. G.J. Ramstedt, *Zwei uigurische Runneninschriften in der Nord-Mongolei*, in: *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* 30,3 (1913), p. 30: "An der Vereinigungsstelle des Orkhon und Balıklıg ('des fischreichen Flusses') ließ ich dann den Reichshof aufführen und das Reichshaus (aufbauen)".

hand they were the sometimes quite arrogant protectors of the Tang emperors. In 790 Uygur power declined and the Tibetans conquered Bishbalik (Chin. Peiting). Under the khaqan Boquq (d. 808) and Paoyi (d. 821) Uygur power was re-established[59] for a while and the influence over the towns Bishbalik, Qocho, Kucha and Karashahr. Around 821 the Uygur court was visited by the Muslim traveller Tamim b. Bahr,[60] who reached Ordubalik via lake Issyk-köl and the Dzungarian Basin, all controlled by the Uygurs. But in 840 the Uygur empire began to disintegrate under the pressure of the Kirgiz. After twenty years of warfare, the Kirgiz of the Yenisei region attacked the empire, killed the khaqan and took his capital Ordubalik. Harassed relentlessly by the Kirgiz and the Chinese, the surviving tribes roamed for several years until their complete dispersion. Some tribes led their followers to the Chinese border. They chose Wuhi tegin (841-46) as their leader;[61] he was thus in power when Sallam arrived. Other groups sought refuge in Western Central Asia in Qarluq territory.[62] Uygur tribes fled southwards to the Tibetans in the Tarim Basin and settled in the area around Bishbalik, Kucha, Karashahr and Qocho. They founded the kingdom of Qocho. It would seem that the locals, who according to Sallam's travel account told him about "the ruined towns"[63] were Uygurs who referred to previous Kirgiz behaviour.

7. *Syrian Christians in Central Asia and West China*

Syrian Christians are known to have spread the Christian faith in Central Asia and West China as early as the 6th century, probably even earlier. Departing from Merv, which already in 370 had a bishop in its own,[64] the "Nestorian" missionaries and merchants of the Syro-oriental church (Church of the East) followed the great trade routes. They built sanctuaries in various places along the north-

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[59] Cf. F. Thierry, *Les monnaies de Boquq, qaghan des Ouïghours* (795-808), in: *Turcica* 30 (1998), p. 263-278.

[60] Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, i, p. 480; Minorsky, *Tamīm b. Baḥr*, p. 283.

[61] For the ancien Turkish title tegin/tigin/takin, meaning "prince", cf. Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 367.

[62] Cf. Hamilton, *Les Ouïghours*, p. 141f.; Pritsak, O., *Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden*, in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 101 (1951), p. 279ff., and his historical map of Central Asia, 7th-12th c., ibid., p. 300.

[63] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3).

[64] Dauvillier, *Les provinces chaldéennes*, p. 280f.; J.-M. Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus Novus*, Beirut 1993, p. 110.

ern branch of the Silk Road. Christians lived in Aqsu, Turfan and Hami. Qocho, the Manichaean capital of the Uygurs, is distinguished by its foremost Manichaean and Buddhist mural paintings from the 9th and 10th centuries. In 1904 the German expedition of Albert von Le Coq found here a six foot-high fresco, almost certainly a picture of Mani, the founder of the religion. Some paintings show Syriac influences.[65] Other communities with mostly Christianized Turks settled along the southern Silk Road at Yarkand, Khotan and particularly in Kashgar. The later was since the 8th century the residence of a bishop and it was ruled by a Christian sovereign.[66] Syriac was also the language of the Christian mission in China. In the Chinese capital Changan (modern Xian) was erected in 781 the famous stele of Singanfou.[67] Its Chinese-Syriac inscription gives information about the mission of Alopen (Laban) and the first Christian communities in China. Alopen arrived with Syriac and Sogdian monks in 635, bringing in Syriac images, liturgy and manuscripts and translating the Bible and other religious texts into Chinese. Some years later the Tang emperor ensured the free propaganda of the "luminous religion" in his empire and the building of monasteries and churches.

Passing via the Northern Silk Road, Syrian christians reached the oasis of Turfan in the late 6th century.[68] Christian communities were quite developed in the time of the East Syrian patriarch Timothy. During his long rule in Baghdad (780-823) this great scholar and politician strongly supported the Asian mission, in particular with the aim to convert Turkish tribes, some of whom having accepted the Christian faith in the 6th century. In 782 Timothy ordained a new bishop for the khaqan of the Türkesh. Their bishop had no fixed residence but followed the semi sedentary tribes. The Sogdians

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[65] Von Le Coq, *Auf Hellas Spuren*, p. 69ff., and pictures nos. 17-22; Von Gabain, *Das Uigurische Königreich*, p. 17; M. Bussagli, *La peinture de l'Asie centrale*, Genève 1963, p. 112-113.

[66] Cf. Dauvillier, *Les provinces chaldéennes*, p. 286-289; Klein, *Das Nestorianische Christentum*, p. 54f., 206. The Christian communities still existed when Marco Polo passed centuries later by Yarkand. For the West Syrian communities at the Southern Road and in China cf. J. Dauvillier, *L'expansion de l'église syrienne en Asie Centrale et en Extrême-Orient*, in: *Bulletin de l'Université de l'Académie de Toulouse* 75 (1950), p. 82f. (Reprint: id., *Histoire et institutions des Eglises orientales au Moyen Age*, London 1983).

[67] Cf. P. Pelliot, *L'inscription nestorienne de Si-ngan-fou*, Kyoto–Paris 1996.

[68] W. Hage, *The Christian Community in the Oasis of Turfan*, in: id., *Syriac Christianity in the East*, (Moran 'Etho. 1), Kottayam 1988, p. 42-54.

who were resident in villages along the Silk Road came under the rule of the Syriac bishop of Samarkand who was raised to the rank of a metropolitan (around 853) some years after Sallam had arrived in Samarkand.[69] The presence of Christians along the Silk Road is attested by numerous manuscripts in Syriac and Sogdian language between the 9th to 14th centuries. A spectacular found was unearthed during the Second and Third German Turfan expeditions (1904-07) in the former Syro-oriental monastery of Bulayiq, some ten kilometres north of Turfan, indeed a centre of Christian missionary activity in Sallam's time. A library of hundreds of documents was discovered. Written in Syriac script in Sogdian, Turkish, Syriac as well as in several other languages, these texts cover a wide range of Eastern Christian literature. The manuscripts contain in particular texts on spirituality and religious life necessary for a monastic community as in Bulayiq. Of special interest is the high quantity of hagiographical and apocryphal texts translated from Syriac into Sogdian.[70] Among the findings is a fragment of the *Sleepers of Ephesus*,[71] a legend quite popular in Syriac christianity. It is an important testimony of Syriac tradition in Central Asia and subsequently the transmission of the theme of Alexander's barrier far to the east. Another fascinating reference is the mosque in Toyok, a village in the Turfan oasis at 20 km east from Karakhoja near the ancient site of Qocho. Built at the place of a non-Muslim temple, the mosque is dedicated to the *Sleepers of Ephesus*. The place is locally known as Apsus (Ephesus),[72] the town of "Dakyanus" (emperor Decius in whose days happened the story). It is not surprising that Muslims in Toyok saw in the rocky caves at Qocho the legendary *Cave of the Sleepers*. Their imagination was probably inspired by Syriac tradition. It should again be emphasized here

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[69] Cf. Dauvillier, *Les provinces chaldéennes*, p. 282-285.

[70] A good overview on the Syriac and Sogdian texts find in Bulayiq gives Sims-Williams, *Turfan and Tunhuang Manuscripts*, p. 43-61 and M. Maroth, *Die syrischen Handschriften in der Turfan-Sammlung*, in: H. Klengel–W. Sundermann (ed.), *Ägypten, Vorderasien, Turfan* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients. 23), Berlin 1991, p. 126-128. For the Sogdian and Syriac narratives on Bar Shabba, found in Bulayiq, cf. S.P. *Brock, Bar Shabba/Mar Shabbay, First Bishop of Merv*, in: M. Tamcke et al. (ed.), *Syrisches Christentum weltweit*, (Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte), Münster 1995, p. 190-201.

[71] Sims-Williams (ed./transl.), *The Christian Sogdian Manuscript C2*, (Berliner Turfantexte. 12), Berlin 1985, p. 154-156; cf. id., *Turfan and Tunhuang Manuscripts*, p. 51-53.

[72] Von Le Coq, *Auf Hellas Spuren*, p. 41, 80f. and photo; Kandler, *Siebenschläfer*, p. 88-89.

that the amalgam of the three main subjects of the Koranic Sura XVIII—which derives its name from the "Cave" (Ar. *al-kahf*)—namely the *Seven Sleepers*, Gog and Magog and Alexander's barrier, are directly related to Syriac Christian tradition. The presence of the lore of the Sleepers of Ephesus at Toyok may go back to Christian inhabitants of Syriac origin in Qocho.

Among the texts discovered in the library of Bulayiq, there is another text interesting in this regard. It is a homily of the Syrian poet Jacob of Sarug. He, who is said to have composed the Syriac *Alexander Poem*[73] so influential for the diffusion of the motif of Alexander's barrier in Christian and Muslim circles, is also known as the author of a sermon on the *Seven Sleepers*.[74] One may surmise that Syrian Christians brought his *Alexander Poem* or the *Alexander Legend* together with the text of the *Sleepers of Ephesus* to Turfan.[75] When Islam made its entry there, the Koranic Sura "Cave" fell, so to speak, on fertile ground. It then is not surprising that a cave in the Turfan oasis was dedicated to the Sleepers, an early predecessor of the present-day mosque.

Eight kilometres to the south-east from Dunhuang are the famous Mogao Caves (Caves of the Thousand Buddhas) carved into the precipitous conglomerate cliffs overlooking from the west the mouth of a barren valley. The site is most prominent for its treasure of Buddhist manuscripts, sculptures and paintings. Several Christian texts in Chinese from the 9th to 10th centuries and crosses were also found.[76]

The expansion of the East Syrian Church in Transoxania and Turkistan was thus in its heyday when Sallam travelled on the north-

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[73] Cf. Chapter 2, p. ■■.

[74] A. Vööbus, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg*, 1: *Sammlungen: Die Handschriften*, (CSCO. 344; Subsidia. 39), Louvain 1973, p. 72 n. 14; id., *op.cit.*, 2: *Sammlungen: Der Bestand*, (CSCO. 345; Subsidia. 40), Louvain 1973, *s.v.* index.

[75] For a Mongolian fragment of the Alexander tradition in Turfan, which probably goes back to an old Turkish Uygur text, cf. D. Cerensodnom–M. Taube, *Die Mongolica der Berliner Turfansammlung*, (Berliner Turfantexte. 16), Berlin 1993, p. 51-52 ("Epos- und Spruchdichtung: Die Alexander Sage").

Another attestation of the Syriac Alexander tradition is the assertion that Alexander had founded the towns of Khumdan (Changan) and Taugast (Luoyang), cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 226.

[76] For a 13th c. bilingual Syriac-Uygur fragment of the Syriac evening office, cf. D. Qing, *Bericht über ein neudentdecktes syrisches Dokument aus Dunhuang / China*, in: *Oriens Christianus* 85 (2001), p. 84-93.

ern branch of the Silk Road, passing many of the Christian settlements. All these data lead almost inevitably to the conclusion that it was virtually impossible for Sallam, during his long journey in Central Asia and West China, not to come in contact with Syrian Christian lore, so full of stories about Gog and Magog and the barrier. While in search for the wall, he must have considered the Syriac traditions as a god-speed for his enterprise. His idea of the barrier may well be based on information received from Christians, which would explain its Syriac-inspired character. And so a popular story known perhaps to Sallam already in Samarra through Mesopotamian Christians, was again met with by him in Central Asia in Christian and perhaps early Muslim circles while on his outward journey.

8. *Islam in East Turkistan*

When Sallam arrived in the Urumchi and Turfan areas, Islam had only just been in Farghana, far out to the West, at about 841. In that case the islamization of the Urumchi and Turfan regions was of an even later date. Yet, Muslim merchants may well have settled in these towns before. Sallam reports that he found Arabic and Persian-speaking Muslims in the region then inhabited by the Adhkash Turks.[77] Since they had mosques and madrasas, they may have formed a (partly temporary) community, whose members were coming and going in view of their mercantile business. al-Idrisi's passage on the way Islam had come to these people seems to reflect a cherished local tradition.[78] These Muslims may have experienced the sense of relief which Ibn Battuta ascribes, some five hundred years later, to the merchants established in Chinese Canton: "As these merchants live in infidel country they are delighted when a Muslim arrives among them".[79] Since Sallam presented himself as an envoy of the caliph, the merchants must have seen him as a Muslim.

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[77] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3); cf. Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, *Dīwān-i lughāt al-Turk*, ed. by Kilisili Mu'allim Rif'at Bilge, Istanbul 1915-17, i, p. 89; Ibn al-Wardī, *Kharīdat al-adjā'ib*, p. 56.

[78] Cf. Chapter 5 p. ■■

[79] Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta*, iv, p. 895.

9. *The Tarim Basin*

Another region which plays an important role in Sallam's journey is the Tarim Basin in the modern Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region of China (formerly also known as Eastern Turkistan). The basin is named after the river Tarim. It is an elevated ellipsoid depression (1280 km from east to west, 640 km from north to south), bordered by massive mountain complexes, the Kunlun, Altyn and Nan Shan on the south, the Pamir on the west, and the Tianshan on the north. The basin consists of three or more distinct segments: the Taklamakan desert as its core,[80] a string of mostly pied-mont oases surrounding this desert, and lake Lop Nor, the eastern limit of the basin; the smaller but deep Turfan depression on the north-east is included by some in the Tarim Basin. In the 9th century important cities of the Tarim Basin were Kashgar in the west, Aqsu and Kucha in the north, Turfan and Dunhuang in the east, and Khotan in the south.

The Tarim Basin was conquered by the Chinese at the beginning of the Tang period (641-907), but people from India had already settled in its southern and western parts in a much earlier period. With the end of the first century Buddhism was brought in by Indian missionaries and merchants travelling along the southern Silk Route. Dunhuang, on the frontier between China and the West, was for many centuries a great centre of Buddhist pilgrimage. In Khotan Buddhism continued to flourish until its "lion kings" finally were conquered by the Muslim Turkish Qarakhanids (regn. 902-1211). Buddhism was also professed by the Indo-European Tokharians who were living in Turfan, Karashahr and Kucha. Other settlers of the Basin were the Saka who probably had migrated from north-west China to what is now Afghanistan in the third century B.C., and from there to southern East Turkistan.[81] A strong presence of East Syrian Christians is attested as well, as we have seen above. Another important group of people in the Tarim Basin were the Indo-European Sogdians among whom were Christians, too. They did not create a state of their own, but they played an important role in administra-

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[80] A popular etymology of Taklamakan is: "you go in, but you don't come out" (cf. Dante's "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate", Inferno III:9). The word is either a compound of Uygur ta(r)klı "abandoned", or taklı "grape" and Persian makan "place", cf. Mallory–Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, p. 169.

[81] Von Gabain, *Das uigurische Königreich*, p. 14.

tion, Silk Road trade and religious mission between East and West.[82] Christian and Manichean documents written in Sogdian language were found in Dunhuang as well as in Western Turkistan. Another important religion in Eastern Turkistan and Western China, at the time of Sallam, was Manichaeism,[83] above all adopted by Sogdians and the Uygurs, who settled in Turfan after 840.

10. *The battle for supremacy: Tibetans, Chinese, Arabs, Turks*

The Tarim Basin, where the Chinese, between 640 and 791, held four military basis—Suyab (later replaced by Karashahr) and Kucha on the northern Silk Road, Khotan on the southern Road and Kashgar at the intersection of both routes—, was occupied by the Tibetans from 670 to 692 and again between 790 and 866. They were the most important political and military foreign element in the Tarim Basin during the 7th-9th centuries. In 670 the Tibetans took the four garrisons over from the Chinese being their main military and administrative bases to control the states of the Western countries. The Tibetans thus dominated the main East-West trade on the Silk Road, even if the control most probably was left in the hands of local dynasts. In 692 the roles were reversed in that the Chinese again took control of the Tarim Basin.

Between 710 and 712 the Eastern Turks invaded the territory of the Türkesh, who were living near the Ili river which flows through "the land of the seven rivers", known as Yeti-su or Semiryechye, and empties itself in lake Balkhash. It was in their lands that, according to al-Idrisi and al-Biruni, the barrier of 'the two-horned one' was to be found.[84] Their central authority collapsed after their khaqan had been executed by the Eastern Turks. In 724 the Chinese, having captured the important town Suyab, re-established their power in the heart of Western Turkic territory. However, the Western Turks were reorganized and unified by the Türkesh leader Sulu, known to the Arabs as Abu Muzahim ("Father of Competition"), who declared himself khaqan. In 717 he led an army of Türkesh, Tibetans and

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[82] Cf. V. Hansen, *The Impact of th Silk Road Trade on a Local Community: The Turfan Oasis, 500-800*, in: E. de la Vaissière–E. Trombert, *Les sogdiens en Chine*, Paris 2005, p. 284, 290-294.

[83] Cf. S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia & China*, (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies. 45), Leiden 1998, p. 87-97 (for Qocho).

[84] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■ (14).

Arabs against Aqsu and Üch-Turfan, both on the northern edge of the Tarim Basin, but he was driven off by a Chinese army. In 719 the Türkesh took Suyab from the Chinese and posed as protectors of Khurasan against the Arabs, who in 720 made an alliance with the Chinese against the Türkesh. But in 724 the Türkesh defeated the Arabs and were now predominant in Transoxania.[85] Was it this success of the Türkesh against the Arabs that made al-Idrisi locate the barrier of 'the two-horned one' in their lands, thus suggesting that they, or the Turks in general, were to be identified with Gog and Magog?[86]

A Türkesh-Tibetan alliance, solidified by the campaign and siege of Kucha in 727, was followed by a peace accord of the two parties with the Chinese.[87] However, notwithstanding the marriage of a Chinese princess to the Türkesh khaqan, the Chinese were suspicious of the Türkesh-Tibetan cooperation and concluded an informal alliance with the Arabs against them. In 736 the Türkesh mounted a major attack against Bishbalik and Aqsu, but they were defeated and surrendered to the Chinese. When the governor of Khuttal on the upper Oxus asked Sulu for help, the Türkesh khaqan covered the distance between Suyab and Khuttal, estimated at 450 km, in seventeen days (i.e. with a speed probably much higher than 25 km per day).[88] But the murder of Sulu in Suyab in 738 was "the deathblow to Türkesh unity and, ultimately, to the Türkesh nation".[89] About 745 the Qarluqs migrated to what then was the fading Western Turk/Türkesh khaqanate in Yeti Su.[90]

Around 750 the Chinese and the Arabs were the now dominant colonial powers in Central Asia, while the fragmented Türkesh were under heavy Chinese political influence. When the rulers of Farghana and Tashkent opened hostilities against each other, the Türkesh

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[85] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 80, 88, 90, 97; cf. Gibb, *Arab conquests*, p. 65-66.

[86] According to Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 204, the king of Tibet submitted to 'the two-horned one', and both went to the king of China, who also submitted. 'The two-horned one' then built a stone tower and travelled to the north in order to subjugate Shūl (a region and city in China or Mongolia. It may also be the Chinese name for Kāshghar at the Tarim Basin).

[87] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 103-107.

[88] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 116 n. 49. Cf. the calculation of the average speed of Sallām's travelling below.

[89] Ibid., p. 119

[90] Cf. EI² *s.vv.* Turks I 2 (P.B. Golden) and Yeti Su (C.E. Bosworth).

revolted against the Chinese by siding with the ruler of Tashkent. The Chinese took Tashkent but were defeated by the Arabs in the famous battle of Talas (751) because the Qarluqs, who had become another dominant power in the region, switched sides. The Arabs gained military dominance in Central Asia and one of the most advantageous traderoutes in the world which linked China with the West.[91] Notwithstanding this defeat, China seemed nearly invincible, but "all under heaven" was shaken when the Turko-Sogdian governor An Lushan rebelled and crushed a Tang army. A most merciless repression of the Tibetans by the Chinese emperor Xuanzong (712-56) provoked hostilities in 763 that would last until the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 822. In the meantime, China was cut off from the west by both the Tibetans and the no less hostile Uygurs, who around 750 had begun to establish their rule in the region around the Dzungarian Basin and lake Issyk-köl.

Meanwhile, the Tibetans were most successful in their war with China. After taking the Tang capital Changan, they conquered, between 764 and 781, Liangzhou, Ganzhou, Suzhou and Guazhou.[92] They also besieged Dunhuang[93] and Igu. Peace between Tibet and China was brought by the treaty of 783, which practically ended further Tibetan inroads into Central Asia.[94] In 786, however, the Tibetans threatened the Chinese capital again. Though reluctantly, the Chinese emperor made an alliance with the Uygurs against the Tibetans. But even the war between the 'Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the Tibetans did not save the so-called four Chinese garrisons mentioned above. Anxi (modern Anhsi), existing since 691, was also lost to the Tibetans. Only Khotan remained nominally governed by a Chinese resident and a local ruler.

In 822 a Sino-Tibetan treaty was signed, which was to last for twenty years i.e. until about the time Sallam arrived in the region. By that time the Tibetans still occupied Igu and Lop Nor, thus

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[91] Cf. H.S.H. Behbehani, *Arab-Chinese Military Encounters: Two Case Studies 715-751* A.D., in: *Aram* 1,1 (1989), p. 77ff.

[92] Cf. T. Moriyasu, *Qui des Ouïgours ou des Tibétains ont gagné en 789-792 à Beš-Baliq ?*, in: *Journal Asiatique* 269 (1981), p. 193-205, and map on p. 194.

[93] On the Tibetan presence in Dunhuang, cf. G. Uray, *Notes on a Tibetan Military Document from Tunhuang*, in: *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 12 (1961), p. 223-230.

[94] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 179.

threatening to cut off for the Uygurs the only direct route to China, and keeping them out of the southern Tarim Basin.[95]

As said above, the situation on the northern side of the Tiangshan had changed dramatically in 840 when the Uygur khaqans submitted to the Kirgiz. The Uygurs then based in Mongolia were harassing, according to Chinese sources, the inhabitants of Bishbalik, the neighbouring Qarluqs and the so-called white-clothed Turks, perhaps members of a Muslim sect.[96] They also extorted exorbitant fees from merchants and Chinese officials for the permission to pass through Uygur controlled lands on journeys between China and the west.[97] Traders and travellers profited from an agreement between the Qarluqs, the Tibetans and the Arabs. On their journeys between Tibet and the Arab caliphate, they passed through the lands of the Qarluqs, who were now the rulers of the Western Türks in Dzungaria and controlled the Dzungarian Gate. The ruling class was partly Christian and belonged to the Syriac Church of the East. In Qarluq territory traders and travellers were escorted by Kirgiz, who protected them from Uygur banditry. The trade route described in Chinese sources must have run from northern or north-eastern Tibet to the eastern edge of Dzungaria, then along the northern slopes of the Tianshan to the Arab dominions in the west. Setting out from Mongolia to capture the strategic town of Liangzhou, the Uygurs must have reached it by marching across the desert along the Etsinköl.[98] Had they attacked from the Tianshan region, they would have had to slip past the Tibetan forts in Gansu, which extended as far as Igu.[99] This merchants' route, may also have been taken by Sallam when he travelled from Igu to Yumenguan.[100]

When the Uygurs were defeated in Bishbalik by the Tibetans in 790, the Uygur general, the *elugasi*, came to an understanding with the new khaqan in Ordubalik, the Uygur court, and turned again to the West together with a Chinese army. But they were once more defeated by the Tibetans. Qocho, the Uygur kingdom then still in Chinese hands, fell to the Tibetans in 791, who also took Khotan. But in 792 the Uygur crown prince captured Qocho from the

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[95] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 166f.
[96] Ibid., p. 154 n. 62; Mackerras, *The Uyghur Empire*, p. 103 and n. 202.
[97] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 153.
[98] Mongolian for "Black Water", cf. Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p. 405.
[99] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 163.
[100] Cf. Chapter 10, p. ■■.

Tibetans. According to a Manichean text,[101] Ukai was khaqan of the Uygurs in 841 until 846, and so was in function when Sallam visited the region. From near prominence in the Tarim Basin the Tibetan forces now apparently settled down to a war of attrition with the Uygurs. In 848, some years after Sallam had left the region, the Chinese war-lord Zang Ichao was prefect of Dunhuang. In 851 he drove the Tibetans from Qocho and Igu and in 866, supported by the Uygurs, from the entire Tarim Basin.[102]

[101] Müller, *Doppelblatt aus einem manichäischen Hymnenbuch*, p. 30.

[102] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 157 n.3, 170f.; Von Gabain, *Leben im uigurischen Königreich*, ii, p. 231f.; Giles, *A Topographical Fragment*, p. 566.

SALLAM'S OUTWARD JOURNEY: SAMARRA–YUMENGUAN (CA. JULY/AUGUST 842–NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 843)

1. *Reasons for the journey*

In Sallam's travel account the reason for his journey is the dream of the Caliph al-Wathiq[1] (regn. 842-47): *it was as if the barrier which exists between us [i.e. the Muslim world] and Gog and Magog had cracked* [cf. Koran XVIII:93]. As is occasionally the case in religious tradition, Islam sees a dream as a divine revelation, linked to prophecy and completing it. al-Wathiq's dream may be seen as an expression of current eschatological ideas, activated by fear of the Turks, in whom the collectors of the *hadith* in the first half of the 9th century saw personifications of Gog and Magog. Similar ideas were alive among Syrian Christians in the Arab world. The fear of Christians and Muslims is clearly expressed in the *Apocalypse of Bahira*,[2] dated between 817-24 i.e. during the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mun. Quite correctly al-Ma'mun is indicated in this text as the seventh Imam (caliph), i.e. of the 'Abbasids, and the twenty-fourth of all caliphs taken together. According to the *Apocalypse* the end of time will come during al-Ma'mun's reign. The aim of the text is "to strip the Prophet's biography of all the lustre with which the compilers of *hadith* were already beginning to done it".[3] At the same time the Christian author of the text wants to bring the Koran from the supposed divine level down to the human level. If this is indeed the case, the aim of the *Apocalypse of Bahira* might be seen as a Syrian reflex of al-Wathiq's endeavour to rationalize the stories on the Seven Sleepers

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[1] Cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Wāṯhiḳ bi-llāh, Abū Ḏja'far Hārūn (K. Zetterstéen–C.E. Bosworth–E. van Donzel); cf. Ibn al-Aṯhīr, *Kitāb al-Kāmil*, vi, p. 372, 376; vii, p. 6-9, 12-26.

[2] Sergios-Baḥīrā was a Christian monk or hermit in Southern Syria, whom the Prophet Muḥammad met in his youth, cf. EI² *s.v.* (A. Abel). The apocalypse exists twice in a Syriac and Arabic recension, cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 271-276, 478.

[3] A. Abel, *Changements politiques et littérature eschatologique dans le monde musulman*, in: *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954), p. 29; cf. id., *L'apocalypse de Baḥira*, p. 11.

(the "People of the Cave"), and Gog and Magog and the barrier of Alexander 'the two-horned as found in the Koran. The investigations into these quite popular themes may indeed have been inspired by the Caliph al-Wathiq's wish to put an end to misuses of the Koran, by his Mu'tazilism, and by the question whether or not the Koran is created.[4] The *Apocalypse of Bahira* undoubtedly has a Syrian background: the predictions about the Antichrist, Gog and Magog, the four kingdoms (the Turks as the last kingdom), and the Final Judgement are based on the 8th century *Apocalypses of Daniel* and *Ezra. Pseudo-Methodius* is explicitly mentioned.[5] Muslim circles in Baghdad and Samarra, among them Ibn Khurradadhbih and/or Sallam, may well have been acquainted with these apocalyptical ideas alive among the Syrian Christians. This in its turn may explain the similarity between the Syriac tradition of Alexander's barrier and that given by Sallam and Ibn Khurradadhbih.[6]

The Arab geographers, Ibn Khurradadhbih, al-Muqaddasi, al-Mas'udi and Yaqut all relate that the caliph sent the astronomer al-Khwarazmi (ca. 800-47) to Byzantium to investigate the story of the *Sleepers of Ephesus*.[7] Ibn Khurradadhbih even writes that the astronomer himself told him that the Greek emperor had sent someone to accompany him to Qorra,[8] and that they had travelled to the place of the alleged Cave of the Sleepers. al-Muqaddasi suggests that the purpose of al-Khwarazmi's mission was to collect information about Gog and Magog. If that was the case, at least two missions were planned at the beginning of al-Wathiq's reign to gather information about the barrier. The astronomer's journey had preceded

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[4] Cf. al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, viii, p. 222ff., where it is said that al-Wāthiḳ began to question the doctrine according to which the Koran was created.

[5] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 276-278; Abel, *L'apocalypse de Bahîra*, p. 6f.

[6] Cf. Chapter 8, p. ■■, and Chapter 9, p. ■■.

[7] M.J. de Goeje, *De legende der Zevenslapers*, in: *Mededeelingen der Kon. Acad. van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam*, 4e reeks, 4e deel, Amsterdam 1901, p. 27, 29. Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, ii, p. 805f. (where he is called Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Munadjdjim ('the astronomer'); al-Muḳaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taḳāsīm*, p. 362-365. The story was also told in al-Mas'ūdī's lost "Middle Book", *Kitāb awsaṭ* (id., *Murūdj*, § 730-732): al-Mas'ūdī writes that al-Wāthiḳ sent al-Kh^{w}ārazmi to Germa (not identified). He adds that he dealt there also with the barrier which 'the two-horned one' had built to prevent the passage of Gog and Magog.

[8] Perhaps Koron in West Cappadocia and since806 in the hands of the Arabs, cf. F. Hild, *Das Byzantinische Straßensystem in Kappadokien*, Wien 1977, p. 50, 42 (map); E. Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des Byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071*, Bruxelles 1961, p. 45. For other places of the Cave of the Seven Sleepers in Cappadocia and Cilicia according to the Muslim tradition, cf. Kandler, *Siebenschläfer*, p. 62-76.

that of Sallam. Since the latter left Samarra in July/August 842 we must conclude that the journey of al-Khwarazmi must have been placed in the very beginning of al-Wathiq's reign. It may well be that both al-Khwarazmi's and Sallam's missions were inspired by the caliph's care for religious correctness. Because of his religious scruples, le *caliph théologien* al-Wathiq wanted to curtail the ridiculous stories for which the Koran was misused as a pretext. The caliph wished to collect information about the places mentioned in the Koran and in Islamic Tradition, e.g. the cave of the *Seven Sleepers* and the barrier of Gog and Magog.

Barbier de Meynard considers the beginning of Sallam's journey as historical, but the fantasies with which the account ends in such a strange way seems to him to be a concession to the taste for the miraculous, which had not been reduced by the scientific investigations under al-Ma'mun.[9] It is nevertheless interesting to note that the *Apocalypse of Bahira* on the one hand, and the missions sent by al-Wathiq to the Cave of the Sleepers and to the barrier on the other, had one point in common: rethinking the interpretation of the Koran, though the objectives of the two parties were completely different: the *Apocalypse of Bahira* wished to attack the superhuman character of the Koran, while al-Wathiq's Mu'tazilism wished to save it from too humanizing interpretations.

2. *Sallam's journey and the so-called map of Caliph al-Ma'mun*

During the reign of the 'Abbasid Caliph al Ma'mun (regn. 813-33), a world map was drawn, known as *al-sura al-ma'muniyya*.[10] This al-Ma'mun map may underlie the rectangular world map found in the *Book of Curiosities* (first half of the 11th c.), an Arabic cosmographical manuscript with a series of early maps and astronomical treatises.[11] The drawing of the *al-ma'muniyya* must have preceded Sallam's

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[9] Barbier de Meynard, *Le livre des routes et des provinces*, p. 23.

[10] Cf. J.B. Harley–D. Woodward (ed.), *The History of Cartography*, vol. 2, 1: *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, Chicago 1992, p. 95-96 ("The Map of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn); Y.T. Langemann, *The book of bodies and distances of Ḥabash al-Ḥasib*, in: *Centaurus* 28 (1985), p. 108-128.

[11] Bodleian Library, Ms. Arab. c. 90. The rectangular world map is found on fol. 23b-24a (see plate ■■), and reproduced by E. Savage-Smith, *The* 'Book of Curiosities': *a newly discovered series of Islamic Maps*, in: *Imago Mundi* 55 (2003) p. 7-24;

journey by a few years only and the question arises whether map and journey are connected.

The *al-ma'muniyya* map must have been known to Ibn Khurradadhbih, the director-general of Posts and Intelligence, and the Turkish generals involved in the preparation of Sallam's journey, the more so because the map explicitly mentions the barrier, the aim of Sallam's enterprise. In the lower left (i.e. the extreme north-east in modern cartography) a crenelated wall is visible, over which is written: "The rampart which 'the two-horned one' Iskander built".[12] From the rampart an unnamed river flows inland past the "City of Copper"[13] and flows into the Caspian Sea. One can hardly avoid the impression that the map shows how one should travel to reach the barrier of Alexander, namely along an important river and past a big city.

Did the map indeed play a role in the preparations for Sallam's journey? Jewish and Christian authors had identified Gog and Magog with their enemies in the north, and consequently had located the barrier there. From the topographical point of view as seen from Baghdad, the main external enemies were the unbelieving Persians and Turks in both the north and the east. Gog and Magog therefore were located in that direction and as far away as possible, namely the very end of the world. In this respect, too, the Arabo-Muslim geographers continued, and of course adapted the ideas of their predecessors.

al-Farghani and al-Dinawari, both contemporaries of Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam,[14] locate the barrier in the north-east. The Arabo-Muslim geographers of the 9th to 10th centuries locate it beyond the Caucasus and Khurasan, probably because it had not been found in those regions. This view is represented in the map of the *Book of Curiosities* and probably also on the *al-ma'muniyya* map. The reason why Sallam's principals nevertheless sent him first to the Caucasus is probably to be found in the caliphal policy towards the unruly potentates in the Caucasus and the former enemy, the Khazars. It was the Turkish general Ashnas, together with the

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E. Savage-Smith–Y. Rapoport (ed.), *The Book of Curiosities: A critical edition.* www-publication (march 2007):
http://cosmos.bodley.ox.ac.uk/hms/home.php (*s.v.* Ch. 2.2).

[12] *[al-] sudd 'lladhī banāhu Dhu 'l-Qarnayn al-Iskandar.*

[13] *madīnat al-nuhās.*

[14] Cf. Chapter 5, p. ■■(10).

Khazar military slave Aytakh al-Turki[15] (d. 849), called "the mainstay of al-Wathiq's caliphate", who advised the caliph that Sallam was the man to be sent on a mission in order to make enquiries about Alexander's barrier and to report back about it. The careful preparation of the journey seems to indicate that the expedition had a double aim: to find out whether indeed the barrier of 'the two-horned one'—this "wonder of the world" as Ibn Khurradadhbih seems to qualify it—was breached, but also to check the attitude of the local potentates in the Caucasus and of the Khazars. The advice could also have been given in order to gather information about hostile Turkish tribes, or on the contrary, to make contacts with certain tribes for political purposes. A more direct cause for al-Wathiq's concern may have been the movements of the Kirgiz nomads north of lake Baikal. In 840 they had invaded the regions of the Orkhon and Selenga rivers, driving the Uygurs out from there.[16] The journey thus was not an erratic search for the barrier but part of a deliberate political plan.

In their commentary on the map found in the *Book of Curiosities* the editors remark that copper (*nuḥas*) in the name "City of Copper" possibly is a mistake for merchants (*tudjdjar*). The letters *n/t*, *ḥ/dj* and *s/r* indeed are easily confused in Arabic script. Yet, the reading of the Arab root is quite clear, while the epithet "City of Copper" is part of the folkloristic baggage of early Christian and Muslim tales in the Near East. It is found in the ε-version of the Greek *Alexander-Romance* (7th-8th c.).[17] In the Syriac Alexander tradition the barrier built by Alexander is a bronze or copper gate[18] using the same root (Syr. *nḥš*) as in Arabic. The prison of Gog and Magog seen as a bronze city is also well known in Latin, Sasanian and Armenian tradition. Thus this map, and the *al-ma'muniyya* too, again points Christian and Pre-Islamic sources.[19] Copper may be seen as a symbol of the riches,[20] accumulated in the mercantile centre that of the

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[15] Cf. EI², Suppl *s.v.* Aytākh al-Turkī; cf. also EI² *s.v.* Wahb, Banū (C.E. Bosworth); Sourdel, *Le vizirat*, p. 260-270.

[16] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■(15).

[17] Cf. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 22; cf. also R. van Leeuwen, *De wereld van Sjahrazaad*, Amsterdam 1999, p. 239-246 ("Koperen Stad").

[18] Cf. Chapter 2, p. ■■ (3, 7, 13).

[19] Cf. J.R. Russell, *The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian*, in: Th.J. Samuelian–M. Stone (ed.), *Medieval Armenian Culture*, (Armenian Texts and Studies. 6), Chico 1984, p. 250-261.

[20] Cf. Van Leeuwen, *op.cit.*, p. 242.

town Talas (Ar. Taraz). This important mercantile centre on the highway to China had been visited by the Byzantine envoy Zemarchos in 568, and by the Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang around 630. Traces of Syrian and Byzantine influences have been found in the region during Russian excavations. If the unnamed town in the map can be identified with Talas, the river drawned there must be the Chu.[21] It takes its origin in Terskei Alatau, flows to the north-east, almost reaches lake Issyk-köl, and then flows east of the Amu Darya (Oxus, Ar. Jayhun) to end in the desert lake Saumal-köl.[22] Two ancient trade routes led through the Chu valley: one to the Kastek Pass on the south side of the Issyk-köl and the valley of the river Ili, the other through the Bugham Pass to the south side of the Issyk-köl. The capital of the Chu valley was the old town Suyab,[23] while the residence of the local ruler usually was at Kuz Ordu or Balasaghun. Talas was well known in Islam. In 751 a famous battle had been fought in the neighbourhood between a Chinese-Turkish alliance and Arabo-Muslim forces. The victory of the latter had put an end to Chinese ambitions in Central Asia. Other places in the region are mentioned by Ibn Khurradadhbih and Qudama b. Dja'far.[24] Thus according to the map the route to the barrier led along a river, the Chu, and past the "City of Copper" (Talas/Taraz). This route may have been known to Sallam, but nevertheless on his outward journey he did not take this highway; he visited Talas only on his homeward journey.[25] He may have learned from the Khazars that there was a more direct route from the Aral Sea to Eastern Turkistan (see below).

The early 9th century equally produced the material for the sketch of another world map, also kept in the Bodleian Library and published by M. Kropp.[26] According to the designer, the sketch is a

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[21] EI² *s.v.*Ču (B. Spuler); cf. Klein, *Das Nestorianische Christentum*, p. 142.

[22] Cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 279, 299.

[23] Recent excavations show that Sūyāb and Ṭarāz had a properous Christian community in the 8th-11th c., cf. Ch. Baumer, *Frühes Christentum zwischen Euphrat und Jangtse. Eine Zeitreise entlang der Seidenstraße zur Kirche des Ostens*, Stuttgart 2005, p. 177f.; Klein, *Das Nestorianische Christentum*, p. 113-121, 130, 195.

[24] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 29; Ḳudāma b. Dja'far, *Kitāb al-kharādj*, p. 206.

[25] Cf. Chapter 12, p. ■■ (13).

[26] Ms. Laud. Or. 317; cf. M. Kropp, Kitāb al-Bad' wa-ta'rīḫ *von Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Aḥmad aš-Šāwī al-Fāsī und sein Verhältnis zu dem* Kitāb al-Ğa'rāfiyya *von az-Zuhrī*, in: R. Peeters (ed.), *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the*

rendering of the map made by al-Kindi[27] (ca. 801-66) and his disciple al-Sharakhsi[28] (ca. 835-99), both also contemporaries of Ibn Khurradadhbih and Sallam. Here the barrier is not mentioned, but Gog and Magog are. Here too they are located in the extreme north-east, in a long, wide and empty section, completely closed in by mountains.

3. *Dates of the journey*

Sallam's outward journey lasted sixteen months, his homeward journey twelve months and a couple of days: two years, four months and a few days in all.[29] Since al-Wathiq was proclaimed caliph on January 5, 842, Sallam left Samarra after that date. On his way back he visited at Nishapur the governor of Khurasan, the Tahirid 'Abd Allah b. Tahir,[30] who died on November 26, 844. Consequently, Sallam was in Nishapur before that date. Counting around two months for the journey from there to Samarra, say November and December, he was back at the caliph's court around December 844—January 845. Two years, four months and a couple of days before the latter date bring us to ca. July–August 842 as the latest date for Sallam's departure from Samarra. Sixteen months after that date bring us to November–December 843 as the date of arrival at the barrier, the aim of the journey. Following Sallam's indications and trying to interpret them, it will be argued that 'his' barrier in fact was the still existing Yumenguan or Jade Gate, the then custom post on the southern branch of the Silk Route from Khotan to Changan in Gansu, China.

Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Leiden 1981, p. 153-168 (with a reproduction of the map on p. 160-161).

[27] Abū Yūsuf Ya'ḳūb b. Isḥāḳ, "The philosopher of the Arabs", cf. EI² *s.v.* (J. Jolivet–R. Rashed).

[28] Cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Sharakhsī, Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib (F. Rosenthal).

[29] All texts give 28 months for the entire journey, except Yāḳūt, who has 18 months, cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (25).

[30] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■.

4. *Stages*

Samarra–Tiflis

One reason for sending Sallam from Samarra to the Caucasus evidently was that the barrier of Gog and Magog was believed to be located there. If Sallam indeed was a Khazar Jew, this may have been a concomitant factor for travelling to the Caucasus. The rumour that there was a mosque named after Alexander may have played another role in his decision for the first stage, because Mtzkheta the residence of the Georgian king, al-*tanbaghi*,[31] was also known as *masjid Dhu 'l-Qarnayn*, the mosque of 'the two-horned one'.[32] However, the name Mtzkheta surely does not refer to a mosque. By assonance in Arabic, the old royal capital of Georgia, or even the entire region was erroneously understood by the Arabs as *masjid* (which in Georgian would be *mizgid* "mosque").[33] Mtzkheta, the royal city of Eastern Georgia, where the first indigenous Georgian monarchy was established (around 299 B.C.), is situated north of Tiflis on the place where the river Aragwi flows into the Kura. When Tiflis had become the capital in the 5th c., Mtzkheta remained important as religious centre of the East Georgian kingdom and as burial place of the Georgian

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[31] al-Mas'ūdī uses the title here to indicate the Georgian king. The title, however, is not correct. Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 186, proposed to read *al-manbaghī*, which goes back to the Georgian title *mamp'ali* held by high ranking princes in the feudal Caucasian hierarchy. It replaced the older title *vitaxa* in use before the 9th c., cf. Toumanoff, *Christian Caucasian History*, p. 263, 489, 648; Rapp, *Medieval Georgian Historiography*, p. 388.

[32] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 498. According to al-Ya'ḳūbī Tiflis and the town called Dhu 'l-Ḳarnayn form together one of the three parts in which Armenia is divided (*Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 364; Wiet, *Les pays*, p. 232). Ibn Ḥawḳal (Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, ii, p. 333) writes that Tiflis was somewhat smaller than Derbent, that it had two mud walls with three gates; the inhabitants led a prosperous life but were surrounded by enemies on all sides.

[33] M. Cincadze, *Sak'art'velo da K'art'welebi X-XI saukuneebis sparsul c'qaroebši*, in: *Istoriis, ark'eologiis et'nograp'iis da xelovnebis istoriis* 4 (Tbilisi 1984), p. 85-86; and B. Silagadze, *Al-Masudis t'xzulebis murudž az-zahab wa ma'adin al-džawha"is ert'i cnobis gagebisat'wis*, in: *K'art'uli šqarot'mcodneoba* 8 (Tbilisi 1993), p. 74-78, propose the hypothesis that al-Mas'ūdī's mention of Dhu 'l-Ḳarnayn could be interpreted as the distorted Georgian toponym "Kharnata" as it is cited in the *Book of Ceremonies* of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (*De cerem.* 2, 48). Silagadze identifies the place with the region Taoskari (Tao) ruled by a Bagratid sovereign in the 9th-10th c.; cf. also Toumanoff, *Christian Caucasian History*, p. 492f.

al-Ṭabarī writes that Caliph al-Maslama (d. 738), on his return from his campaign in the Caucasus took the route (*maslak*) which 'the two-horned one' had taken, cf. Yarshater, *History of al-Ṭabarī*, xxv, p. 45.

kings. The name of Alexander was given to that village just in order to emphasize its antiquity. Alexander the Great—according to the Georgian historical tradition—installed here the first sovereign of the Georgian monarchy after having subjugated the country. These coincidences may have contributed to the confusion around the existence of an "Alexander's mosque" on the route to Tiflis. It should be noted too that Alexander was as popular in Persia as he was in Georgia. In his *Iskandarnama*, Nizami Ganjawi refers to old Persian, and possibly pre-Islamic, Caucasian traditions according to which Tiflis was built by Alexander the Great. It may therefore well be that Sallam, and the court in Samarra for that matter, were more led by Persian stories than by local Caucasian traditions, when he directed his way at first in the Caucasus.

Sallam's itinerary from Samarra to Tiflis is not indicated in the account, but the route to the Caucasus was well known since al-Jarrah,[34] appointed governor of Armenia in 722-23, had marched against the Khazars from Barda'a (Partaw in Caucasian Albania, the most important Arabic stronghold against the Khazars) to Derbent, Balanjar and Samandar. We may therefore assume that Sallam travelled on the route, well-known in his days, from Samarra to Shahrazur, Zanjan, Ardabil, Barzand, Wartan in the Muqan steppe (Vardanakert on the river Araxes), Baylaqan, Barda'a, Ganja, Shamkur and finally Tiflis.[35]

Tiflis–Sarir–Alans–Filan-shah

Sallam relates that he travelled from Tiflis to Sarir, the Alans and the Filan-shah.[36] It is noteworthy that he does not mention the Bab al-Abwab i.e. the Derbent Pass, in his days for the Arabs the best known of the Caucasus. Our analysis above on the supposed location of the

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[34] EI[2] *s.v.* al-Djarrāḥ b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥakamī (D.M. Dunlop). Further campaigns against the Khazars were led by the Umayyad general and later Caliph al-Maslama and by the later (and last) Umayyad Caliph Marwān II (d. 750). The campaign is described by Ibn Ḥawḳal (Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, ii, p. 343, with further references).

[35] Cf. the map on p. ■■. The towns were well known in Sallām's days, see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, index *s.vv.*; cf. also Le Strange, *Caliphate*, p. 175-178, 222. Muslim tradition connects Mūḳān (Badjarvan) with the 'Fountain of Life', said to have been discovered by the prophet al-Khiḍr, cf. Le Strange, *op. cit.*, p. 175. The famous Mūḳān steppe thus is linked to the story of 'the two-horned one'.

[36] The territory of the Filān-shāh was contermunous with that of the Master of the Sarīr, cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■ (6).

barrier between the "Breasts of the North" at the Caucasian Darial Pass[37] clearly shows why Sallam had no reason to waver around the famous gate at Derbent. He was certainly aware of the Syriac traditions about Alexander's barrier-gate in the Caucasian mountains. These did not admit the localisation at Derbent.

Minorsky considered Sallam's itinerary embroiled and his movements in the Caucasus erratic.[38] Yet, if his journey to the Caucasus was a political mission, organised by the Turkish generals Ashnas and Aytakh al-Turki under the aegis of the Caliph, as suggested above, his movements there were not haphazard but deliberate. The letters he was carrying to the local rulers also seem to suggest this. In the Caucasus and in Khazar territory he apparently felt secure. It were only for the endless Asian steppes that he needed guides.

In al-Mas'udi's days Sarir was only two parasangs away from the Khazar town of Samandar, which lay at an eight days' march from Derbent. Sallam's information about this part of his journey in the Caucasus seems confirmed by Ibn Rusta.[39] According to the latter, the journey from Sarir to the Khazars took twelve days "through mountains and over meadows" Since the Filan-shah gave Sallam a letter for the king of the Khazars,[40] some sort of contact must have existed between this Caucasian Avar and the Khazar ruler, whose territory extended to the east of the Caspian Sea.

Khazars

Sallam stayed one day and one night[41] with the "king", probably the *tarkhan* of the Khazars. This means that he stayed for some time in the ruler's premises instead of in his own camp. He did this only four times during the entire journey: with the tarkhan, with the *king of al-Lub*, with the *tabanuyan*, and with the latter's master 'Abd Allah b. Tahir in Nishapur.[42] It was apparently only with these authorities that he felt secure enough to do so. The tarkhan of the Khazars gave him five guides, an indication that the regions lying ahead were

[37] Cf. Chapter 2, p. ■■(34).
[38] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■(29).
[39] *Kitāb al-a'lāḳ al-nafīsa*, p. 147, 169; cf. Minorsky, *History of Sharvan*, p. 146, 167.
[40] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (2).
[41] Five days, according to al-Ḳazwīnī, *Kitāb āṯār al-bilād*, p. 118.
[42] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■(2, 7).

unknown and considered dangerous. According to al-Idrisi, Sallam also passed through the land of the Basjirts and the Pechenegs.[43]

At this point of his journey Sallam may have thought of talk at the court of Baghdad about the existence of barriers or gates in Central Asia, to protect settled agricultural lands from hostile invasions. Such constructions existed indeed to the north of Bukhara, in Tashkent (Shash) and in Ilaq, the region in the great southern bend of the Syr Darya. The construction of a wall from the mountains down to the river in Ilaq is ascribed to 'Abd Allah b. Humayd b. Kahtaba, governor of Khurasan in 776. The famous Iron Gate in Tokharistan is another case in point.[44]

Fetid Land

Some twenty-six days after leaving Basjirt land, Sallam came to "a black, fetid region", in which he travelled for ten days. A region with such qualities was not unknown to Arab geographers. According to Abu 'l-Fida the fetid country lies east of the land of the Pechenegs. The land is desert. It is impossible, Abu 'l-Fida writes, to enter it, unless one is provided with aromatic substances.[45] His description agrees with Sallam's account. Both authors seem to refer to the vast and barren steppes of what is now known as Kazakhstan. Our traveller must have followed, one might think, tracks which in his days had already been used for centuries. These tracks may be seen as forerunners of roads and railways, and so Sallam may have passed by places now known as Gurjev, Celkar, Dzezkasgan and Karazal, travelling in the direction of lake Balkhash. There was also the route around the northern tip of the Aral Sea, which followed the Chu river upstream to Talas, continuing south of lake Balkhash via Bishbalik to Urumchi and Igu. This northern route, however, does

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[43] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■(n. 16).

[44] EI² *s.v.* Ṭukhāristān (W. Barthold–C.E. Bosworth).

[45] Abu 'l-Fidā', *Taḳwīm al-buldān*, p. 206, 293. Cf. al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, ii, p. 929, Jaubert, *Géographie*, ii, p. 412, who gives a similar description: *Le pays fétide est âpre, noir, stérile, et s'étend en longueur sur un espace de dix journées. On n'y trouve, ni dans les plaines, ni dans les montagnes, aucune plante, aucune végétation. Dans cette contrée sauvage, les habitations sont lointaines et tristes, les guides toujours incertains, les voyageurs toujours affligés. L'air exhale de désagréables odeurs. Là point d'habitation commode, point de route, point de paysage qui réjouisse, qui console le voyageur.*—The "black land" mentioned by al-Marwazī, *Ṭabā'i'āt-Ḥayawān*, refers to the North (= black), cf. Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 263 n. 98.

not seem to have passed through the "fetid land", because it did not traverse the Kazakhstan steppes.

It is also possible that Sallam rounded the Aral Sea and turned southward along the Syr Darya which empties itself into that sea, which in fact is a lake. He then would have come to Tashkent, Talas and Isfijab, well-known towns on the northern trade route to China. However, if he had passed by these places on his outward journey, he would have quite likely mentioned them, for he passed by them on his homeward journey. The "fetid land" and the "ruined towns" rather suggest that he travelled in regions unknown to him and to his guides.

The region around lake Balkhash and further eastward to the salt lake of Ara-köl in modern Kazakhstan,[46] at ca. 180 km from lake Balkhash and about 150 km from the Chinese border, is indeed desolate and arid. The "evil odour" of the fetid land mentioned in Sallam's account was perhaps caused by the *assafetida*, the fetid gum resin of various plants of the genus Ferula,[47] widely spread in the Kazakhstan steppes. The guides provided by the Khazar Tarkhan must have known about this phenomenon, for Sallam had provided himself with vinegar[48] as a remedy against the evil smell.

After leaving the fetid land, Sallam may have travelled on to lake Ara-köl and from there to the southern part of the Dzungarian Basin, which lies west of the Altai and north of the Tianshan or Tengri Dagh, the "Celestial Mountains" The so-called Dzungarian Gate, for centuries used by nomadic tribes and, among many other conquerors, by Genghis Khan, is famous for the violent winds.[49] This is

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[46] Cf. EI² Suppl. *s.v.* Ḳazaḳstānin (Tomohiko Uyama).

[47] According to Schuyler, *Turkistan*, i, p. 228f., the steppe between Tashkent and Samarkand was a parched and barren waste. The most characteristic vegetation was the *Ferula assa-foetida* which grows in great profusion. The leaves had fallen to the ground and died, but there rose a tall round stem, a foot or more high, branching off at the top, like the spokes of a wheel, into small heads of insignificant flowers. The peculiar odour of the plant was very perceptible. It disappeared after boiling, and the young shoots and heads were considered by the Kirgiz as a great delicacy.

[48] al-Idrīsī: "things to smell", Ibn al-Djawzī: "perfume"; cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3 n. 18, 22).

According to De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 110, this passage comes from al-Djayhānī, his unspoken argument probably being that what is not found in Ibn Khurradādhbih but only in al-Idrīsī, must have been taken from al-Djayhānī, whose work al-Idrīsī used (cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (12). But this assumption can only be asserted the moment we possess al-Djayhānī's text.

[49] Ibn al-Djawzī: "fetid wind"; cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (22).

also described by travellers as widely separated in time as Aristeas of Proconnesus (7th c. B.C.), John de Plano Carpini (d. 1252)[50] and 20th century travellers.

Arriving at lake Balkhash, Sallam may have rounded its southern tip and travelled upstream the river Ili,[51] which empties itself into the lake. The principal route from Central Asia into the southern Dzungarian Basin and the region of Xinjiang led through the Ili valley. In the upstream region the caravan may have come to the junction of the rivers Tekes and Kunges, which from there form the river Ili. This supposition finds support in the itinerary reconstructed by E. Chavannes[52] on the basis of topographical material found in the official history of the Tang dynasty, the so-called *Tangshu*. In a direction opposite to that of Sallam, this itinerary led from Turfan to the valley of the Ili via Paohoeihien (south-west of Guchen), Urumchi and Kurkaraussu. In the valley Sallam may have come upon a settlement which was to become Almaligh, south of lake Sayram and the Talki Pass, north of the Ili and probably north-west of the later Kuldja.[53]

The oasis of Urumchi commanded the northern end of a gap leading from the Dzungarian Basin to the Tarim Basin. Luo Zhewen published a map on the relationship between the Silk Road and the Great Wall.[54] Apart from the northern and southern branches of the famous road, it shows a trail leading from Anxi via Igu to Urumchi and further on to a number of unnamed stations, joining the other two branches of the Silk Road at Samarkand.[55] Luo Zhewen remarks that this trail was the Silk Road of the Tang dynasty. It seems quite likely that Sallam travelled from Urumchi to Igu and further to Anxi on this road. The map also shows beacon towers along the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road, as well as along the western extension of the Great Wall of China from

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[50] Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, p. 95ff.; F. Schmieder, *Johannes von Plano Carpini, Kunde von den Mongolen: 1245-1247*, (Fremde Kulturen in alten Berichten. 3), Sigmaringen 1997, p. 42.

[51] EI² *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth).

[52] Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 11-13.

[53] E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval researches*, i, p. 69f.; ii, p. 53ff.

[54] Zhewen–Luo, *The Great Wall*, p. 18. Cf. Stein's map on p. ■■.

[55] EI² *s.v.* Samarḳand (H.H. Schaeder - C.E. Bosworth). According to Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 92, the Chinese name for this famous city in modern Uzbekistan, Samokin, is not found before Mongol times. For the route Aqsu–Kucha–Anxi, cf. Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p. 817.

Yumenguan to Loulan at lake Lop Nor. The latter route probably was the one Sallam took on his homeward journey.[56]

al-Idrisi relates:

> in the eighth section of the seventh clime there is a miserable region with a deep valley, which shows the most remarkable phenomena.

And al-Jayhani reports in his book:

> the travellers, having come out of the fetid land, see this valley. They travel along the rims during one day, but are unable to descend into it on any side, because the terrain is very deep and the approaches grim. However, they are of the opinion that this land is inhabited, for on several spots they see smoke during broad daylight and fires during the night, which appear and disappear at intervals. The most surprising thing is that there is a river which flows from north to south, on which spectres appears and whose banks are covered with buildings. But it is impossible to descend into the valley or to climb out of it because the rims are steep.[57]

That river in question perhaps is the Tarim. A similar description is given by Sir Aurel Stein. One night, while doing survey work in the Kunlun Mountains near Khotan, he looked down upon the moonlit Taklamakan desert, thousands of feet below; it seemed as if he was looking at the lights of a vast city lying below him in the endless plains. In other words: Stein and al-Jayhani were both looking down upon the famous desert of Taklamakan, the first from the southern, and the latter from the northern edge.

At this point, Sallam's outward journey from Itil to Urumchi may be reconstructed on a modern map as follows:

Gurjev–Celkar–Dzezkasgan
then: either Karazal–Aktogaj–through the Dzungarian Gate
or: Koktas (on lake Balkhash)–Kabchagay–through the Dzungarian Gate
then: Lake Aibihu–Urumchi.

Ruined Towns

After the fetid land, Sallam came to what he calls "ruined towns", between which he travelled for twenty days.[58] The destruction, he was told, was the result of incursions made by Gog and Magog.

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[56] Cf. Chapter 12, p. ■■.
[57] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, p. 961, Jaubert, *Géographie*, ii, p. 438.
[58] Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3).

These ruined towns, according to his account, were located between the fetid land and Igu. In order to reach the latter town Sallam, coming from the west, may have travelled on one of the routes of the northern branch of the Silk Road leading from Urumchi to Igu, either via Turfan or via Guchen and Barkol.[59] In the first case, he came across the ruins of Bishbalik, the "Town of five".[60] Conquered by the Qarluqs in 791, it later became the residence of the princes of the Basmil Turks, who were succeeded by the Uygurs in 860.[61] Together with Qocho, Karashahr and Kucha, Bishbalik was one of the four garrisons of the Chinese.

If Sallam travelled via Guchen and Barkol, he saw the ruins of Yarkhoto, situated island-like between two deep-cut ravines to the west of the modern town of Turfan. There an isolated and naturally strong plateau bears the remains of a maze of ruined dwellings and shrines carved out for the most part from the loess soil. They mark the position occupied by the earlier capital of Turfan territory during Han times (202 B.C.–220). Sallam may have seen Qocho (Chin. Gaochang, modern Idikutshahri) near Karakhoja, the Turfan capital during Tang rule (618-907), inhabited by Manichaens, Buddhists and Christians at the time of his journey. Ruins were found in Toyok, which means "carved out", marked by remnants of small Buddhist shrines and monastic quarters. Also from Sallam's days, there are in Bezeklik, some 20 km nord of Karakhoja, an extensive series of rich decorated temple cellas carved into the rocks from the 5th to the 9th century.

The distance between the various "ruined towns", Sallam remarks, was one to two parasangs, i.e. 5-10 km. The fact that there indeed were abandoned towns in the region Sallam was travelling through is another indication that his travel account is a historical document.

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[59] Cf. the maps on p. ■■. Von Gabain, *Leben im uigurischen Königreich*, p. 13, gives the following list of places on the northern branch of the Silk Road from Dunhuang to Kashgar: Dunhuang–Yumenguan–Qomul (Chin. Hami, earlier Igu)–Turfan–Qocho–Karashahr (Chin. Yanqi, on lake Bakhrash)–Sortchuq–Korla–Kiri–Kucha –Kızılkum–Aqsu–Barskhan–Üch-Turfan (Hecynka)–Maral-bashı (Bartchuq)–Tumtchuq–Fayazabad–Kashgar.

[60] Cf. EI² *s.v.* Bishbalıḳ (B. Spuler); cf. Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p. 554-559; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 11. The route Barkol–Hami is also mentioned by Yule, *Cathay*, ii, p. 579 n. 3.

[61] al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, § 312 and Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, iv, p. 320 remark that it was the residence of the king of the Toghuzghuz; cf. Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 11, 305.

Fortified Places

al-Idrisi writes that there was a six days' distance between the ruined towns and what Sallam calls "fortified places",[62] probably the enormous watch- and/or beacon towers built by the Chinese along the routes leading to the West, here on the northern branch of the Silk Road between Urumchi and Igu. They were also found along the defensive wall stretching from Anxi northwards. Some of these towers were standing by themselves; others were part of a so-called *guan* or fortification.[63] Sallam also says that the distance between these "fortified places" was one to two parasangs (5 to 10 km), while the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang reports for the year 630 that the distance between the beacon towers on the Anxi–Igu route was around 25 km.[64]

Igu

Tiflis and Igu are the only towns mentioned in Sallam's travel account.[65] Igu is an historical place lying on the northern branch of the Silk Road. The name strongly suggests that Sallam was travelling along this, already in his days, centuries-old route, which led to Anxi, Dunhuang and ultimately to Yumenguan, the place where Sallam, supposedly, locates the barrier of Gog and Magog, and from where his homeward journey may have begun. There is no direct proof for the itinerary beyond Igu, but no serious objections can be raised against it either.

Igu, present-day Hami, was from the first century onwards known to the Chinese as Iwu (Yiwu) or Iwulu. In or about 607 a Chinese general led an army across the desert and founded, to the east of the ancient Han walled town a new city which he called Hsin Iwu ("New Iwu") and which corresponds to mediaeval Qomul and modern Hami.[66] In 630 it became the 'I-prefecture' or 'I-zhou'—'I' being

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[62] Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3).

[63] Mallory–Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, p. 167.

[64] On Xuanzang see below. According to Mallory–Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, p. 13, the distance between these two towns is 304 miles (490 km).

[65] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (3f).

[66] EI² *s.v.* Ḳomul (E. van Donzel); Pelliot, *Notes*, i, p. 155f.; cf. also Imbault-Huart, *Le pays de Hami*. For the early history of Igu, cf. E. Chavannes, *Les pays d'Occident d'après le Heou Han chou*, in: *T'oung Pao*, ser. II, 8 (1907) p. 156-161; id., *Documents*, p. 169f. For the recent excavations cf. Wieczorek, *Ursprünge der Seidenstraße*, p. 134-149.

the first element of the former Iwu. Iwu was retained as the name of the Hsien ("district") established at Yizhou. In 710 an army of Yizhou was created, which had its seat in a valley of the eastern Tianshan, ca. 150 km (300 li) north-east of the town.[67] Sallam's Igu may well represent Chinese Iwu, Iwulu or Yizhou. The oasis lies at ca. 500 km north of the fortress of Yumenguan. It held a central position in the cultural exchange between East and West. In the history of the posterior Han dynasty, it is said to be the key to the "Western countries" Shortly after their access to the throne, the Chinese Tang, during their forward policy, wrestled Iwu and Turfan from the Western Turks, who had been weakened by tribal dissensions. The modern name Hami is derived from Mongolian Khamil, which renders Uygur Qomul.

The identification of Sallam's Igu with modern Chinese Hami is essential for our thesis that Sallam indeed went all the way to the Gobi desert and Xinjiang. In 843, when he probably arrived there, Igu was still in Tibetan hands, and de facto ruled by Basmil Turks.[68] Two centuries earlier, Igu had been visited by the Chinese monk and traveller Xuanzang who, unfortunately, did not leave a description of the oasis. But Marco Polo has a chapter on Igu.[69] As so many people after him, Marco Polo praises the melons and grapes of the

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[67] This Yizhou occurs as Icu in a Khotanese document of probably the 7th century, see F.W. Thomas–St. Konow, *Two medieval documents from Tunhuang*, Oslo 1929; cf. the review of P. Pelliot, in: *T'oung Pao* 37 (1930), p. 230.

[68] Cf. Chapter 9, p.■■. According to S. Lévi–E. Chavannes, *L'itinéraire d'Ou-K'ong (751-790)*, in: *Journal Asiatique*, ser. ix, 6 (1895) p. 382, Igu was taken by the Tibetans around 780 after a long siege. The name Yizhou is again found in 784 (A. Stein, *Sand-buried ruins of Khotan*, London 1903, p. 535). Imbault-Huart, *Le pays de Hami*, p. 153, confirms Sallām's information (Chapter 7, p. ■■ (5) that the function of commander was hereditary, at least at Igu. A certain Wang Yento, in the account he left of his embassy (981-83) to the land of the Uygurs, relates that the chief of the district of *Y-tcheou* or *Y-vou* belonged to the family of the Tch'en: ten generations of that family had been in command since 714.

[69] Yule, *The Book of Marco Polo*, i, p. 209ff. ("Of the province of Qomul"). He took the Southern Silk route Bukhara–Kashgar–Yarkand–Khotan–Lake Lop–Dunhuang–Ganzhou (ibid., p. 190-220). The Southern route, be it in opposite direction, was taken soon after Marco Polo by the monk Markos of the Ongut Turks, the later East Syrian patriarch Yaballahah III, on his journey from Peking to Baghdad. He passed Miran and followed the course of the Cherchen river to Khotan, then he proceeded to Kashgar–Taraz–Khurasan–Maragha–Baghdad; cf. E.A.W. Budge, *The Monks of Kublai Khân, Emperor of China, or the History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Sawma, Envoy and Plenipotentiary of the Mongol Khans to the Kings of Europe, and Marqos, who as Mar Yabhallaha III became Patriarch of the Nestorian Church in Asia*, London 1928 (Reprint: New York 1973).

region. He also dwells upon the custom of the inhabitants to put their wives at the disposal of guests,[70] and remarks that they are "idolaters" i.e. Buddhists, and have a peculiar language. Igu was also visited by the embassy which the Timurid Shah Rukh b. Timur had sent to China in 1420. They still found there a Buddhist temple.[71]

The oasis, Sallam relates, measured "ten parasangs" in circumference and had iron gates which, to be closed, were let down. Inside the walls were mills and cultivated fields. This description fits perfectly well with what the Chinese call a guan or fortified, garrisoned place with four gates, whose approaches were defended by watchtowers. Because of its strategic position, Igu was policed in this way by both the Chinese and the Tibetans.

Igu is also mentioned in Gardizi's *Zayn al-akhbar*. In his report on the trade route from Qocho "the town of the Chinese" (Chinanjkat) to Khumdan (Changan), Gardizi, by including Qomul (Igu), seems to describe Sallam's itinerary from Dzungaria to Dunhuang:

> From Tchinanjkat in Toghuzghuz territory one of the Chinese trade routes leads eastwards across a desert to Qomul. At Baghshura,[72] a river is crossed by boat. On the eighth day Qomul is reached. From here the route leads in seven days through a steppe, in which sources and grass are found,[73] to the Chinese town of Shazhou.[74]

Gardizi, or his source al-Jayhani, notwithstanding some shortcomings, was very well informed about the topographical position of the main stations on the route between Dzungaria and the capital Changan (Khumdan, modern Xian).[75] Sallam's travel account,

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[70] On this practice, cf. Pelliot, *Notes*, i, p. 156.

Yule, *Cathay*, iii, p. 265; M. Rossabi, *Two Ming envoys to Inner Asia*, in: *T'oung Pao* 62 (1976), p. 16-24, cf. Chapter 11, p. ■■ n. 19.

[72] For Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 229, Baghshūrā is the Iranian name of a Chinese town on the Changjiang river, but for Pelliot, *Notes*, ii, p. 819-820, it is Lanzhou on the Huangho river (Yellow River).

[73] The *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* (Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 275) describes the town of Khm'd, recognized by Minorsky as Qomul/Igu/Hami, as a place of meadows and pasture lands, with tents and yurts of the Toghuzghuz. For this region, called Beishan (Peishan), cf. C.J. Futterer, *Geographische Skizze der Wüste Gobi zwischen Hami und Sutschôu*, (Petermanns Mitteilungen, Ergänzungsheft. 139), Gotha 1902, p. 11ff. M. Cable–French, *The Gobi desert*, London 1942, describe it less favourably.

[74] Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 149. Gardīzī continues that from Shazhou (Dunhuang) the route leads in three days to Sanglākh, from there in seven days to Sakhdju, in three days to Khamdj [Ganzhou], then eight days to Ḳuča, from there fifteen days to the river 'Ayyān [Huangho, but see above n. ■■ 85] and to Khumdān [Changan].

[75] Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 150 n. 306.

though even more defective, may have been one of the sources for al-Jayhani and thus for Gardizi. Sallam's remark that 'the two-horned one' and his army stayed at Igu does not enhance his credibility, but it may be seen as an example of his adapting reality to what he wanted his caliph to believe, as he also did with the description of the barrier itself.

Igu–Anxi

There is no better description of Sallam's itinerary from Igu to Anxi than that of the Chinese monk and pilgrim Xuanzang who, two centuries earlier, travelled in opposite direction.[76] On both his outward and homeward journeys, Sallam may have travelled on sections of the tracks taken by Xuanzang. Here we shall follow the latter on his outward journey as far as Kucha. In chapter 12 we will travel with him from Dunhuang to Kunduz.

Xuanzang left Liangzhou towards the end of the year 629 and travelled via Guazhou to Anxi where he turned to the north. At 50 li (ca. 25 km) he crossed the Bulunghir river, whose wide lower course could be forded. On this river, Aurel Stein writes, is the Yumen barrier which is the key of the Western regions. To the north-west, beyond this barrier, are five signal-towers, 100 li (ca. 50 km) apart from each other. Sallam's remarks on the "fortified places" which he saw on his way from Igu to the barrier of Gog and Magog seem, at least to a certain extent, to be in accordance with this archaeological description. In between these towers, Xuanzang's biography reports, there is neither water nor herbage. Beyond them lies the desert of Mohoyen and the frontiers of the kingdom of Iwu (Igu). With the connivance of the local governor, who for piety's sake agreed to close an eye, the monk prepared to evade the official prohibition against his crossing the border. From an aged "barbarian" he secured a horse recommended for having made the journey to Iwu fifteen times to and fro. He started at night with a sole guide, another "barbarian" In the third watch they came to the river, and sighted the Yumen barrier from a distance. Having crossed the river

[76] Cf. also Chapter 12, p. ■■ (2). For his journey from China to India, his stay there, and his return journey to China, cf. Julien, *Histoire de la vie de Hiouen-Thsang*; Beal, *Life of Hinen-tsiang*; the map in Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*; Yule, *The Book of Marco Polo*, ii, p. 36. Here we follow Sir Aurel's version, *Serindia*, p. 1097ff. which is based on the sources just mentioned but enriched with his personal experiences of the terrain.

the young barbarian, who was unwilling to venture further, was discharged, and Xuanzang set out alone on the track leading to the first watch-tower which lay at 80 li (ca. 40 km) from the river crossing. Travelling along the track indicated by bones of dead animals and beset by mirages, Xuanzang arrived at the first watch-tower where he hid himself until nightfall. On trying to replenish his water bottle from the source near the tower, he was shot at. Declaring that he was a monk from the capital, he was taken to the commandant, a native from Dunhuang called Wanghsiang, who received him kindly. Unable to persuade Xuanzang to return, he directed him in the morning towards the fourth watch-tower, commanded by a relative of his. Arriving there, Xuanzang was again shot at and taken to the commandant. On learning of Wanghsiang's message, he offered the monk a hospitable welcome but warned him against approaching the fifth and last tower as it was held by men of a violent disposition. Instead, he was advised to go to a spring a 100 li (ca. 50 km) off, called Yehmachuan or "the spring of the wild horses" A short distance from this fourth tower, Xuanzang entered the Mohoyen desert which is 800 li (ca. 400 km) in length. In ancient times it was called Shaho or "the river of sand" Neither birds, nor quadrupeds, nor water, nor pasturage were seen there. Xuanzang lost his way and failed to find the spring of the wild horses. He dropped the big waterskin he had been given at the fourth watch-tower and lost the water. Not knowing which direction to take, he began to return to the fourth watch-tower but then, after 10 li (ca. 5 km), he reminded himself of his oath not to take his way eastwards again before having reached India. Praying fervently he directed his steps to the northwest. All around, he saw only limitless plains without a trace of man or horse. Troubled at night by lights lit by wicked spirits, and in day-time by terrible sand storms, he suffered cruel torments from thirst. Having travelled thus for four nights and five days without water, he lay down, exhausted. In the middle of the fifth night, after fervent prayers, he felt refreshed by a cool breeze and found rest in a short sleep. A divine vision seen in his dream urged him to move ahead. After about 10 li, his horse, which had managed to get on its legs afresh, suddenly turned into another direction and, after a few more li, carried him to a plot of green pasture. Having allowed his horse to graze, he was about to move on when he discovered a pool of clear water and felt saved. After a day's halt at this spot, he continued his journey with a fresh supply of water and fodder and,

emerging from the desert, arrived at Iwu.[77] Having left China clandestinely, Xuanzang upon returning had to request the emperor's pardon for this trespass before being permitted to enter the country again.

Iwu then was the capital of a principality subordinate to the kingdom of Gaochang,[78] the name under which the two kingdoms north and south of the eastern Tianshan Mountains were known. In 640 Gaochang had become a Chinese province under the name of Sizhou (Xizhou).[79] The treatise with maps on the Western Countries, composed in 608 by the imperial commissioner Pei Chu, shows that already by that time the so-called "Route of the Centre"[80] reached Turfan via Iwu, as the modern Chinese high road does.[81] The direct route from Dunhuang to Iwu made it possible for the Chinese to reach Turfan and the region north of the eastern Tianshan with far less natural difficulties through want of water, grazing grounds etc., than the ancient Loulan route. There was thus in Sallam's time a route which led from Turfan to Iwu (Igu), Anxi, Dunhuang and Yumenguan,[82] substantially the same as the present-day high road.

Anxi–Dunhuang

Anxi was closely connected with Dunhuang. An inscription of 894 refers to a prefect of Guazhou in 850, who was the grandson of the local chief of Dunhuang. His elder brother held the prefecture of Dunhuang.[83] Famous archaeologists and explorers such as Futterer, Bonin, Stein, Hedin and Przevalski, and Western travellers like Carey and Dalgleish, Warner, Cable and French and, quite recently, Ollivier, have left travel accounts which illustrate, as it were, Sallam's itinerary on his outward journey, giving it a sense of reality.

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[77] The statement that Xuanzang proceeded in a single march from the first signal tower to the fourth, Stein, *Serindia*, p. 1154, remarks, is in contradiction with the text elsewhere. For the rest, Xuanzang's account agrees with the topographical facts.

[78] i.e. Ḳarakhodja (Ḳočo). According to Yule, *Cathay*, iv, p. 237 n. 3, the king of Gaochang had his capital in Kiaoho (Yarkhoto).

[79] Bretschneider, *Medieval researches*, i, p. 244.

[80] Cf. Chapter 11, p. ■■ (no. 2).

[81] Stein, *Serindia*, p. 426.

[82] Stein, *Serindia*, p. 553ff., 705ff. ("The New Route of the North").

[83] Stein, *Serindia*, p. 1092.

Carey describes in 1887 the section of the northern branch of the Silk Road between Shazhou (Dunhuang) and Urumchi via Hami.[84] On the left bank of the Danga-köl, and about one and a half km above Shazhou was the site of the old city, the limits of which could easily be traced by the ruined walls, still standing. The high road led over saline soil to Gudak Jingzo, whose resthouse was full of fantastic idols, gorgeously painted and with droll expressions. Past a small fort and tower, the plain was dotted with abandoned forts fast falling into ruin. At about 80 miles (120 km) from Shazhou the travellers entered the desert. On a fairly good road they marched for about 175 miles (260 km) to El-Timar. A further 30 miles (45 km) brought them to Hami. The Chinese town was inside a small but neatly built mud fort—one is reminded of Sallam's description. At a short distance to the north-west was the old town, peopled exclusively by Turks under their own *wang* or hereditary governor. According to Carey the distance from Shazhou to Hami was about 250 miles (375 km), that between Hami and Turfan about 230 miles (350 km), and that between Turfan and Urumchi about 125 miles (190 km). On the road to Urumchi the travellers saw long strings of camels carrying frozen fish from lake Baghrash for sale in Urumchi.[85]

Warner[86] describes the journey he made from Peking to Dunhuang via Xian, Lanzhou, Liangzhou and Ganzhou. From Shazhou (Dunhuang) he made an excursion in a north-eastern direction along the Etsin-göl[87] to the oasis Maomei (Maomu), on the Mongolian border, and to Etsina, the "City of Marco Polo".[88] The rampart, Warner writes, "seemed full thirty feet high and in some places I could see crenelated bits left undestroyed on the parapet" Warner then went back to Anhsi via Maomei, Ganzhou, Shazhou and Kiayuguan (also Jiayuguan), the present-day western end of the Great Wall of China.

The itinerary proposed above for Sallam's outward journey from the Ili river to Dunhuang and Yumenguan also finds confirmation

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[84] Carey, *A journey around Chinese Turkestan*, p. 747-749; *Carey, Journey of Carey and Dalgleish*, p. 48-54.

[85] Carey and Dalgleish continued their journey to Kucham Bai, Aqsu, Yarkand and finally back to Leh and Simla; see also the map in Carey, *A journey around Chinese Turkestan*, p. 790.

[86] Warner, *The long road*, p. 75-83, and map on p. 12.

[87] Mongolian for "Black Water", Chin. Hweiho.

[88] Cf. Yule, *The Book of Marco Polo*, i, p. 223.

in the journey made in 1926 by Mildred Cable and Francesca French,[89] in the opposite direction. The entire region from the Kiayuguan to the Siberian frontier, they write, is known in China as "without the mouth", an area of enforced exile. From Suzhou, Cable and French travelled to Yumen and Anhsi, where they entered the Gobi desert, "a limitless expanse of grey grit mixed with small black pebbles, so windswept as to have lost its sandy surface in the gales" They passed places with beneficial names like "Great Spring" and the "Park of Tamarisk'. After the frontier station of Xinjiang, they came to a narrow pass called "The Ravine of Baboons" Via the "Spring of the Sands", the "Spring of Bitter Water" and the "Inexhaustible Spring" they reached Hami, which they describe as a large and fertile oasis, stretching 7 miles (11 km) to north and south and 5 miles (8 km) to east and west, "an island of green in an ocean of sand".[90] The town is also called the "Oasis of the Gourd", the "Shameful City of Comul" (see Marco Polo),[91] and the "Key to Dzungaria" The two women call the journey from Suzhou to Hami "unmitigated bitterness", and the Hami–Urumchi route "medium between the bitter and the sweet".[92]

Two main routes part from Hami: the Nanlu or 'South Road' which leads to Aqsu and Kashgar, and the Beilu or 'North Road' to Urumchi, the Ili valley and Kuldja. Cable and French took the latter, which led them to the town and the lake of Barkol, the "Cart-Wheel Halt" and the "Seven-Cornered Well", where the routes divide to Turfan and Guchen. Cable and French, and perhaps Sallam before them, took the Guchen route, which traverses the Tianshan through a gorge (the Dzungarian Gate) with high rocks on either side, leading to the Dzungarian plain. Via the "Great Stone", from where a foot-track led to Barkol and a short cut over the mountains to Turfan, they reached the ancient city Guchen, the terminus of the great desert trade-route which starts at Peking. Passing by the "Mount of God" (Khan Tengri, at ca. 23000 feet/7000 m), they finally reached

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[89] Cable–French, *Through the Jade Gate*, p. 180ff. The two authors were missionaries of the Inland Mission of China, established in London.

[90] Cable–French, *Through the Jade Gate*, p. 185, 212.

[91] A reference to the hospitality practices in that town, cf. above p. ■■ (15 n. 75).

[92] The route from Hami to Anhsi, and further to Suzhou is also described by Futterer, *Geographische Skizze der Wüste Gobi* (with map). He travelled in 30 days from Hami to Suzhou.

Urumchi in southern Dzungaria. From here, trade routes part to Mongolia, Kashgar and Hami in Chinese Gansu. The distance from Suzhou to Urumchi was 1500 miles (2200 km). From Urumchi the route led to Changli, Hutubi, Manas, Hansantai (east of lake Aibihu), Laofengkou and Tacheng (Chuguchak).[93] Through the Tarbagatai and Sair Mountains they reached lake Zaisan.[94] The distance between Urumchi and Chuguchak was 700 miles (1000 km).

In spring-summer of the year 2002 Bernard Ollivier,[95] marching from Turfan to Xian on the former Silk Road, passed by Hami, Anhsi and Yumen "la porte de Jade", again the itinerary we propose for that part of Sallam's outward journey.

Information about the distance between Igu and Dunhuang varies. Xuanzang speaks of three stages, Sallam of three days, the cosmography *Jihan-nüma* of Katib Chelebi[96] notes twenty-five days. Modern travellers such as Von Richthofen[97] speak of eight days, and Hopkirk[98] of three weeks and also of seventeen days. The number of stages depends, on the travelling speed. For the same distance caravan travellers needed five months, the post thirty-five days, and the express fifteen days.

Dunhuang

If Sallam indeed travelled to Igu (Hami) and returned via Loulan at the northern side of lake Lop Nor, he cannot have missed Dunhuang.[99] In 111 B.C. the Han emperor Wudi established west of the present-day Jiayuguan gate in the Great Wall, at the eastern border of the desert called "Moving Sand" (Liusha), a fortified town and district, known as Dunhuang. The town became the starting point of the early Chinese expeditions into the west. The Chinese pilgrim

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[93] On the Russian border, colloquial Beya i.e. "The Town of the Seagulls" The birds follow the Irtysh all the way.

[94] From here a boat took the missionaries to Semipalatinsk and further to Omsk, where they boarded the Siberian Railway to Moscow.

[95] Ollivier, *Longue marche*, iii.

[96] Kātib Čelebī, *Ǧihān-nümā*, p. 50; cf. EI² *s.v.* no. 9 (O.S. Gökya).

[97] Von Richthofen, *China*, i, p. 496.

[98] Hopkirk, *Foreign devils*, p. 17, 133.

[99] For a description of this famous Buddhist centre, cf. Stein, *Desert Cathay*, ii, p. 34ff.; Pelliot, *Notes*, ii, p. 822, also 813, 814. The *Ḥudūd* (Minorsky, ibid., p. 85, 233) notes that Sājū [Shazhou] is a prosperous oasis and that the inhabitants profess the faith of Mani. Lying between the mountains [in the north] and the desert [of Lop Nor in the south], it is the first Chinese town on the road from Ḳomul [Igu]. The *Ǧihān-numā* of Kātib Čelebī, 507, calls the place Sekju.

Xuanzang passed it on his way to India in 629. Upon his return in 645 he calls it Shazhou[100] or "Sand Town", as it had been renamed during his absence. It had come under Tang domination in 618 and remained under Chinese administration until 781, when it fell into the hands of the Tibetans. On the break-up of the Tibetan state in the 850s, Dunhuang nominally reverted to Tang rule, but in fact came in the hands of a family of local Uygur governors of Ganzhou, who set up an independent state in 905.[101] The commander, who according to Sallam had the hereditary function of guarding the barrier of 'the two-horned one', may have been a member of one of these Uygur families.

When Sallam arrived at Dunhuang, the frontier town had already for centuries been an important commercial and religious centre for merchants, travellers and Buddhist pilgrims. The caliph's envoy arrived in a melting-pot of various languages, peoples and religions: Chinese, Sogdians, Khotanese, Indians, Tokharians, Tibetans, Uygurs and other Turks, Arabs and Persians. If coming from the west, the traveller entered here Chinese-administered territory. For the Chinese merchants who left here familiar ground, Dunhuang was the last town and possibility to organize their caravans before they had to face the dreadful Taklamakan desert and the unknown and hostile West. The town was well defended. Beyond Dunhuang the trade route from China to the West split into a north-western and a south-western branch. The former passed the river Yanguan and continued along the northern rim of the Tarim Basin to the oases of Turfan, Karashahr, Kucha, Aqsu and Tumchuq to Kashgar. The south-western branch passed the Yumenguan, situated to the south-west of Dunhuang, went to Loulan at Lop Nor and continued along the northern ramparts of Tibet and the southern desert edge to the oases of Miran, Endere, Niya, Keriya, Khotan and Yarkand, to finally rejoin the northern branch at Kashgar.

At Dunhuang, Buddhist paintings were being executed (Mogao Caves) while Sallam found himself at this great centre of religion and commerce. A Bodhisattva in the northern part of the central altar, Cave 196, is dated in the late Tang Period (848-906), i.e. shortly after Sallam had left the site. The hall with the inverted funnel-

[100] Bretschneider, *Medieval researches*, ii, p. 19. In European sources, the transliteration of Shazhou varies greatly, cf. Yule, Cathay, iv, p. 241 n. 2 and index. According to Von Richthofen, *China*, i, p. 24, Dunhuang is Ptolemy's Daxata, cf. A. Herrmann, *An historical Atlas of China*, Edinburgh 1966, p. 14 (A 1).

[101] Bretschneider, *Medieval researches*, ii, p. 241; cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■ (19f.).

shaped ceiling and central stupa-pillar, Cave 17, dates from the same period, while a Buddha in Nirvana, Cave 158, dates from the Mid-Tang dynasty (781-847), as does other sculptures of the famous caves.

5. *Summary of the outward journey*

Samarra*–Ardabil–Tiflis*–Northern Daghestan (Khumzakh on the left bank of the Avar Qöy-su)–Sarir* (modern Daghestan)–Samandar (on the Caspian Sea north of Derbent)–Caucasian Gate (Darial Pass, east of Mount Kazbek)–Maghas (capital of the Alans near Vladikavkaz–Itil* (near Astrakhan)–Basjirt (southern Ural)–Gurjev–Dzezkasgan,

then either

on a northern course to Karazal–Aktogaj–lake Aibihu–the Dzungarian Gate,

or

on a southern course to Koktas (on lake Balkhash)–upstream the Ili river–Kabchagay–lake Aibihu–the Dzungarian Gate–Kuldja (south of lake Sayram)–Talki Pass,

then either

to Manas–Urumchi - Turfan–Hami (Igu*),

or

to Urumchi–Guchen–Barkol

Karakhoja (Qocho)–Bukluk–Hami (Igu*)–Anhsi (Anxi)–Altmishbalik–Dunhuang–Yumenguan (at ca. 80 km north-west of Dunhuang).

Placed on a modern map, Sallam's outward journey started in Iraq, and took him through Persia to the Caucasus, Russia, Kalmykia (capital Elista), Bashkiria (capital Ufa), Kazakhstan (capital Astana; until late 1997 Almaty, formerly Alma Ata), Xinjiang (capital Urumchi).

6. *Distances and duration of the journey*

The outward journey, Sallam reports, took sixteen months, the homeward journey twelve months and a couple of days. These data are only useful if they can be brought in relation with the distances covered. Only then an average speed per day can be calculated, which in its turn is an indication for the feasibility of the journey.[102]

[102] The distance over land between Sāmarrā' and Yumenguan was established by Dr. J. Roodenberg (NINO, Leiden) with the help of the *Operational navigation charts* of the US Government, published by The National Imagery and Mapping Agency 1996-97, scale 1:1.000.000, and of a *Classic* map measurer.

Samarra–Ardabil–Tiflis	410 km
Tiflis–Itil–Gurjev	1440 km
Gurjev–Dzezkasgan	400 km
sub-total	**2250 km**

From Dzezkasgan to Lake Aibihu

a. *the Northern Route*:

Dzezkasgan–Karazal	260 km
Karazal–Aktogaj	720 km
Aktogaj–Aibihu	360 km
sub-total	**1340 km**

b. *the Southern Route*:

Dzezkasgan–Koktas	550 km
Koktas–Kabchagay	420 km
Kabchagay–Aibihu	540 km
sub-total	**1510 km**

Aibihu–Urumchi	400 km
Urumchi–Turfan–Igu	550 km
Igu–Dunhuang	420 km
Dunhuang–Yumenguan	80 km
sub-total	**1450 km**

Samarra–Aibihu–Yumenguan:

a. *the Northern Route*:

	2250 km
	1340 km
	1450 km
sub-total	**5040 km**
+ 10% correction	504 km
total	**5584 km**

b. *the Southern Route*:

	2250 km
	1510 km
	1450 km
sub-total	**5210 km**
+ 10% correction	521 km
total	**5731 km**

The Northern Route: 5584 km / 16 months = 349 km per month / 30 days = ca. 12 km (11,63 km) per day.

The Southern Route: 5731 km / 16 months = 358 km per month / 30 days = ca. 12 km (11,93 km) per day.

With such a travelling speed per day the outward journey of Sallam was quite feasible. It could include the delays caused by illness, death-cases, difficult terrain and other prevention.

DESTINATION REACHED

After a six days' march beyond Igu Sallam reaches, he says, the aim of his journey: the barrier of 'the two-horned one' It is controlled by a guard under a commander whose function is hereditary. To show to the caliph that he indeed had seen and examined the barrier, he describes it in full detail and takes some iron-dust with him.[103]

The reader of Sallam's travel account is left with many questions. It gives no information about tribes, and very little about topography. But the most intriguing question, it seems to us, is his description of the barrier against Gog and Magog. Sallam's description certainly is not based on his inspection of an existing construction, for the simple reason: it never existed as such! Nor is there any proof that iron, or iron-dust was found in that region at that time. It is a fantasy, just like those found in the Syriac tradition. Other purely fictitious or symbolic elements in the travel account are such as the striking camp of the 'two-horned one' in Igu, and Gog and Magog being responsible for the destruction of the ruined towns. One may even wonder if Ibn Khurradadhbih inserted the description of the barrier into his *Book of Routes* as another example of the "wonders of the world".[104] It is then tempting to relegate this passage, and by implication the entire travel account, to the realm of phantasm. Yet, many elements of Sallam's travel are verifiable, with Tiflis and Igu as incontestable realities. The material scraped from the barrier, the commander and his soldiers, the inscription in "the primordial language" found, according to Sallam, in iron letters on the gate —[105]even if not a Koranic text, as Sallam pretends, yet pointing to

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[103] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■.

[104] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (11).

[105] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (6). It is quite unlikely that there existed in the 9th century—or before or after—a Chinese text confirming that a quotation from the Koran was found on a Chinese custom post in the Taklamakan desert, saying that this is the barrier of 'the two-horned one'. That there was an inscription on the gate, on the other hand, is quite likely, for it was a custom of old in China to put inscriptions on doors and gates.

a
well-known Chinese custom—have a sense of reality. They seem to indicate a concrete location. Sallam gives the impression to have reached, at a certain point, a building, construction or post in which he sees—or says to see—the barrier against Gog and Magog. This place evidently is the point of his return to Samarra. What kind of building may have given Sallam the idea of having reached his destination?

A relation between the Great Wall of China and the stories around the barrier is not to be excluded altogether. The impressive building, especially after its completion under the emperor Wudi of the Han dynasty (regn. 141-87 B.C.), may well have been discussed far and wide among the nomads in the Central Asian steppes and have found their way to the Near East along the Silk Road. Consequently, Sallam may already have had an idea, be it vague and out of proportion, of what he was going to see before actually seeing anything.
The landscape Xinjiang, as shown above, knew—and still knows—a plethora of impressive landmarks. The most important, at least in the region between Igu and Lop Nor were Dunhuang and Yumenguan, the "Barrier of the Jade" or "Jade Gate", which is found on the southern branch of the Silk Road, west of Dunhuang. Whether Yumenguan can be considered as the building considered by Sallam as the aim of his journey—and which he wanted the caliph to consider as such without telling him what in fact it was—will be the subject of this chapter.

1. *Yumenguan or the Barrier of the Jade Gate*

The Yumenguan took its name from the barrier gate (Chin. *menguan*), the custom post on the southern branch of the Silk Road which ran from Khotan to Xian (Changan). The Chinese term *guan*[106] may already have been familiar to Sallam, at least since his visit of Igu. For the locals, the guan par excellence was the Yumenguan. Whether Sallam, or the Muslims he met, saw a relation between Chinese *guan* and Arabic *sadd*, the Koranic word for the barrier, cannot be decided, but is not to be excluded either. *Yu*, the other element of Yumenguan, means jade. The import of jade from Khotan of this highly appreci-

[106] Cf. Chapter 10, p. ■■ (15).

ated commodity was controlled at the Jade Gate. Another important defence and custom post on the frontier of the Chinese empire with the *Xiyu* or "Western countries" was Yanguan, built during the reign of the Han emperor Wudi in about 120 B.C.

2. *Various locations of Yumenguan*

Several studies have been devoted to the location of the border station Yumenguan, all based on Chinese written sources and/or archaeological surveys and excavations. According to the Imperial Annals of the Han dynasty, the Loulan route (from Dunhuang to Lop Nor (Loulan), in our view taken by Sallam upon leaving the Jade Gate,[107] started from a fortified border station called Yumenguan. Yanguan, the other guan in the Western approaches, was situated at ca. 3 km west of the sub-prefecture of Shouchang, the present-day oasis of Nanhu, west of Dunhuang, while Yumenguan was at ca. 59 km north-west of Dunhuang.[108] The position of Yanguan never changed, but that of the Yumenguan occasionally switched from one location to another, as we will see below. Yumenguan controlled the route to Loulan. A "Jade Gate army" was kept at ca. 100 km east of Dunhuang, from where it was transposed to the west.[109]

At ca. 100 B.C. the Jade Pass or Jade Gate was established at about 100 km west of Dunhuang, but was abandoned when the main route of the west was deviated at Guazhou (Guazhoucheng) in the direction of Igu and Turfan. According to Kanyin, an author from Dunhuang who around 435 was governor of Liangzhou (now Wuwei in Gansu) the Jade Gate had already been abandoned under the Han dynasty (202 B.C.—220 A.D.). Its garrison, transferred to the sub-prefecture of Yumen, was abolished in 627. Under the threat of the invading Tibetans, Yumen became a garrison town with 3000 men. After the Tibetan conquest, the name of Yumen disappeared

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[107] Cf. Chapter 12, p. ■■.

[108] Giles, *A Topographical Fragment*, 553; E. Chavannes, *Dix inscriptions chinoises de l'Asie centrale d'après les estampages de M. Chr.R. Bonin*, in: *Extraits des Mémoires présentés à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, I^ere^ série, t. i, 2e partie, Paris 1902, p. 67 n. 2; Stein, *Serindia*, p. 620.

[109] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 101. Already Chavannes and Stein had proposed to locate that primitive Yumen to the east of Dunhuang. This location was criticized by Giles, *A Topographical Fragment*, p. 553f.

from administrative topology until the Manchus (1644-1911) re-established the sub-prefecture of this name.[110]

It is however also reported that Yumen, under the Tang (618-907) depended from the prefecture of Suzhou, a trade centre on the Silk Road between Ganzhou and Yumenguan, and that the name of Yumenguan was given to posts considered to guard the beginning of the route to the west.[111]

In 813 a Yumenguan, specifically distinguished from its older namesake,
was located west of Dunhuang, at about 30 m west of the sub-prefecture of Guazhou. This means that the post of customs control called "Pass of the Jade Gate" was located near the town of Guazhou. Sallam's reference to the commander who rode out to inspect the barrier[112] seems to find support here.
The Yumenguan of the early Tang, crossed by Xuanzang in 629 and located at ca. 25 km north of Guazhou, is identified by Lao Kan with the remains of an ancient well at about 25 km north of present-day Kouyutcheng. The latter is found at about 150 km east of Dunhuang. The Guazhou of the Tang, according to Lao Kan, is then to be located here, and not, as Stein wanted, at the actual Guazhoucheng near Ngansi, which is much further to the east, at about 300 km from Tsientsuan and about 100 km from Dunhuang. By 814, however, the pass had been transferred to a spot east of the prefecture of Guazhou. In 865, finally, Yumen is mentioned as lying between Guazhou and Suzhou. If Sallam's barrier can be identified with the Yumenguan of his days, it probably is to be located near Guazhou.
Aurel Stein was one of the first Western archaeologists in the early 20th century who described the ancient Jade Gate. It was on his journey from Loulan to Dunhuang that he discovered near Dunhuang a regular wall constructed of horizontal reed bundles placed at regular intervals across layers of stamped clay, the whole consolidated by

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[110] Lao Kan, *Etude sur les vestiges des Deux Passes*, in: *Bulletin Histoire Phil. Acad. Sinica* 11 (1947), p. 287-290.

[111] Lao Kan, *Etude sur les vestiges des Deux Passes*, p. 287-290, is of the opinion, that already in early Han times the sub-prefecture of Yumen was found at ca. 110 km west of Suzhou, near the actual defile of Tchekin.

[112] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (5). Under the Tang dynasty, the pass apparently had a nomadic character and was no more used (except by Sallām ?), cf. P. Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa : une controverse sur le quiétisme entre bouddhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe siècle de l'ère chrétienne*, Paris 1952 (Reprint: 1987), p. 309.

permeating salts. At places the wall was remarkably well-preserved. The gate, he described, most probably was similar to which Sallam saw in his days: The wall was fully 5 m at the base and had a big opening resembling a pointed arch 3,90 m wide below. The arch seemed to have been caused accidentally by the mass of clay falling outward, obviously by wind-erosion. The gap had been closed by rough brickwork which seemed late. The true entrance to the little stronghold led through the west wall and was only 2,40 m wide. The interior was about 16 m.[113] Records found here and archaeological observations led to the conclusion that the famous Jade Gate could have been located at this site.

A modern publication by Luo–Zhewen represents the ruins of the Jade Gate in its present state. They published a sketch map of the Han Great Wall, which ends at Puchanghai, one station beyond Yumenguan. The latter, situated at 80 km north-west of Dunhuang, is known as "Square Fortification": "It lies between two mountains south-east and north of the Sulo river, which is fed by an underground source. It forms a small lake, which in ancient times provided Yumenguan with water for soldiers, horses and fields. The fortification lies on the south bank of the lake, and is protected by the Great Wall which, on the northern side of the river, stretches to east and west for 2,5 km. Other buildings, such as warehouses, garrisons etc. which are part of a guan, have been destroyed. The fortification at Yumenguan is nearly square, 23 m from west to east and 23,6 m from north to south. At the top, the wall is 2,8 m thick, the exterior of the foundation, partly destroyed, is still about 3 m, originally probably 5 m. The wall is now 10,9 m high. Through the west gate of Yumenguan the road leads along the interior part of the wall straight to Lop Nor. The Great Wall here is not in a very good condition; it is 5,2 m high and over 2 m thick, built of sand, crushed stones, tamarisk branches or reeds. Inside and outside are the remains of many beacon towers. One of them is the Danggusui Beacon Tower, situated at about 4 km west of Yumenguan. To the south-east of the tower are the remains of a few small rooms, supposedly for soldiers on duty. Stairs lead to the square, earthen platform on the top of

[113] In view of the very dry, conserving climate of the region, photographs dating from the pre-touristic period, such as Stein's, visualize what Sallām may have seen back in the 9th c. For the very impressive ruins of what is said to have been a warehouse near Dunhuang, cf. id., *Serindia*, p. 684; id., *On ancient tracks*, p. 166, 171, 177-192.

the tower, each side being 7,8 m long. The remains of the platform are 7,8 m high, with a distinct narrowing at the top [Sallam's merlons possibly refer to this]. Many wooden slips were found, dating back to the time of the Han dynasty, with records of Yumenguan, the Great Wall and the beacon towers. The district military commander had his office at Yumenguan, and was responsible for fifteen signal stations [we are again reminded of Sallam's description of the barrier, of its commander in particular]. Sometimes there was a line of signal stations only, without any wall, as was the case in the section between Yumenguan and Puchanghai. Such signal stations included a watch tower with rooms for soldiers, horse sheds, sheep-pens, storerooms for weapons etc. The watch towers of the Han dynasty were mostly square with a narrowing at the top, about 12 m high".[114]

3. *Abu Dulaf's Risala and Sallam's barrier*

The identification of Sallam's barrier with the Yumenguan of his days seems to find confirmation in the much-debated first epistle (*Risala*) of Abu Dulaf *Misʿar b. al-Muhalhil* (10th c.).[115] He describes his journey from Bukhara to Sandabil in the company of the envoys of the Turkish prince Kalin b. Shakhir, who were returning to Sandabil after their visit to the Samanid ruler Nasr b. Ahmad (regn. 914-43).[116] The reliability of this *Risala* is considered doubtful. According to

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[114] Zhewen–Luo, *The Great Wall*, p. 32, 39-41 (photos p. 18-19).

A Chinese publication called [AA.VV.], **敦煌研究院　　编**, *China Dunhuang*, 2001 (ISBN 7-5344-1108-4), p. 2f., reads: "Yumenguan (Western Han), locally named "Small Square Plate City (Castle)" is one of the important passes on the road between the ancient central plain and the various states of the Western Region. The beautiful jades of Khotan and other places in the Western Region were transported to the central plain through this pass. It therefore received the name of "Jade Gate Pass" (also called "Gate Pass"). The city wall remained basically intact. The pass has a height of ten metres, the north-western length is 26,4 m, the east-western width is 24 m, the total floor space is more than 630 m^2. There are two gates, one in the western wall, the other in the northern wall. Outside the city wall is a west-east road, the famous Silk Road" (transl. by Dr. Jin Jie, Leiden).

[115] Abū Dulaf, Misʿar b. Muhalhil al-Khazradjī al-Yanbuʿī, cf. EI[1] *s.v.* (C. Brockelmann), EI[2] *s.v.* (V. Minorsky); G. Ferrand, *Voyage de Abu Dulaf*, in: *Relations de voyages et textes géographiques arabes, persans et turks relatifs à l'Extrême Orient du 8e au 18e siècles*, Paris 1913-14, p. 208-229. The two risālas are also found in the Mashhad ms. used by Massé (see Pellat's avertissement to Massé's *Abrégé du Livre des Pays*, p. VII).

[116] Cf. EI[2] *s.v.* Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Ismaʿīl (C.E. Bosworth). The journey is mentioned in Yāḳūt, *Muʿdjam*, iii, p. 445 (under al-Ṣīn).

Bosworth, it has the air of being rather "a tall traveller's tale".[117] Marquart considers Abu Dulaf's account "a disaster" He nevertheless endeavoured to identify Sandabil with Ganzhou in Gansu province, the capital of the Western Uygurs, which lay on the highway from Xian (Changan) to Dunhuang.[118]

Abu Dulaf's report shows similarity with Sallam's travel account on two points: the relation between Yemen and China, and the references to Yumenguan and Dunhuang. The first point of interest is the link which Abu Dulaf makes between Yemen and China. He mentions Bedouins from Yemen who were found in *al-Kulayb*, where they had been left behind after the campaign which the Tubba' (said to have been Yemenite kings)[119] had carried out against China. Abu

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[117] C.E. Bosworth, *The medieval Islamic underworld: the Banū Sasān in Arabic society and literature*, Leiden 1978, i, p. 48ff., p. 51, 60, 69. A. von Rohr-Sauer, *Des Abû Dulaf Bericht über eine Reise nach Turkestân, China und Indien. Neu übersetzt und untersucht*, Stuttgart 1939, p. 41, 57, 72, seems to believe in the *bona fides* of the author, but Minorsky, *Tamīm b. Bahr*, p. 276 rather agrees with H. von Mžik, in: *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 1942, p. 240ff., who thinks that Abū Dulaf's report is a mixtum oppositum, "eine Fälschung von der es nur fraglich ist, ob wir sie Abû Dulaf selbst oder einem späteren einschreiben sollen".

[118] Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 88-90. Marquart identifies the "gate" with Yumen, and Abū Dulaf's "wadi of the station" with the fort and custom-barrier of Kiayuguan, situated, as he says, not far from the town of Suzhou. Marquart thus distinguishes between Yumen and Kiayuguan. Taken by itself this is correct. But, by referring to De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 116, Marquart implicitly says that his Kiayuguan is the same as the one De Goje was writing about. De Goeje confused the syllabe *yu* of Yumenguan with that of Kiayuguan/Jiayuguan. In Yumenguan, *yu* means "jade", in Kiayuguan/Jiayuguan, *yu* means "abundant, plentiful", the whole word meaning "the good, plentiful guan" The difference between Kiayuguan and Jiayuguan is due to the difference in the transliteration of the Chinese character (the Wade-Giles system as against the Pinyin system, cf. e.g. W. Lindesay, *Alone on the Great Wall: from the desert to the sea*, London–Sydney 1989, p. 57). Kia-/Jia-yuguan lies in the Gansu corridor at 40 km west of the town of Jiuquan and is the frequently visited terminus of the present-day Great Wall of China, built in 1372 under the Ming dynasty (cf. e.g. Zhewen–Luo, *The Great Wall*, p. 6, 70 (photos p. 70, 71). It cannot be identified with the "Jade Gate" Yumenguan, because it did not yet exist in Sallām's time, nor in Abū Dulaf's days.

The difference between Jiayuguan and Yumenguan was known to Bonin, *Voyage de Pékin*, who between April 1899 and April 1900, travelled from Peking back to France along Marco Polo's route. He crossed the Great Wall at Jiayuguan, entered the desert, and writes that during eight days the only noteworthy spot till Anxi (Anhsi) was Yumenguan "isolated in the middle of the Gobi. It is not linked to the Great Wall as most maps have it"

[119] A pre-islamic colony of Himyarite Arabs is said to have settled in the region. These Beduins also used himyaritic letters in writing, see Gardīzī, *Kitāb Zayn al-akhbar*, p. 263; cf. A.L.F. Beeston, *Hamdānī and the Ṭabābi'ah*, in: Yūsuf b. 'Abdullāh (ed.), *Hamdani, a great Yemenite scholar*, Sana 1986, p. 5-15; Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*,

Dulaf relates that these Bedouins spoke "the original Arabic language", expression which reminds us of the inscription in "the primordial language" found, according to Sallam, on the barrier of 'the two-horned one'.

Marquart sees in *al-Kulayb* a reference to Lop Nor, i.e. "Lake Lop".[120] It is to be remarked that the apposition *kul* (*köl*) "lake" is usually found behind the proper name, i.e. Issyk-köl. Abu Dulaf's *Risala* seems to suggest that he indeed found himself near lake Lop (Kulayb).[121]

Relations between Yemen and China had already been mentioned by Ibn Hawqal,[122] although he seems reluctant to admit them. Some people, he writes, pretend that the city of Samarkand was founded by a Tubba' and also that 'the two-horned one' was said to have been the founder of their city, or at least of part of it. Abu Bakr of Damascus told Ibn Hawqal that he had seen an iron tablet on the great gate in Samarkand. It carried an inscription which, according to the inhabitants, was written in the Himyarite language.[123] Its deciphering had been transmitted from father to son, while it was assured that its author had been a Tubba'. Among other things the inscription said that the distance between San'a and Samarkand is 1000 parasangs (ca. 6000 km). Samarkand and San'a were said to have had the same founder and Samarkand's ruler was said to have been a Tubba', who resided one full year in San'a and the next in Samarkand. During a revolt the gate on which the tablet was found, had been set to fire; the gate had been restored in iron, in the way it had been before, but the tablet had not been restored.[124]

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p. 326, Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 386; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, i, p. 351; iii, p. 142, 218; Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, iii p. 445-458 (under al-Ṣīn).

Abū Dulaf's *nisba* al-Yanbū'ī refers to Yanbū', the Red Sea port in the western Ḥidjāz, see EI² *s.v.* (E. van Donzel).

[120] Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 84.

[121] In the report of Shah Rūkh's embassy (cf. Chapter 10, p. ■■ 15, the lake is called *l.w.b.* (Lūb) or *l.b* (Lub), which seems to confirm Marquart's interpretation. The embassy took the route: Bukhārā–Tashkent–Toḳmaḳ [on lake Issyk-köl]–Aḳsu–Ḳuča–Ḳarashahr–Turfan–Ḳomul–Suzhou–Ganzhou.

[122] Kramers–Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, ii, p. 474.

[123] al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 318, relates that he saw on the Bāb Kishsh an iron slab (*ṣafiḥa*) with an inscription about which the inhabitants pretended that it was written in the Ḥimyaritic language (*al-ḥimyariya*).

[124] al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 318; Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 326, Massé, *Abrégé*, p. 386. Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, iii, p. 136, remarks that, according to al-Asmā'ī [the philologist, EI² *s.v.* (B. Lewis)], the gate of Samarkand carried, in the Himyaritic language, the following inscription: "From this town to Ṣan'ā 1000 parasangs, to

The second point of similarity between Abu Dulaf's *Risala* and Sallam's account seems to be the reference to Yumenguan and Dunhuang. Abu Dulaf, upon leaving al-Kulayb, reached after thirty days to what he calls "the station of the gate" (*maqam al-bab*). He describes it as "a place in the sand", what Yumenguan at one point certainly was, and still is (see plate ■■). The border guards of the emperor of China, Abu Dulaf further says, were stationed there to control the traffic and permission to enter the country had to be requested here. From this place a three days' journey leads to the *wadi al-maqam* "the wadi of the station", from where Sandabil can be reached in two days. At one of the gates, the wall was 90 cubits high (ca. 46 m), and 90 cubits thick. Next to the wall was a very large river. The town had an enormous temple, said to be bigger than that of Jerusalem. There were images and statues, among which a huge one of the Buddha. The people did not slaughter animals, nor did they eat any meat. If someone killed an animal, he was killed himself. There lived also Indians and Turks.

It seems evident that Abu Dulaf describes the Jade Gate, the river Sulo and the Buddhist centre of Dunhuang. Abu Dulaf undoubtedly travelled on the same branch of the Silk Road to Loulan (Lop Nor), to the Yumenguan and to Dunhuang, as Xuanzang and Sallam had done before him on their homeward journeys, be it in opposite direction.

4. *Yumenguan: the gate to the West*

In a Chinese geographical work, the *Weilio*, composed by a certain Yuhuan between 239 and 265, three routes are said to start from Yumenguan to the West:

1) The *Route of the South.* It passed the Jachang, a nomadic tribe in the mountains between Dunhuang and Cherchen and then turned

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Baghdād and Ifrīḳiya 1000, to Sidjistān and the sea 200". Blochet had suggested that the inscription was in Orkhon-Turkish characters. Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 87, remarks that these caracters bear some resemblance to Himyaritic, but adds that the Arabs gave the name Ḥimyarī, or Musnad, to nearly all unknown scripts. The full name of the restorer of the gate is given as Abū 'l-Muẓaffar Muḥammad b. Luḳmān b. Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Asad. He may have been the grandson of Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Asad b. Sāmān-khudā, the Sāmānid ruler of Samarḳand (regn. 914-43, see above); EI² *s.vv.* Bukhārā (W. Barthold–R.N. Frye); Iran V.a (A.K.S. Lambton); Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad (C.E. Bosworth); Sāmānids 1. History (C.E. Bosworth).

westward. This route is identical with the present-day route from Dunhuang, along the northernmost main range of the Kunlun and Altyn, to Cherchen and the string of oases in the south of the Tarim Basin. It is the so-called southern branch of the Silk Road.

2) *The Route of the Centre* led to the "Well of the Protector-General", then turned back to the northern extremity of the Sanlung well, turned there to the north-west and arrived at the ancient town of Loulan. There it turned westward, and finally reached Kucha.[125] It would seem that Sallam, on his homeward journey, took this route.

3) *The New Route (of the North)*, which was opened in the 3rd century. It set out to the north-west, avoided the Sanlung desert of sand and led to the territory of Gaochang. There it turned westwards and joined the Route of the Centre at Kucha.

It is important to note that the great highway (the Silk Road) from the Chinese capital Changan to "the Western countries" bifurcated at Anxi. The northern branch of the Silk Road, taken by Xuanzang on his outward journey and, supposedly, by Sallam on his outward journey—but in opposite direction—turned here to Igu in the north-east. The southern branch continued in western direction to Dunhuang and the guans of Yang and Yumen.

5. *Yumenguan and the barrier of 'the two-horned one'*

Sallam places the barrier, his turning point, between Igu and Lop Nor. In his days, there were on this route only two spots which were important enough to retain his attention: Dunhuang and Yumenguan. Dunhuang was certainly not a barrier, it was a Buddhist sanctuary, and Sallam must have seen it as Abu Dulaf did about a century later. Yet if anything, it must have been Yumenguan which evoked the association with Alexander's barrier. The view of the wall, the gate, watch-towers and forts of Yumenguan may have given Sallam the idea that he had found the barrier that withholds Gog and Magog.

Refuse layers near most of the watch-towers and, according to Chinese records on wood, dated to the first century, call to mind Sallam's "fortress" in which, as he puts it, 'the two-horned' kept his building equipment. The watch towers, an essential part of the

[125] On the 'Well of the Protector-General' and the Sanlung or "Three Ridges", cf. Stein, *Serindia*, p. 556.

Chinese defence system, were invariably built solid, whether with bricks or stamped clay. Their being tapered towards the top may have reminded Sallam of the "merlons" of the gate, mentioned in his sources.[126] The top had once borne a small look-out room or platform, protected with a parapet. In most cases it could be reached only by clambering up ropes, holes still being visible in the brick-work serving as foot-holds. The distances between the towers varied considerably as the ground outside the line could easily be kept under observation or not. A carefully organized system of transmitting information by fire signals at night and smoke signals by day was maintained along the whole line to warn of impending attacks.

The barrier of the Jade Gate certainly did not correspond exactly to the descriptions found in the Syriac or Muslim tradition. But Sallam does not seem to have been scrupulous about the historical exactness of what he reported on the barrier. He had a mission to accomplish, whatever his personal belief, and that is what he did. He knew he had to report, and he did report, that Gog and Magog, these savage and dangerous enemies of civilisation, were safely locked up behind a barrier-gate. It is of course difficult to ascertain whether or not Sallam believed in Gog and Magog, but in any case, he would have been decried as an infidel—maybe not by Caliph al-Wathiq himself—had he shown any doubt. It was impossible for him to come back affirming that the barrier did not exist. His was not the first case of *pia fraus*, nor the last.

[126] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (4).

SALLAM'S HOMEWARD JOURNEY: YUMENGUAN–SAMARRA (CA. DECEMBER 843/JANUARY 844–DECEMBER 844/JANUARY 845)

1. *Sallam's itinerary*

All versions of Sallam's journey (except that of Yaqut) say that the homeward journey took twelve months and a couple of days. According to Ibn Khurradadhbih's version, it led from the barrier of 'the two-horned one' to al-Lub, to the principality of the ruler of Tabanuyan, and further to Isfijab–Usrushana–Samarkand–Bukhara–Tirmidh–Nishapur–Rayy and finally Samarra. This sequence will be discussed below.

al-Idrisi's version gives four other names of places by which Sallam is said to have passed on his way home: Lakhman, Ghuriyan, Barsakhan and Taraz. They are found on the highway from China to Tashkent and were probably mentioned in al-Jayhani's lost work. According to al-Idrisi, the guides who were to lead Sallam from the barrier, possibly Yumenguan, to Khurasan, were taken from among the inhabitants of the fortresses near the barrier. If the latter can be identified with Yumenguan, the direct route to Khurasan from there was the southern branch of the Silk Road to Kashgar and the Farghana valley. However, al-Lub, mentioned as the first stage after the barrier, probably stands for Lop (Nor).[127] In that case Sallam, upon leaving Yumenguan, did not return to Igu but embarked at the Jade Gate upon the Loulan route to Lop Nor.

The travel account further mentions Taraz (al-Idrisi) and Isfijab (Ibn Khurradadhbih), places lying far to the north-west on the above-mentioned trade route from Suyab through the Yeti-su or Semiryechye

[127] In the notes to the French translation of Ibn Khurradādhbih's text, De Goeje links al-Lub with Ghuriyān (Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 130f.; id., *De muur*, p. 113). However, Ghuriyān lay far to the north on lake Issyk-köl.

region to Samarkand.[128] In order to join that route, Sallam must have travelled from Loulan in northern direction. There were at least two important routes leading from lake Lop Nor to Isfijab and Taraz: one went along the southern branch of the Silk Road to Miran, Khotan, Yarkand, Kashgar, Naryn, lake Khatir-köl, Kurem-aldı (on lake Issyk-köl) and Taraz; the other turns north to Korla and/or Kucha, from where the above-mentioned trade route to Taraz and Isfijab could be joined.

Neither Ibn Khurradadhbih nor al-Idrisi give any indication as to whether he travelled to Taraz and Isfijab through Kashgar or through Korla. The account only says that Sallam left the place of the ruler called al-Lub and that he came to the place of a ruler called *tabanuyan*, the head of the poll-tax. He spent a couple of days with each of them, and then travelled from that place until he arrived in eight months at Samarkand.[129]

As already remarked, many sections of the outward and homeward journeys of the Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang in the 7th century shed light on parts of the alleged outward and homeward journeys of Sallam. For the section Lop Nor–Korla their itineraries do not coincide, but both travelled on the Kucha–Taraz section of the Silk Road, Xuanzang on his journey from China to India, Sallam probably on his journey from Yumenguan to Samarra. It may have been the route the guides had in mind when they directed Sallam on what he calls the "route of Khurasan" The respective itineraries of the Chinese traveller and Sallam up to Kucha, however, were different: Xuanzang came from Igu and Urumchi, Sallam from Lop Nor.

Since Xuanzang's itinerary[130] is so much better documented than Sallam's homeward journey, it is useful for our purpose to follow the monk again, now from Yumenguan to Tirmidh. The report of his travels is rich in details, precise observations about religious life, society and cultural customs, rather the opposite of Sallam's account.

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[128] Cf. Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, map vii; W.C. Brice (ed.), *An Historical Atlas of Islam*, Leiden 1981, map 24a.

[129] Cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (7).

[130] For his journey from China to India, his stay there, and his return journey to China cf. Julien, *Histoire de la vie de Hiouen-Thsang*; S. Beal, *Buddhist records of the Western World. Translation from the Chinese of Hiuen-Tsiang* (A.D. *629)*, London 1884, condensed in Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 329-344.

2. *Xuanzang's itinerary from Igu to Tirmidh*

Xuanzang had intended to travel from Igu westward by the northern route past Kagan-stupa near Guchen, north of Turfan. But peremptory orders of Kuwentai (Khiowentai or Kuka), the powerful Turkic ruler of Gaochang, to visit him, forced the pilgrim to change his plans. A six days' journey through the desert brought him to Pihli (Pichan), a frontier town of the Gaochang state between Igu and Turfan. From there he advanced to Kiaoho, the Gaochang capital, at present Yarkhoto, a few kilometres west of Turfan. The Turkic ruler detained him for more than a month, after which he sent him on his way, laden with valuable gifts. Xuanzang passed through the towns of Wupwan and Tatsin, and came to the kingdom of Akini (Yenqi), west of Gaochang. His biography does not give the name of the capital of this kingdom, but other Chinese authors mention it as either Nanhocheng or Yunqu/Yanqi, the latter perhaps just another form of Yenqi. Its site is generally considered to be identical with Karashahr, a town to the north of lake Baghrash and one of the four garrisons of the Chinese.[131] Xuanzang stayed one night in the capital of Akini, then crossed "a great river" (the Khaldu or Tan), and arrived at Kucha (Kuchin), where he prepared to cross the Tianshan mountains. In a twelve days' march across a strip of desert, he arrived in the small kingdom of Pohluka (meaning "sandy"), undoubtedly the modern district of Aqsu, passing by the town of Sayram.[132] According to a local tradition, this place was founded by captives brought there by the Kalmyks. The Pingshan or 'Ice Mountains'[133] loom here up before the traveller. Enormous masses of snow accumulate there in winter. Xuanzang could have attacked the mountains from Jam, earlier on the Silk Road, from where the road to Kuldja[134] leads to the 'Muzart Art' or Icy Pass, east of lake Issyk-köl and close under the peak of the Tengri. It is the shortest route between Kuldja and the Ili valley to Aqsu and Kashgar. In old times the Chinese kept the road over the pass in a tolerable state of repair, pickets being stationed at intervals to keep it open and to hew steps

[131] Hedin, *Through Asia*, ii, p. 857f.

[132] Not to be confused with the Sayram near Chimkent, cf. EI² *s.v.* Sayrām (P.B. Golden).

[133] Cf. Hedin, *Through Asia*, i, p. 86.

[134] Cf. Yule, *Cathay*, iv, p. 228 n. 1.

in the ice. Chinese travellers and Russian officers speak of the difficulties and terrors in this pass.[135]

Chavannes and Smith, however, are of the opinion that Xuanzang took the Bedel Pass. The transit took seven days, and was so arduous that twelve (or fourteen) men perished, and a still greater number of oxen and horses. The pass was the frontier between Turkish and Chinese territory, and the main route from the Tarim Basin to Suyab.[136]

Emerging from the mountains, Xuanzang crossed the river Chenchu or Ajak-tash, marked on Watter's map as the Narin, which empties itself into lake Issyk-köl. In due course the traveller reached the lake, called "warm lake" because it never freezes.[137] Opinions differ whether Xuanzang passed to the south of the lake, or followed the easier circuitous route through Kara-köl by the eastern and northern shores. A north-western course brought the monk to Tokmak on the river Chu, the summer camp of the powerful khaqan of the Western Turks, who received him hospitably.[138]

At Tokmak, Xuanzang turned in a south-western direction, crossed the basins of the Jaxartes, the Zarafshan and the Oxus, and arrived at Isfijab, the "White Water City",[139] the modern Sayram, at about 12 km west of Chimkent, on the middle Syr Darya. Proceeding to Tashkent, he probably went to Samarkand, continued to Kish,[140] and after four marches of ca. 80 km reached the Iron Gate.[141] After crossing the Oxus, he went to Kunduz in modern Afghanistan, where he was delayed for more than a month. Xuanzang then made an excursion to Tirmidh, went back to Kunduz and continued his route to

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[135] Schuyler, *Turkestan*, ii, p. 134-135.

[136] Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, p. 113; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 143 n. 1-2; Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 135f., 139 n. 233.

[137] Mongol. Temurtunor or "Ferruginous Lake", cf. Schuyler, *Turkistan*, ii, p. 131.

[138] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 74-76. For a description of the route Tokmak–Issyk-köl, cf. Schuyler, *Turkistan*, ii, p. 126f.

[139] EI² Suppl *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth); further ibid. *s.vv.* Ḳarluḳ, Mā warāʾ al-nahr, Sayram. For references to Isfīdjāb in the works of al-Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥawḳal and al-Muḳaddasī, cf. *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, iii, index, p. 6; for Abu 'l-Fidā, cf. Reinaud–Guyard, *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, ii, p. 223; Le Strange, *Caliphate*, p. 483-484; Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 175f.; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 37-38, 118f.

[140] EI² *s.v.* Kish (C.E. Bosworth).

[141] Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 175, remarks that the Iron Gate of Ibn Khurradādhbih, even if allowing for some mistake on his part, can hardly be identical with the Iron Gate of Ibn Ḥawḳal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, p. 384, which here is in the Ḳalāṣ steppe between Binkath and Gharkard.

India. He reached the kingdom of Gandhara in September 630, stayed in India till July 644 and returned to China.

On their homeward journeys both Xuanzang and Sallam took the track from Loulan to Yumenguan, be it in opposite direction. On their outward and homeward journeys they both travelled in the same direction between Kuldja and Tirmidh. The itinerary of Xuanzang's homeward journey gives details about the track between Yumenguan and Loulan which are important for that part of Sallam's homeward journey. The monk's itinerary between Kunduz and the Chinese capital moreover gives important information about the southern branch of the Silk Road which is not easily available.[142]

The itinerary of Xuanzang's homeward journey, important for that of Sallam, mentions also the "kingdom of Nafopo" "Navapa", Aurel Stein writes, "is a sanskritization of Nop and presupposes the form Lop".[143] It included Loulan, Yumenguan and Dunhuang. It thus

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[142] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 343: Kunduz–Badakhshan–Yamgan–Kuran–Wakhan–lake Sari-köl [formerly also known as Lake Victoria]–Wakhdjir Pass–Taghdum-basin–Pamir–Tashkurgan—along the Mustagh-Ata–Osh [EI² *s.v.* Učč]–Kashgar–Yarkand–Khotan [here Xuanzang awaited for seven or eight months the imperial permission to return to China]–Pima [Bhima, probably the modern Uzuntati at ca. 8 km. from Khotan]—Niya [on the eastern frontier of the Kuchan kingdom]—Tukhara [perhaps to be located at Endere]—the territory of Chemoto [modern Cherchen]—the kingdom of Nafopo—the Yumenguan–Dunhuang–Anxi–Liangchou–Changan.

Von Gabain, *Leben im uigurischen Königreich*, p. 12 gives the following list of places along the southern branch of the Silk Road between Dunhuang and Kashghar: Dunhuang–Ecangöl—the ruins of Karakhoto–Loulan–Miran–Cherchen–Endere–Niya–Keriya–Hadaliq–Dandan–Oyliq–Khotan–Yarkand [from where started the route across the Karakorum to India]—Kashgar.

To the itinerary of the Buddhist monk found in his biography, Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 6-13, esp. p. 7-9, added other geographical data for the outward journey from Turfan to Taraz. These data probably also bear on stages of Sallām's return journey. From passages scattered in the geographical section of the *Tanchou*, the history of the Tang dynasty, Chavannes pieced further material together. The placenames are: Turfan–Yarkhoto–Bukun–Toksun—the gorge of the Subashı mountain –Aga-bulak–Kiumush or Silver Mountains–Kara-kısıl–Učak-tal–Tabelgu–Yenqiucheng [the ancient name of the capital of Yenqi, identified with Karashahr, on the left bank of the Khaldu. Xuanzang places the capital of Yenqi to the west of that river]—the gorge of the Iron Gate—the military post of Yulin—the military post of Longipi–Sisipi–Tchengan–Kucha—the Tchekin Pass—the river Pomaho ["White Horse"]—the stony plane of Kiupilo [modern Sayram]—Asiyen–Aqsu–Üch-Turfan—the river Uital—the Bedel Pass–Ajak-tash [in the upper-reaches of the Jaxartes]—Tokmak [either by the southern shore of lake Issyk-köl or via Kara-köl. Chavannes identifies Tokmak with Suyab]—Taraz.

[143] Stein, *Serindia*, p. 321; cf. also E. Chavannes, *Pei Yuan Lou. Récit d'un voyage dans le nord, écrit sous les Song par Tcheou Chan*, in: *T'oung Pao*, ser. II, 5 (1904), p. 173;

is quite clear that, coming from the west, one passed first Yumenguan before reaching Dunhuang.

3. *Stages*

Yumenguan–Lop Nor

In 1914 Aurel Stein traced the course of the ancient road between Loulan and Yumenguan. The desert part of this road makes a detour to the north in order to avoid the largest expanse of the salt-crust which marks the old extent of Lop Nor, but it has nevertheless to cross it for a stretch of about 30 km. There is also a short-cut but even this has six waterless stages.

Departing from the barrier (Yumenguan), Sallam supposedly took the very old Loulan route, which follows the southern branch of the Silk Road up to Besh-torak.[144] Here he turned north-west in the direction of the old garrison Loulan, once a fertile oasis, tracking across the formidable dried-up salt-encrusted sea-bed of Lop Nor in the way Aurel Stein was going to do. In one day the latter covered about 33 km (21 miles) of the smallest part of this forbidding terrain.[145]

Loulan was the capital of an ancient kingdom which lay on the middle road into the Tarim Basin at the north-western edge of lake Lop. Documents written in Kharosthi, the writing system used in north-western India and partly also in the Tarim Basin, state that Kroraina was probably the indigenous designation of Loulan.[146] The site lies some 525 km west of Dunhuang. It had been opened by the Chinese towards the close of the 2nd century B.C. The autonomous kingdom came under Chinese domination in 77 B.C. Though it was important as a cultural and economic meeting point of the traffic between China of the Han and the "Western countries", it was abandoned in the 4th century. Lake Lop dried out when the Tarim flowing into it has changed his course to the south into a new river bed

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Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 143.

[144] Cf. Stein's map on p. ■■. The distance between Xian (Changan) and Lop Nor is some 2500 km (5000 li), cf. Mallory–Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, p. 58.

[145] Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p. 281ff. id., *On ancient tracks*, p. 145-162. F. Bergmann, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, especially the Lop-Nor region*, Stockholm 1939, p. 38-41, has 30 km.

[146] Hedin, *Through Asia*, i, p. 15ff., ii, p. 864-913; Wieczorek, *Ursprünge der Seidenstraße*, p. 230.

and generated a new lake (Lake Karakoshun).[147] The oasis was deprived of its fresh water and people abandoned the place. Sven Hedin, who discovered in 1900 the ruins of Loulan in the now desert and salty area, digged up from the sand the previous administrative headquarter with hundreds of Chinese records on wood, silk and paper dated between 263 and 330. Other documents were written in Sogdian and Kharosthi. Still visible today are the 10 m high relics of a Buddhist sanctuary.[148] The Chinese garrison had originally been founded to safeguard China's western frontier and to protect the traffic along the Silk Road. At about this time, there existed in the south of Loulan region a Sogdian settlement which became important for Christian merchants of the Syriac church. Alopen, the first Christian missionary in the Chinese capital Changan, possibly originated from a Christian Sogdian community along the Silk Road.[149] In 675 the whole region was included in the Shazhou administration.[150]

Long before Sallam, the Loulan route had been taken by famous travellers such as the Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian, who journeyed from China to India in 402, and by Xuanzang on his return journey in 644. Marco Polo too travelled via Loulan to Lop Nor, which he describes as a large town: *People about to cross the desert rest here for a week. They take a month' supply for man and beast. Where the desert's breadth is least, it takes a month to cross it.*[151]

Parallel to this route ran the ancient Chinese border line wall, the western extension of the Chinese defence system, dating back to the first century B.C.[152] From Dunhuang the wall ran north-eastward as far as the Etsin-göl river, beyond the oasis of Maomei. Westward of Dunhuang the wall reached the marshes of Lop Nor and northwards it went as far as Korla. The western extension of the Great Wall of China, measured from Lop Nor to Etsin-göl, had a length of some

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[147] Cf. Baumer, *Die Südliche Seidenstraße*, p. 89-93 ("Das Rätsel des Lop Nor Sees").

[148] For the recent excavations in Lop Nor cf. Wieczorek, *Ursprünge der Seidenstraße*, p. 230-256.

[149] J. Tubach, *Die Heimat des China Missionars* Alopen, in: *Oriens Christianus* 76 (1992), p. 109-110.

[150] Cf. P. Pelliot, *Le « Cha Tcheou Tou Fou T'ou King » et la colonie sogdienne de la région du Lob Nor*, in: *Journal Asiatique*, ser. xi, 7 (1916), p. 116, 121, 123.

[151] Yule, *The Book of Marco Polo*, p. 203.

[152] On a tablet bearing a date which corresponds to 94 B.C., the westernmost wall section is designated as Tachientu (Stein, *On ancient tracks*, p. 179, 188).

600 km (400 miles). It was constructed under emperor Wudi. Military posts were established from place to place along the entire wall. Originally, there had been around Loulan a circumvallation which formed a square of about 340 m inside, apparently a watchtower like the one Sallam had seen in Igu and Yumenguan. The final abandonment of the Loulan site took place some time after 330[153] due to the changing course of the Tarim river. The oasis had been thus a ruin for five hundred years when Sallam arrived there. It must have looked then as it does now: desolate.

A combination of the places given by Ibn Khurradadhbih and al-Idrisi for Sallam's homeward journey, leads us to the conclusion that he travelled from Lop Nor to Lakhman, Ghuriyan and Barskhan[154] (Tabanuyan). The latter three places all lay on the great trade route from Tashkent to the easternmost district of Khurasan which bordered on Chinese territory. The route from Lop Nor to Barskhan necessarily led across the Taklamakan desert and the Tianshan Mountains. We therefore will follow modern travellers who crossed the Tarim Basin from Lop Nor to the Tianshan Mts. before motorized traffic was introduced.

Lop Nor–Korla

Between Lop Nor and Korla, Sven Hedin travelled on a road marked by two ancient Chinese fortresses and a long string of mile-posts demonstrating that in former times this was an important highway between the two towns.[155] Aurel Stein discovered concerning this Lop Nor–Korla route that from Loulan a track led northward along the former river Kuruk, which was dried out, but had once carried water to the Loulan site. At Yingpan or "the garrison", Stein again saw the line of the limes and the remains of a ruined fort and a small temple site, discovered earlier by Kozloff and Hedin. The station, which had held a Chinese garrison, lies on a track which in Stein's days still led from Charklik to Turfan.[156] On his journey to Korla, Aurel Stein found an ancient line of watch-towers, some of them remarkably massive, dating back to the times of emperor Wudi. They

[153] Baumer, *Die Südliche Seidenstraße*, p. 97f. According to others part of the town were inhabited until 542 (Wieczorek, *Ursprünge der Seidenstraße*, p. 43).

[154] Cf. Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 135 n. 202.

[155] Hedin, *Through Asia*, ii, p. 788f., 816ff. He also remarked that at Abdal, in the Lop Nor region, the dignity of the *beg* is hereditary in the family.

[156] Stein, *On ancient tracks*, p. 191, 275.

extended for over 150 km (100 miles) along the foot of the Kuruktagh.

The route Lop Nor–Korla was also taken, in the opposite direction, by Carey and Dalgleish.[157] Their itineraries between Korla and Charklik, and between Shazhou and Aqsu via Hami and Turfan, are important for our purpose, as are their excursions to Lop Nor. They give dates, places, elevations, distances, and remarks. The distance between Korla and Lop Nor is given as 286 km (191 miles). Carey and Dalgleish first travelled along the Korla river. Then they joined the high road to Lop Nor and followed the bed of the Tarim. Beyond Kirchin, from where a road went northeast to Turfan, their route led through marshy land, in February frozen over. At about 18 km (12 miles) from Abdal, in an east by north direction was the head of lake Lop Nor, where enormous quantities of ducks, wild fowl but also mosquitoes were found. From here a route, known to the Lop people as the Karashahr–Kalmak route, led south-east by east for about 75 km (50 miles), then turned south to Lhasa (Tibet). The travellers returned to Charklik where they spent the remainder of the winter before starting for their Tibetan journey. Their description shows that it was feasible to travel from lake Lop Nor and the Lop village (Loulan)—perhaps the place of Sallam's "king of al-Lub"—[158]to Korla. They also remark that near Charklik are ruins which clearly indicate that in the past the place must have been important. It lay on the high road from Khotan to Dunhuang and was taken by the pilgrim Xuanzang on his return journey from India to China. Travelling conditions in Sallam's days must have been more or less the same as those encountered by Carey and Dalgleish.

Korla–Kucha–Kara-köl

One might suppose that the guides left Sallam at Korla, the easternmost of the oases which stretch along the southern foot of the Tianshan. From ancient times onward Korla had served as a protec-

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[157] Carey, *A journey around Chinese Turkestan*, p. 737-739, see also the map on p. 790; Carey, *Journey of Carey and Dalgleish*, p. 28-31.

[158] De Goeje founds the phrase in Sallām's account "*There was a king called al-Lub*" (Chapter 7, p. ■■ (7) suspect, unless several words have fallen out, for the place of the king who is called al-Lub is missing. However, Sallām's "al-Lub" refers to the place or region Lop (Nor) rather than to a king of that name; cf. Abū Dulaf's *Risālā* (Chapter 11, p. ■■(6 n. 19).

tion of the Chinese hold on Loulan against the Huns, and as the security of the route leading through it. At Korla, Sallam may have turned west towards Kucha, from here to Tirmidh. Sallam probably followed the route taken by Xuanzang on his outward journey: Kucha–Pohluka–Pingshan Mts.–Bedel Pass–Ajak-tash river–lake Issyk-köl–Tokmak–Bin-köl–[159]Taraz–the Jaxartes–the Oxus–Sayram–Tashkent–Samarkand–Iron Gate–Tirmidh.

Kucha was a junction of roads, from where the Pingshan Mountains could be approached.[160] Sallam may have crossed these formidable obstacles in the way Xuanzang had done. Like his predecessor, he reports heavy losses of men and mules, but unfortunately does not say where, when and under what circumstances.

The route which we propose for Sallam's homeward journey from Yumenguan was also that of Bonin.[161] He travelled from Dunhuang to Lop Nor, Korla and Karashahr, from where he continued his journey with three men and three pack-horses. At 3800 m he reached the Borotai-amen Pass (Mongol. "Pass of the Grey Station") and crossed three other passes, one of which was the Argantai-amen (Mongol. "Pass of the Confluence Station"). The journey from Karashahr to Urumchi lasted ten days. Via Kuldja and Korgos (not far from the Russian border), Bonin went to Tokmak, Chimkent, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Merv. He crossed the Caspian Sea and went to Istanbul via Baku, Tiflis, and Batumi.

Lakhman–Ghuriyan–Barskhan–Tabanuyan

The places al-Lub and Tabanuyan are not found in al-Idrisi's version of Sallam's account but, as opposed to Ibn Khurradadhbih, he mentions Lakhman,[162] Ghuriyan and Barskhan as places situated between the latter and Taraz. Lakhman, al-Idrisi writes, *is a region of the Samriq or Valakh Turks [i.e. Qarluq] in the eighth part of the sixth clime. It lies on the summit of a mountain.* It would thus seem that Lakhman was to be found in the same region as Ghuriyan and Barskhan. Ghuriyan and

[159] "Thousand Springs", a name often found in Central Asia.

[160] Barthold, *Four Studies*, p. 9, 91.

[161] Bonin, *Voyage de Pékin*, p. 178ff.

[162] al-Idrīsī, *al-mushtak*, p. 834, cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (n. 61). According to De Goeje, *De Muur*, p. 113 n. 1, the reading Lakhmān is uncertain: variants are *taḥtān* and *nakhmāt*; but al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat*, i, p. 3(4?)78) has Lakhmān.

Barskhan—rather (Upper) Barskhan/Barsaghan–[1] are found on the northern trade route from Tashkent to China. And so al-Idrisi's text confirms that Sallam travelled on this highway.

According to De Goeje, the capital of the king of the Qarluqs is called Ghuriyan (or Ghuran). He locates the Qarluqs near lake Lop Nor and al-Idrisi's Ghuriyan for him is Chinese Liulan (Loulan).[2] At that time the Qarluqs were dominant in that region, even if they no longer held supremacy over the Turkish tribes as they had done earlier in Umayyad times. However, De Goje's text must be corrected as follows: his "Lop Nor" is lake Issyk-köl, and Ghuriyan is not to be identified with Loulan.[3] Moreover, the habitat of the Qarluqs was in the Yeti-su or Semiryechye region, south of lake Issyk-köl along the highway from Tashkent to Suyab and the frontier with China. Their capital Ghuriyan was near off Alma Ata in what is now Kyrgyzstan. It was this Qarluq capital that was visited by Shah Rukh's embassy, and not Loulan.[4]

In al-Idrisi's version, Sallam travelled from Ghuriyan to Barskhan. This town was very probably the capital of the ruler whom Sallam calls *tabanuyan*.[5] Barskhan was the easternmost limit of Tahirid power. For all the Arab geographers of this period this town was the farthest frontier with China. East of the town began the lands of the Turkish tribes who were under China's supremacy. According to Qudama, the district of Upper Barskhan consisted of four large and five small towns. One of these was situated on a lake (Issyk-köl) and had a defensive army of 20000 men, said to be the strongest of all Turks, ten of them being a match for one hundred Qarluqs.[6] The *Hudud* mentions this large number in connection with Suyab,[7] while

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[1] Cf. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 39; Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 235 n. 202.

[2] De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 113 in referring to Von Richthofen, *China*, i, p. 27 n. 450, 456.

[3] De Goeje refers to Ṣādiḳ Iṣfahānī (around 1635), who mentions a *brkh ghu ryan* with which lake Lop is perhaps meant, but *birka ghuryan* means "the small lake of Ghuriyān"

[4] The embassy travelled in 1420 from Herat to Balkh–Samarḳand–Tashkent–Sayrām–Ashfarah (east of Ṭarāz)–Yulduz (via Issyk-köl and the Ili river)–crossed the Tianshan north of Yulduz–Turfan–Ḳarakhodja–Ḳomul–Suzhou–Ganzhou–Lanzhou–Khānbaliḳ [Peking]. The embassy returned via Suzhou–Khotan and Kāshghar.

[5] Chapter 7, p. ■■ (7).

[6] Ḳudāma b. Dja'far, *Kitāb al-kharādj*, p. 262, cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 293.

[7] Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 99.

Gardizi[8] gives the more realistic number of 500 warriors. Tabanuyan perhaps means 'Lord of Taba',[9] *noyan* being a West-Middle Mongolian term for "ruler, commander" *Noyanan* are "(Muslim ?) rulers", and the *noyane* found themselves in the middle between the princes and the people. The term is not attested before the 13th century,[10] and on the basis of Ibn Khurradadhbih's text it would seem that it was already known to the Arabs in the 9th century. *Taba*, not identified so far, might have been the name of a region around Issyk-köl. From the information provided by both Ibn Khurradadhbih and Qudama we may perhaps conclude that the *tabanuyan* was a Turkish local ruler who, at least in Sallam's days, was subject to the Tahirid governor of Khurasan, collected the land-tax on the latter's behalf, and ruled over a district with nine towns adjoining China. He probably resided in (Upper-) Barskhan, and was visited there by Sallam.[11] The Lower (i.e. Nearer-) Barskhan lay three parasangs east of Taraz, and sixty to sixty-five parasangs east of Samarkand. Upper (i.e. Further-) Barskhan was situated on the south-eastern part of lake Issyk-köl, at some 500 km east of its lower namesake. On the west-side it was protected by a massive wall near the present-day village of Koltsovska which stretched from north-west to south-east between the Tong creek and the Terskei mountains which in the south form the watershed between the basin of the Issyk-köl and the head-waters of the Syr Darya.[12] Tabanuyan, Barskhan and Ghuriyan thus indicate that

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[8] *Kitāb Zayn al-akhbār*, p. 279; cf. Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 189, and index *s.v.*

[9] De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 108 n. 2.

[10] G. Dörfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*, i, Wiesbaden 1963, no. 389.

[11] De Goeje (*Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vi, p. 21, 22, 131 n. 1, and 203), following Yāḳūt, *Mu'djam*, iv, p. 823, thought that the principality of the ruler of *tabanuyan* was called Nūsādjān and replaced Barskhān (the reading of the manuscripts). However, Yakut's clear spelling Nūshkhān is an ancient clerical error for Barskhān; al-Muḳaddasī, Gardīzī, the *Ḥudūd* and al-Kashgarī all have Bars(a)khān; cf. Minorsky, *Tamīm ibn Baḥr*, p. 277.

[12] Minorsky, *Tamīm ibn Baḥr*, p. 290f, quoting Ḳudāma b. Dja'far, *Kitāb al-kharādj*, p. 205, 208: from Ṭarāz north-east to Tashkent (ca. 280 km, through the Čū valley); to Navākat: 53 parasangs; to Sāghūr (the later Balāsāghūn): 3 parasangs; to Upper-Barskhān: fifteen days for caravans, three days for Turkish couriers. The route from Farghāna to Upper-Barskhān led along the headwaters of the Syr Darya and across the mountains to the southern shore of lake Issık-köl. Ḳudāma (ibid., p. 262) also reports that the distance between Upper-Barskhān to Shāsh (Tashkent) is forty stages for caravans. Minorsky (ibid., p. 293) says that the distance between Upper-Barskhān and Bishbalık or Turfan is approximately 1 000km (more than six days' travelling).

Sallam, for his return journey, used the highway from China to Tashkent, and consequently turned to the north when departing from al-Lub (Lop Nor).[13] He then had to cross the Tarim Basin.

Katib Chelebi's information[14] that Barskhan and Kashgar are the two capitals of Turkistan seems to confirm that there were large agglomerations of towns such as the 'nine towns' of Barskhan, the 'five towns' of Bishbalik (Panjikath) and the 'six towns' (Alti Shahr). The latter comprised Kucha, Aqsu, Üch-Turfan, Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan, all lying on the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road.

Sallam stayed a couple of days with the tabanuyan. Such a longer sojourn only took place with the tarkhan of the Khazars in Itil, the king of al-Lub, and later with 'Abd Allah b. Tahir in Nishapur. While travelling from Igu to Dunhuang and Yumenguan, Sallam may have convinced himself that for his homeward journey the northern route was to be preferred over the one he had come. Indeed, as he himself relates, it offered shelter and food in the various garrisons and thus seemed safer than the itinerary of his outward journey. Safer, perhaps, but not easier. In order to reach the northern highway from the south, several high passes in the formidable Tianshan Mountains had to be crossed, among which perhaps the Bedel Pass, at an altitude of 4248 m. It is mentioned by al-Kashgari as lying between Üch-Turfan and Barskhan. Probably identical with the Azar Pass, it is the most direct connection between Khotan and Barskhan, and thus with the northern highway,[15] also for the traveller arriving from Kucha–Korla. The route across the Pamir was perhaps not, or hardly, known to the guides of Yumenguan, whereas the northern highway, taken by earlier travellers such as the Chinese Faxian and Xuanzang, may have been known to them. At the outset Sallam may not have realized that this route was considerably longer than that of his outward journey. In the end it turned out to be quicker: 12 as against 16 months.

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[13] Sallām's itinerary does not mention any place between al-Lub (Lop Nor) and Tabanuyan, Lakhmān, Ghuriyān and Barskhān, just as the outward journey shows a gap between Itil and Igu. The lack of landmarks revives the question whether indeed there existed (and still exists) a more complete manuscript of Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik* (cf. Chapter 7 (3a).

[14] Kātib Čelebī, *Djihān-nümā*, p. 503.

[15] Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 296; Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 139 n. 233.

Kara-köl–Taraz

In Sallam's days the most important market place on lake Issyk-köl was Barskhan.[16] It is the Upper-Barskhan (Nusajan) of De Goeje's list of places and distances on the trade route from Taraz, through the Talas and Chu valleys and through the Yeti-su or Semiryechye region.[17] Sallam may have joined this highway at Kara-köl. He may also have visited in Suyab the *ordu* or encampment of Sulu, the khaqan of the Türkesh,[18] in whose territory, according to al-Idrisi, the barrier of 'the two-horned one' was to be found. Suyab was a Sogdian town in the Yeti-su, a vast region between the basin of the lakes Issyk-köl and Balkhash, just north of the Chu valley, on the frontier of modern Kyrgyzstan with Kazakhstan.[19] Between 704-68 the region had been dominated by the Türkesh.[20] In 748 Suyab was destroyed by a Chinese force, and in 766 it was occupied by the Qarluqs after the fall of the empire of the Western Turks. It may well be that the story of the 20000 (or rather 500) excellent warriors[21] is more applicable to this town than to Barskhan.

Taraz–Isfijab

According to al-Idrisi, Sallam visited Taraz, the "City of Copper", already in Xuanzang's days an important commercial centre.[22] It

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[16] Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 135-137, 147. Near lake Issyk-köl is a lake Ḳara-köl (cf. Barthold, *Four Studies*, i, p. 88, 91) which is not to be confused with the better-known Ḳara-köl between Bukhārā and Čardjuy.

[17] De Goeje, *De muur*, p. 118-124, gives the following names: Ṭarāz–Lower-Nūsādjān–Ḳaṣra bās–Kūl-Shūb–Djol-Shūb–Kūlān–[so far the road leads through flat country, with mountains on the right hand side (cf. al-Muḳaddasī, *Ahsan al-taḳāsīm*, p. 275)]–Mirkī [Birkī]–Aspara [cf. Yule, *Cathay*, i, p. cc n. 1]–Nūzkāt–Kharandjawān–Djūl–Sārigh [the town of the Turkish khaḳān]–Nawākat [residence of an East Syrian metropolitan; from here the khaḳān started in 737 his invasion to Khuttal, cf. Chap. 9, p. ■■ (11f]—Kobal [according to Ḳudāma, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vi, p. 206, Kobal together form Sūyāb, cf. Göckenjan–Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, p. 186 n. 528]—Upper-Nūsādjān [i.e. Upper-Barskhān, "the frontier with China", Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik*, p. 29 (ed.), p. 21 (transl.)].

[18] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■.

[19] The ancient city can be identified with modern Ak-Beshim. In Xuanzang's travel account the village is mentioned with its Chinese name Shushe, cf. Klein, *Das Nestorianische Christentum*, p. 139-142.

[20] Frumkin, *Archaeology*, p. 36.

[21] See above.

[22] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 82; Julien, *Histoire de la vie de Hiouen-Thsang*, i, p. 14. Cf. EI² *s.v.* Ṭarāz (C.E. Bosworth), and Chapter 10 , p. ■■ (4).

enjoyed great fame in Islam since the battle of 751, in which the Chinese governor of Kucha and his Turkish allies had been defeated by the Arabs, and the Chinese expansion had been checked. Islam was introduced in Talas by the Samanid Isma'il b. Ahmad[23] in 893, who converted the principal church into a mosque. The town, therefore, was not yet islamized when Sallam arrived there.

Isfijab–Nishapur

According to Ibn Khurradadhbih, Sallam's itinerary from Isfijab onwards was the following: the river of Balkh–Usrushana–Bukhara–Tirmidh–Nishapur–Rayy–Samarra.[24] Samarkand is also mentioned, but not where one would have expected it in the sequence of place-names given in the text. It is as if these names are mentioned at random, without any topographical logic, by a traveller–or a copyist–who is not interested in, or has any knowledge of the itinerary or the places he visits. This lack of interest in topography, at least in the travel account we possess, finds expression in the words "the river of Balkh" The river near Balkh is the Amu Darya (Oxus). In the above-mentioned sequence of place-names, however, this phrase is found between Isfijab and Usrushana, a region where the Syr Darya flows. It thus seems that the two rivers have been confused here, and that the river at Balkh indicates the Syr Darya. Sallam would not have been the first, nor the last, to confuse the two rivers, known in Arabic as Sayhun and Jayhun. If he did cross the Amu Darya at Tirmidh, he probably travelled all the way down to Tirmidh via Zamin[25] in Usrushana, Samarkand, Kish and Kandak.

After such a long absence, Sallam must have been anxious to return to Samarra. Yet, according to his travel account he made a detour via Tirmidh, for which there is no ready explanation. The town was later to become renowned in Islam for being the birthplace of the traditionist Abu 'Isa al-Tirmidhi,[26] but he can hardly have been the reason for a visit since he was only nineteen years old when Sallam was there in 844. That the town was an important halting place on the caravan route to Eastern Turkistan and China, that it

[23] EI² *s.v.* Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad (C.E. Bosworth).

[24] Chapter 7, p. ■■ (7).

[25] Zamin was the place where the north-eastern trade route from Isfijab and Taraz to Suyab and China met with the eastern route to Khujanda, Andijan, Uzkent, Barskhan and China.

[26] Cf. EI² *s.v.* al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Isā (G.W.J. Juynboll).

had been visited by Xuanzang who saw there many Buddhist buildings and monuments, or that there was a famous haut relief sculpture in limestone at nearby Airtam,[27] can hardly have been a reason either.

The itinerary after Tirmidh may have been either: Samarkand (again)–Bukhara–Amul-i Shatt–Merv–Sarakhs (Northern Khurasan)–Nishapur, or: Tirmidh–Andkhuy–Merv–Bukhara etc., or even: Tirmidh–Nakhshab, a route mentioned by Ibn Hawkal.[28] Other combinations are also possible, for the text at our disposal does not lead to a definite itinerary between Isfijab and Nishapur.

Nishapur–Samarra

It nevertheless may be of interest to give the few details available for Sallam's days about the towns mentioned in Ibn Khurradadhbih's text which the traveller himself says to have passed through.

From Isfijab, the modern Sayram at about 12 km west of Chimkent on the middle Syr Darya, to Usrushana, the road passed through Yabgukath, Binkath, Tunkath and Banakath.[29] Banakath or "chief town, capital", lies south-east of Tashkent and may have been prosperous in Sallam's days.[30] Usrushana is the mountainous district south of the Syr Darya between Khujanda[31] in modern Tajikistan, and Samarkand in modern Uzbekistan. It forms the approach to the Farghana valley. Kawus, the native prince who bore the pre-Islamic title *afshin* had accepted Islam in 822 after a second Arab expedition.[32] His son and successor Khaydhar, after successful campaigns against the Khurramis in Azerbaijan, had joined the governor of Tabaristan, out of rivalry with the powerful governor of Khurasan.

In Sallam's days, Samarkand was governed by Yahya b. Asad b. Saman-khuda. In 819 the governor of Khurasan, at the behest of the Caliph al-Ma'mun, had awarded the four sons of Asad for their support during a rebellion in Transoxania. Nuh b. Asad became governor of Samarkand, Ahmad b. Asad of Farghana, Yahya b. Asad of Shash (Tashkent) and Ilyas b. Asad of Herat. After the death of

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[27] Frumkin, *Archaeology*, p. 110.

[28] Ibn Ḥawḳal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, p. 399.

[29] *-kath* or *-kanth* is an Eastern Iranian suffix used in Christian Sogdian which means "town", cf. EI² *s.v.* Samarḳand (H.H. Schaeder–C.E. Bosworth).

[30] EI² *s.v.* Banākat (B. Spuler); cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, p. 118, 210ff.

[31] EI² *s.v.* (C.E. Bosworth).

[32] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■(1-2).

Nuh in 841, the governor of Khurasan appointed Yahya and Ahmad as governors of Samarkand and Sogdia.[33] At Sallam's arrival in Samarkand in 844, the town probably still suffered from the clash between the first Qarluq and Karakhanid ruler Bilge Kül Kadır Khan with Nuh b. Asad.[34]

In Kish, the later Shahr-i Sabz in modern Uzbekistan, he must have heard people talk about al-Mukanna'[35] "the veiled prophet of Khurasan" who had committed suicide in the neighbourhood in 783. Like so many travellers before and after him, Sallam passed the famous defile of the so-called Iron Gate,[36] located at ca. 80 km south of Kish and 12 km west of Derbent, on the old road from Samarkand to Tirmidh.

In Xuanzang's biography[37] this Iron Gate or Pass is described as the Buzgola Khana or "Goat-house" of the Indians, but the defile is also known under other names. It is said that its width varies between 12 and 18 m (40 and 60 feet), that it is about 3 km (2 miles) long, that a stream flows through it, and that there is a village in it. The gate is said to be made of raw iron from the mountains, plated with iron and furnished with iron bells, hence its name.[38] But Xuanzang used the term in the sense of pass or passage, and understood that this pass carried the epithet iron because it was strong and impregnable. Later travellers relate that the pass was guarded by a barrier, or barriers, of local iron-stone clamped or faced with iron. But no one after Xuanzang seems to have seen a gate hung with bells. It is only a tradition that there had once been a great gate. The pass once checked the advance of the Western Turks and kept them separated from the Tokharians. The pass became famous during the Mongol conquests. In Chinese works of the Tang and later periods it is often called Tiemenguan or "Pass of the Iron Gate".[39]

The first European to describe it was perhaps Gonzalez de Clavijo, member of Henry III of Castile's second embassy to the court of Timur Lang in Samarkand (1403-06). Were it not for the mention

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[33] EI² *s.v.* Sāmānids (C.E. Bosworth); cf. also Encyclopaedia Iranica *s.v. Asad b. Sāmānkhodā* (C.E. Bosworth).

[34] Cf. O. Pritsak, *Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden*, in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 101 (1951), p. 284.

[35] EI² *s.v.* Muḳanna' (Ed.).

[36] EI² *s.v.* Dar-i āhanīn (R.N. Frye).

[37] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 101f.

[38] Beal, *Life of Hinen-tsiang*, p. 47.

[39] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels*, p. 101f.; Von Richthofen, *China*, i, p. 544.

of Igu in Sallam's travel account, the barrier of 'the two-horned one' could well have been located at this spectacular spot. On his way from Tirmidh to Samarkand, De Clavijo relates, he came to a very high hill and a pass leading up to a ravine, which looked as if it had been artificially cut. The hills rise to a great height on either side. The pass is smooth, and very deep. It is called "the gates of iron" The mountains of the gates of iron are without woods. In former times, De Clavijo adds, these are said to have been great gates, covered with iron, placed across the pass, so that no one could pass without an order. In all the mountain range there is no other pass, so that it guards the land of Samarkand. These gates of iron produce large revenues to the lord Timur, for all merchants who come from India pass this way. De Clavijo also mentions the other gates of iron, which are near Derbent and which the Turkish people are obliged to use when they go to Persia.[40]

In Sallam's days Balkh, in present-day in Afghanistan, was ruled by the descendants of the princes of Khuttal,[41] a region on the right bank of the upper Amu Darya. Sallam may have visited 'Abbas al-Banijuri and his son Da'ud, who became governor of Balkh in 847, three years after Sallam had passed there.

Bukhara was the administrative capital of the Samanids. It had a native prince of the Bukhar Khudat, and an Arab emir who was subordinate to the governor of Khurasan residing in Nishapur.

Nishapur was the capital of 'Abd Allah b. Tahir, the largely autonomous governor of Khurasan. This far-away province of the 'Abbasid empire extended from Rayy to beyond Samarkand and the Panjab, probably including Kashgar and Khotan on the southern branch of the Silk Road. According to Sallam's travel account, the influence of the governor reached as far as the "lands of tabanuyan" on the borders with China.

In Nishapur our traveller drew up the balance of the voyage. On the outward journey he had lost twenty-two companions; some of them had been left behind because of illness, others had died. In accordance with the funeral ritual of Islam, the dead had been buried in their own clothes. On the homeward journey, another fourteen men had died so that of the fifty young and strong men who had left

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[40] C.R. Markham (transl.), *Narrative of the embassy of Ruy Gonçalez de Clavijo to the court of Timour at Samarkand*, London 1859, p. 121-122.

[41] Cf. Chapter 9, p. ■■ (11f.).

Samarra, only fourteen arrived safely in Nishapur (and perhaps in Samarra). Of the two hundred[42] mules, only twenty-three had survived. The garrisons in the various fortresses, perhaps another reason for choosing the longer route for the homeward journey, had provided food and shelter for man and beast, and were welcome halting-places, especially when compared with the desolate regions between Itil and the first places on the Silk Road on the outward journey.

The governor of Khurasan presented Sallam with 8000 dirhams, and each of the fourteen men who had survived received 5000 dirhams. He further assigned five dirhams per day to the horsemen and three dirhams per day to the footsoldiers, as far as Rayy. They apparently served as an escort up to the western border of the province of Khurasan, the limit of 'Abd Allah b. Tahir's direct rule. According to Ibn al-Jawzi's version, Sallam paid the horsemen and footsoldiers out of his own pocket.

Probably via Bistam, Sallam went to Rayy and Hamadan and back to Samarra. He reported to Caliph al-Wathiq about his adventures, and showed him the iron material he had scratched from the barrier of 'the two-horned one' at Yumenguan. The caliph praised God, ordered a sum of money to be distributed (as alms), and gave each of Sallam's men 1000 dinars. Sallam also told his adventures to Ibn Khurradadhbih, and showed him the report he had drawn up for the caliph.

4. *Summary of the homeward journey*

Following is a list of places mentioned in both Ibn Khurradadhbih's and al-Idrisi's versions of Sallam's travel account. It shows how erratic the itinerary of the homeward journey was. Since there are no other sources available for the period, no alternatives can be offered:

Yumenguan–Besh-torak–across part of lake Lop Nor(*)–Loulan on the Konche river–along the river Kuruk to Korla–Yingpan (on a track from Charklik to Turfan)–Pingshan Mountains–Bedel Pass–the river Ajak-tash–Kara-köl on lake Issyk-köl–Tokmak on the river Chu–Ak-Beshim (near Frunze)–Taraz*–Isfijab*–Tashkent –Usrushana–Samarkand*–Kish–Kandak–Iron Gate–Tirmidh*

[42] One hundred, according to al-Idrīsī, cf. Chapter 7, p. ■■ (2).

–Balkh–Kish–Nakhshab–Bukhara*–Amul-i Shatt–Merv–Sarakhs –Nishapur*–Bayhak–Bistam–Rayy*–Hamadan–Samarra*.

5. *Distances and duration of the journey*

Yumenguan–Loulan–Kucha	1080 km
Kucha–Taraz* [via Tabanuyan*, Lakhman*, Ghuriyan*, Barskhan*]	1100 km
Taraz*–Samarkand*	700 km
Samarkand–Tirmidh*–Balkh	400 km
Balkh–Nakhshab–Bukhara*	400 km
Bukhara*–Amul-i Shatt–Merv–Sarakhs	470 km
Sarakhs–Nishapur*	250 km
Nishapur–Rayy	700 km
Rayy*–Hamadan	300 km
Hamadan–Samarra*	250 km
sub-total	**5710 km**
+ 10% correction	571 km
total	**6281 km**

6281 km / 12 months = 523,41 km per month / 30 days = ca. 17,5 km (17,44 km) per day.

Placed on a modern map, Sallam's homeward journey started in Yumenguan and took him across the Tarim Basin and the Tianshan Mountains to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Iraq. According to our calculations his journey was ca. 650 km longer than the outward journey, whereas the duration was considerably shorter. Consequently, the average speed during the homeward journey (17,5 km per day) was higher than that of the outward journey (12 km). The difference can be explained by the fact that the greater part of the homeward journey went along the Silk Road, a much frequented route with garrisoned places providing food and shelter. Under these conditions an average speed of 17,5 km per day does not seem unacceptable. No historical itineraries of the period are available for comparison, but travelling in Central Asia most probably did not change dramatically before the second half of the 20th century. We therefore may compare the speed registered by travellers in the early decades of the 20th century with that of some thousand years earlier.

Aurel Stein considered 21 km (14 miles) per day "a slow journey" Ollivier writes that on the Silk Road there were caravanserais at about every 20 to 25 kilometres, according to him a normal stage for a pedestrian.[43] An average of ca. 17 km per day over a period of twelve months, therefore, was not too great stress for the hardened traveller Sallam meanwhile had become.

If Sallam on his return journey indeed took the Silk Road from Samarkand to Rayy, we may trace his steps, in opposite direction, at the hand of the modern traveller Ollivier who in the year 2000 marched from Dogubayazit and Bazargan on the Turco-Iranian frontier to Samarkand, via Tabriz and Teheran.[44] Apart from Ollivier's detour via Arran, Sallam may have travelled from Samarkand to Teheran more or less on the route taken by the Frenchman.[45] Although the present-day bituminous roads probably do not follow closely the tracks of the Silk Road as they were in Sallam's days, the general direction may well have been the same.

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[43] Ollivier, *Longue marche*, ii, p. 69. Elsewhere (ibid., p. 88) a march of eight to twelve hours per day is said to be normal, but the author also remarks that he was not slowed down by a caravan. A normal caravan stage was six to seven parasangs per day, while a royal courier covered some fifty parasangs per day.

[44] Cf. his *Longue Marche*, ii: *Vers Samarcande*. He notes that the distance on foot between Dogubayazit and Samarkand is 2745 km, that between Samarkand and Turfan 2600 km; cf. also G. Moorhouse, *Le Pèlerin de Samarcande*, Paris 1993.

[45] Ollivier marched from Teheran (via Arran) to Kashan–Lake Namak–Natanz–Ma'ir–Anarak–Chupanan–Jandak–along the Dasht-i Kavir desert to Mo'al Laman–Damgan–Semnan–Tarik Khaneh [with its forty columns mosque dating from the early 8th c., which means that Sallām may have seen it]–the Mehmanduat plain–Qaraj Abad–Deh Mollah–Shahrud–Mayameh–Niyandasht–Abbas Abad–Mazinu–Mehr–Rivand–Emir–Sabzevar–Bakhjar–Sultanabad–Hammet Abad–Nishapur–Qadamgah–Qal'eh Vazir–Mashhad–Tus–Aberavan–Süzak Maleki–Mazbaran–Bezangan–Shorlok–Gambaldi–Sarakhs [on the present-day the Irano-Turkmenistan frontier]–Hauz Han–Mary–Merv–Bayram Ali–Ravnina–Repetek –Tchardju [Turkmenabad]–the Amu Darya–Farap [on the Turkmeno-Uzbekistan frontier]–Alat–Kara-köl–Sayat–Bukhara–Navoi [near the Kızılkum desert]–Nurabad–Samarkand.

CONCLUSION

Sallam's travel account poses a number of problems which are not easily explained away, and so a number of presumptions had to be made. Historical sources dating from the 6th through the 10th centuries enable us to verify a great deal of data in his text. Other details found in the account such as the "fetid land", and the town of Igu are equally historical. Occasionally, like in the case of the "ruined towns", Sallam links reality to fantasy: he declares the ruin to be caused by Gog and Magog. Like the fanciful description of Alexander's wall itself, the interpretation of facts by fiction was probably meant to meet the caliph's intentions. Notwithstanding these and other objections that can be made, no reasonable doubt can be raised against the historicity of the travel account nor, in view of Sallam's position, against its reliability at large. The sources available provide enough converging probabilities to convince the reader that Sallam did undertake the journey he describes. The historical account of the Chinese monk Xuanzang, as well as the reports of such modern travellers, archaeologists and explorers as Charles-Eudes Bonin, Sir Aurel Stein, Sven Hedin, Paul Pelliot, Eduard Chavannes, Mildred Cable and Francesca French, seem to confirm that Sallam did travel along the northern branch of the Silk Road to Igu, Lop Nor, Yumenguan and returned to Samarra via the Taklamakan desert. At some point beyond Lop Nor, he saw an imposing building which he presents as Alexander's rampart. The building was the turning point of his journey. Whether he himself believed that he had reached his aim, is impossible to decide. Sallam had set out with the explicit caliphal order to find the barrier. He could not possibly come home empty-handed. He must have considered his foremost wish fulfilled when he saw the impressive Chinese *limes* and some of its fortresses, among which Yumenguan, the Jade Gate. This is what he wants us to believe that it was the answer to the caliph's request: the two-horned's protective rampart.

One can imagine that such imposing landmarks as the Great Wall of China struck the imagination of the surrounding nomads and of the foreign travellers and merchants journeying up and down the Silk Road. The Great Wall, an object of admiration and awe, may

soon have developed into a wondrous thing when descriptions of it began to travel far and wide over the steppes. In the process, the walls or gates grew in height, width and thus in impressiveness. One might suppose that Sallam related to the caliph not only what his eyes saw, but also what his imagination wanted to see, inspired, as he was, directly by Koran and Islamic tradition, indirectly by Syriac tradition. His description of the barrier-gate evidently reflects the way in which the Greco-Syriac-Arabic milieu of the first half of the 9th century was influenced by the Gog and Magog lore. In Sallam's travel account these elements are mixed with some historical practices around gates and fortresses, such as the hereditary function of the guardian, the striking against the gate, the use of keys and inscriptions, and the presence of heavy tools, bolts and thresholds. Sallam may have seen in them a confirmation of what he knew before setting out on his journey.

The fascination which Eastern Christianity and Islam had once developed for Alexander in his role of divine tool against apocalyptic peoples may have receded in our time into the background. Yet, Gog and Magog have not disappeared. They continue to be symbols of dreadful enemies as long as chiliastic and apocalyptic fears remain.

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