

STUDIES IN  
LATE ANTIQUITY AND EARLY ISLAM

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**STUDIES IN  
MUSLIM APOCALYPTIC**

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## CHAPTER 1

## HISTORICAL APOCALYPSES

HISTORICAL APOCALYPSES will be the first type of material to be examined here. In these traditions, as opposed to metahistorical apocalypses, there exist recognizable historical personalities, and a historical sequence of events that leaves reality at a particular point and moves into the realm of fantasy. This should not, however, be taken to mean that all of the events are historical, even in the section of the apocalypse that is clearly based on real events, or that there is a clear-cut difference between the two sections of the historical apocalypse. Frequently the apocalypticist makes use of allegory, or condenses material—suppressing items that do not fit into his scheme of history—in order to achieve a story line that is in harmony with his political-theological bent. By the same token, in the fantastic part of the apocalypse there is occasionally historical material entered by a later redactor. There is every indication that given the choice between accurately relaying historical information, and fitting it into an inaccurate pre-conceived scenario, the apocalypticist will choose the latter.<sup>1</sup> This should give pause to those like Paul Alexander and Suliman Bashear, who have sought to utilize rare tidbits of history preserved in apocalyptic traditions. In certain cases, when the material gives information that is credible, but not of a nature frequently relayed in the mainstream historical texts, it could perhaps be used cautiously.

<sup>1</sup>However, this should not be taken to mean that *everything* is to be rejected, or to be looked upon with suspicion. For example, in one tradition, which could be checked—that of the comet that appeared in 143/760, noted in Nu'aym, 132–33—it is clear that we have a sighting of Halley's Comet, which was scheduled to appear that year (however, this tradition is not without its problems), and is unrecorded in the standard history books. See my "Muslim Material on Comets and Meteors," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 30 (1999), 131–60, at 136–37; and Appendix I, no. 35, for further bibliography.

It is rather ironic, but in his method the apocalypticist achieves a result much closer to what we would now call "historical" writing, because of his concentration upon long-term processes and developments, than do many Muslim historians. This type of writing is considerably different from the strict chronological presentation preferred by so many of the Muslim historians, in which it is impossible to read a small selection in order to learn anything about the overall picture. While the text frequently suppresses material, there is a story line that always delivers the audience to a particular climax and does not leave them hanging. The Muslim apocalypticist, while his writing is heavily biased by his political-theological standpoint, is far better equipped to stand back and give an interpretation of the events to which he is a witness.<sup>2</sup> From this point of view certain apocalypses deserve the historian's attention, though, of course, the apocalypticist's prejudices are apparent and cannot be ignored in the interpretation of the material.

One should note that in the first four cycles of apocalyptic material analyzed here the action centers continually on the five ancient holy cities of Christianity: Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome. Therefore, it is easy to find similar themes in the Christian apocalyptic sagas, and, in fact, these traditions could be a polemical response to them. There may have been a vision among early Muslim groups of totally supplanting Christianity in one fell swoop by conquering all five of its holy cities.

A final note of caution: one thing that is lost in the arrangement of the material into cycles is the very cyclicity of the traditions. Each story line ultimately returns back to the starting point, though sometimes after running through another cycle. The traditions indicating this are ubiquitous:

People were with the Messenger of God (Muḥammad) asking him about the good [times], and I (Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamān) would ask him about the bad [times], fearing that I would live to see them. . . : "O Messenger of God, after this good [time] that God has given us, is there a bad [time] like that bad [time] that preceded it?" He said: "Yes. . ."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Several examples of this sort of apocalypse have been translated in Appendix I (nos. 11—especially the first part, 12, 21, 22, 24—though parts of this last selection are incomprehensible to me).

<sup>3</sup>Nu'aym, 18; al-Hindī, XI, 218 (no. 31,292); Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 93 (no. 4246); and

He (Makhul al-Shāmī) said: "Every twenty years you will be in a situation different from the one in which you were previously."<sup>4</sup>

As will be noted again and again, no victory or defeat is final in the apocalyptic world. Nothing is permanent, even in the messianic future. This, by the way, is the true difference between the apocalyptic future, in which events are still subject to change, and the eschatological future, which is not subject to change. This latter future will occur only after the Day of Judgment, and thus will not be the subject of this research. Muslim apocalyptic, even though it ostensibly leads to the Day of Judgment, in actuality goes in an endless circle and does not have a final end. Therefore it should be noted that the division is artificial, and there are those who may disagree with the manner in which the material has been arranged, possibly even proposing a better division.

### Cycles of Rulers and Events Leading to the Apocalypse

In Muslim historical apocalypses one notes the persistence of a certain pattern of rulers that needs explanation. This is the Cycle of Twelve Rulers, which is probably based on a Christian interpretation of Genesis 17:20, speaking of twelve kings descended from Ishmael.<sup>5</sup> Of course, it goes without saying that Muslims saw themselves (or at least their ruling tribe, Quraysh, saw itself) as Ishmael's descendants and legitimate heirs, and so accepted this scheme. Frequently we find traditions that emphasize that the Day of Judgment will not come until twelve caliphs have reigned, all from Quraysh.<sup>6</sup> From antiquity the number twelve is used topologically for "a full complement

cf. Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 8 (no. 18,960).

<sup>4</sup>Nu'aym, 20.

<sup>5</sup>"John the Little," 36; "Apocalypse arabe," 294–95; and cf. Nu'aym, 64: "God most high gave to Ishmael from his loins twelve upright [rulers] (*inna Allāh ta'ālā wahaba li-Ismā'il min ṣulbihi ithnay 'ashara qayyiman*), 113; al-Haytamī, V, 190–91; and note how the idea spread to other dynasties as well: Ibn 'Adī, II, 156.

<sup>6</sup>Nu'aym, 52–53 (which Ka'b claims that he found in the Torah; the word *rabb* here means "lord, master" and obviously means the caliphs—cf. the usage in R. Hayward, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic," *JSS* 34 [1989], 89, which shows how the tradition passed into Islam, since the same word is used there in the Hebrew); al-Dānī, III, 963 (no. 516, which specifies that a Jewish convert read the Genesis passage), al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, III, 340 (no. 2323); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, VI, 263–64; Ibn 'Adī, II, 386; IV, 208; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubūwa*, VI, 519; the Shī'ī versions in Ibn Babawayh, *Amālī l-Ṣadūq*, 254–56. See the interpretation found in al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuhfa*, VI, 391–92, and the variants in Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 103 (no. 4279); Abū Ya'lā,

of [a given subject]"; thus it is no surprise that this number is so prevalent in Muslim apocalyptic literature.<sup>7</sup> However, the interesting point about this apocalypse is the manner in which this list can be expanded and contracted according to the preferences of the apocalypticist as to which rulers to include, and presumably, the period in which he lived. This is an excellent example of a theological bent influencing the "historical" nature of these traditions. According to a straight count from the Prophet Muḥammad, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 717–20), who also ruled at the turn of the first century of Islam, was the last of the twelve rulers. This undoubtedly did nothing to harm that caliph's reputation as a messianic figure.<sup>8</sup> This list was stretched to cover the orthodox caliphs and the major caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty. Sometimes the count starts from 'Uthmān and includes just the Umayyads.<sup>9</sup> Later on, in Christian apocalypses belonging to the ninth and tenth centuries, one finds that nine more rulers were added to this scheme, probably to cover the first 'Abbāsids,<sup>10</sup> and still later the list becomes twelve and twelve.<sup>11</sup> It is

IX, 222. Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 107, lists the topological relatives of this number; while Kohlberg, "From Imāmiyya to Ithnā'ashariyya," *BSOAS* 39 (1976), 526–27, shows the polemical use to which this tradition was put in Shī'ī circles. Also, see now Uri Rubin, "Apocalypse and Authority in Islamic Tradition: the Emergence of the Twelve Leaders," *Al-Qanṭara* 18 (1997), 11–41.

<sup>7</sup>Germain, *Homere et la mystique des nombres*, 17–18, 35–36, 47.

<sup>8</sup>Nu'aym, 67. This tradition has been incorrectly punctuated in the text and should be translated: "A man from my ('Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb) descendants with a disfiguration on his face will rule and fill it (the earth) with justice. . . ." See also Ibn Ṭāwūs, 107; al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, X, 163, and below, 141, 150, for the meaning of such defects.

<sup>9</sup>Nu'aym, 58; al-Hindī, XI, 219 (no. 31,294): "There will be twelve kings after 'Uthmān from Banū Umayya. . . ." (*la-yakūnannu ba'd 'Uthmān ithnā 'ashara malikan min Banī Umayya. . .*).

<sup>10</sup>"Apocalypse of Peter," 447; and note the addition of nine rods on the tail of the snake in "Apocalypse arabe," 294, which added to the twelve horns could be representative of this tendency.

<sup>11</sup>"Bahira," *ZA* 14 (1898), 223; 16 (1900), 81; and see Meinardus, "XIVth Vision of Daniel," 419, for nineteen kings; and cf. Natanel ibn Yeshi'ah, *Nūr al-zalām*, 91, mentioning 36 caliphs. Note the polemical use of this scheme in al-Majlisī, LII, 267–68; and the scheme of eighteen kings mentioned in al-Haytamī, V, 188. Only the Umayyads are mentioned in Nu'aym, 75; while the 'Abbāsids are described in al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, VII, 181, which specifically mentions twelve rulers from the descendants of 'Abbās; and in Nu'aym, 66, which mentions al-Manṣūr as the fifth of fifteen caliphs (is this the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr? If so, perhaps he counts three orthodox caliphs and then skips to his brother Abū l-'Abbās al-Saffāh. See Nu'aym, 63. This would not be unheard of, since in other traditions the count includes Muḥammad and the first three orthodox caliphs, skips to 'Umar

significant that most of the stretching is achieved by increments of three or derivatives thereof (such as 3–6–9, etc.).

It is fascinating to note that both Muslims and Christians found it important to preserve this idea of twelve rulers, extending it as the need arose. At this point it would be helpful to note the different approaches taken in Muslim apocalyptic towards this dominant idea as time progressed. In Shīʿī Imāmī schemes, this “twelve rulers” tradition was related quite naturally to the twelve Imāms. Thus, according to this interpretation, apocalyptic history remained a straight time-line, whereas in the Sunnī approach the history is very elastic and stretches according to the need, even over all of Muslim future history until the messianic age. Not so among the Shīʿa, since for them the stretching occurs only at the final link with the messianic future—the period of the twelfth Imām. All of the other Imāms lived regular lives (in terms of their length) and do not need to be stretched in order to cover empty territory in the future. In both interpretations this scheme is designed to cover all of history. It has broken down in Sunnī apocalyptic, probably because the constant addition of caliphs led to rather unwieldy numbers, and this tradition is rarely mentioned by apocalyptic writers after the fourth–sixth/tenth–twelfth centuries, at which time it was consigned to the status of “forged”. The Shīʿī scheme, however, is still operative, because we are still living in the period of the twelfth Imām, which has been “stretched” over the last 1100 years.<sup>12</sup>

It would seem that early Muslim perception of the flow of events (the material that is preserved in the *ḥadīth* literature, for example) saw history as leading up to the immediate and imminent End. For this purpose, signs were sought to explain various rulers’ qualities and deeds in these terms. It is assumed that in this manner the word *fitna* either passed from its apocalyptic meaning of a test designed to purify the believer into the religious sense of a civil war between Muslims, or, if one does not accept this premise, from the religious meaning to the apocalyptic. The connection between the two is located at the junction where history becomes a historical apocalypse. One can easily understand how this happened, since so many of the early caliphs and their opponents were, either during their own time, or in hindsight, considered messianic figures. If one’s leader is a messiah, then oftentimes one’s

ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and then states “and seven yet remain” (*wa-baqiya saba’*): al-Dānī, III, 963 (no. 516).

<sup>12</sup>See below, Chapter 4.

opponent is a demonic or antichrist-like figure (or perhaps the follower or avatar of one). Therefore, apocalyptic groups began to see Muslim history as a prelude to the immediate coming of the End, and the endless battles between the various groups (Umayyads, Shīʿī groups, Zubayris and so forth) as the End-time battles or dress rehearsals of them. It is remarkable how many of the apocalypses assume a circular vision of history in which everything will eventually return back to what once was.<sup>13</sup> If the Umayyad dynasty has temporarily disappeared from the stage of history, the apocalypticist wants us to realize that this is just an illusion. They will return, and the old battles will be reenacted in the End times. The only difference is that the right side will win this time.

Every effort in Sunnī Muslim apocalyptic is made to uphold the succession to the Prophet in the orthodox order of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. No tradition that can be constrained to lead the audience to this conclusion is rejected.<sup>14</sup> In apocalyptic traditions ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is frequently described as a “horn of iron”, supposedly something referring to a prophecy that is to be found in the books of the Christians and the Jews.<sup>15</sup> This characterization is probably influenced by the book of Daniel, where there is indeed mention of “a little horn” (for example, Daniel 8:9). Both the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd dynasties are featured in the schemata (mentioned above), while the orthodox caliphs are frequently reduced to three by cutting out ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Many traditions are placed into the mouths of prominent Companions of the Prophet to indicate how much they disliked the internal battles that went on after the latter’s death in 632. These traditions are designed to combat the type of *fitna* that came to be known in the Muslim empire with the meaning of “a civil war”, and to highlight the religious penalties attached to this sort of behavior. Since the serious scholar will obviously take these traditions to mean that later Muslims felt uncomfortable with the fact that so many of the Companions fought and killed each other (especially when at a later period they are all said to be free from sin), there is no need to deal with their historicity. The very fact that no Muslim ruler of this

<sup>13</sup>Probably this is behind the attitude that events that happened to the ancient Israelites foreshadow those to happen to the Muslims: Nu‘aym, 31; al-Haytamī, VII, 261.

<sup>14</sup>Nu‘aym, 60; and see M. Sharon, “The Development of the Debate around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam,” *JSAI* 5 (1984), 123–27.

<sup>15</sup>Nu‘aym, 59–60, 68–69; and cf. “Bahira,” *ZA* 16 (1900), 81; Jefet ibn ‘Alī, *Commentary on Daniel*, 123, mentioning ‘Umar.

period is recorded to have given up a fight because of the idea that it was forbidden to kill other Muslims is sufficient proof that these traditions are the result of later dogmatic discomfort. One should note the extent to which apocalypses deal with the three key civil wars in early Islam: the battles of Jamal, Şiffin, and the Ḥarra. All three are specifically called *malāḥim*, and their participants are all deemed to be in heaven.<sup>16</sup> Traditions like this one are obviously designed to prevent the theological speculation that threatened to rip the Muslim society apart, as to which side was the right one, especially since all three were fought by the Prophet's Companions or their immediate descendants.

Key to the traditions involving rulers is the idea that *ikhtilāf* (dissension, quarrel) is the harbinger of the end of a dynasty: "The rule will remain with Banū Umayya as long as they do not quarrel among themselves" (*lā yazāl hādihā l-amr fī Bani Umayya mā lam yakhtalifū baynahum*).<sup>17</sup> The same thing is said about the 'Abbāsids, though with less historical accuracy. It became axiomatic, therefore, in Muslim legal compositions to avoid at all costs the dissensions and quarrels that dynasties cause, even if this meant accepting a tyrannical ruler. "There will be *fitna* then [following it] will be consensus and repentance, then [following that] will be *fitna* and then consensus and repentance. . . ."<sup>18</sup> *Fitna*, it will be noticed here, requires repentance; it is a religious offense, as well as a political folly. Apocalyptists sought to find a progression in the civil disorders that plagued the Muslim empire, and to convince their audience that they were leading up to a certain point. That point is the metahistorical apocalypse that leads directly to the messianic age, as will be discussed below. According to these schemes, there will be four *fitnas*, the first of which lasts five years (the caliphate of 'Alī in 656–61), the second of which lasts ten years (Ibn al-Zubayr's revolt in 683–92), the third of which will last twenty years (unclear, but one would assume that the apocalyptist means the revolt of the 'Abbāsids in 747–50, since he could have seen the 'Alīd revolts of 762 as part of this process), and the last is the Dajjāl.<sup>19</sup> A tradition of this nature, one would suspect, is the result of the desire to see a religious purpose, even an inevitability, in the numerous civil wars, which are otherwise inexplicable within the Muslim concept of

history. The use of apocalyptic to explain them was one of the methods by which the religious historians interpreted these uncomfortable facts (another was the use of conspiracy theories, which are still common today).<sup>20</sup>

The first Umayyad caliph, Mu'āwiya (r. 661–80), is described in the traditions in none too complimentary terms: having wide buttocks, a large gullet, who eats and is never satisfied.<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to see traditions of this nature stemming from supporters of the Umayyad dynasty. There are traditions describing the Umayyad dynasty as a whole:

(after listing the orthodox caliphs by their names and titles) . . . the master of the guard (*ṣāḥib al-ahrās*, Mu'āwiya) will die, the tyrant (Yazīd I) will die and the master of the troops—he is the last of the kings—will die. Then the one who possesses the sign-manual (*ṣāḥib al-'alāma*) will rule and die ('Abd al-Malik?). As for the tribulations, they will come when *ibn māḥiq al-dhahabīyāt* is killed.<sup>22</sup> At that time misfortunes will prevail and hope will be removed; at that time there will be four kings from the immediate family of the possessor of the mark.<sup>23</sup> Two kings will not have [any] book read to them,<sup>24</sup> and a king that will die on his bed, living only a short while (Ibrāhīm?), and a king that will come from the north, at his hands there will be hardship and at his hands the crowns will be broken (Marwān II). He will besiege Ḥimṣ 120 mornings (days), until terrifying [news] will come to him from his land, and he will go from it

<sup>20</sup>See M. Ḥamīdullāh, "The Jewish Background of the Battles of Jamal and Şiffin," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 36 (1982), 235–51, for a full-blown conspiracy fantasy. For an interpretation of Umayyad history see Appendix I, no. 12, and of 'Abbāsīd history: no. 22; and in general E. Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī Shī'ī Interpretations of Umayyad History," in G.H.A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, 145–59, 249–54.

<sup>21</sup>Nu'aym, 64 (in fairness, Mu'āwiya's name is only broadly hinted at); al-Majlisī, XLI, 317.

<sup>22</sup>I am inclined to read the otherwise incomprehensible *ibn māḥiq al-dhahabīyāt* as *ibn malik al-muqaddasāt* ("the son of the king of the holy places"), which would be Yazīd I, son of Mu'āwiya I, who styled himself as the "king of the holy places".

<sup>23</sup>Probably Walīd I, Sulaymān, Yazīd II and Hishām.

<sup>24</sup>Probably meaning the Qur'ān, in other words they will be infidels: al-Walīd II, and Yazīd III.

<sup>16</sup>Al-Hindī, XI, 334 (no. 31,669); see also 345 (no. 31,700).

<sup>17</sup>Nu'aym, 110; and cf. 'Alī al-Qārī, *Al-Asrār al-marfū'a*, 84 (no. 18).

<sup>18</sup>Nu'aym, 27. This issue will be discussed below, 179.

<sup>19</sup>Nu'aym, 28 (there are several types of progression traditions here); al-Hindī, XI, 216 (no. 31,284).

(Ḥims), and tribulation will strike in the interior (the ‘Abbāsīd army from Iraq). There will be tribulation between them.<sup>25</sup>

This is not a very easy tradition to understand, and many of the identifications are tentative. Still, the basic ideas are clear enough. The apocalypticist is hostile to Yazīd I (a feeling shared by virtually all later Muslim religious and scholarly circles)<sup>26</sup> and Marwān II, but indifferent to the majority of the other Umayyad rulers. Most of the identifications stem from the group of four listed in the tradition as the “immediate family of the one who possesses the sign-manual”. Surely this means the four sons of ‘Abd al-Malik, who as a group dominated the middle generation of the Umayyad dynasty.<sup>27</sup> If this is true, then the “one who possesses the sign-manual” must be ‘Abd al-Malik himself, though the reason why he is referred to like this is obscure. It is also unclear why Mu‘āwiya is referred to as the master of the guard. The meaning of the phrase “. . . will not have [any] book read to them. . .” is also a difficult one, and the identifications stemming from it are very uncertain.

In all likelihood we have here a list of pejorative names, which may have been known in the “street”, and the apocalypticist chooses to use them in order to hide behind the ambiguity of obscure jargon. It is possible that parts of this tradition date from the Umayyad period itself, since even among the versions found in Nu‘aym (who lived in the second generation after the revolution), it appears without the later ‘Abbāsīd part. The apocalypticist sees the coming of the ‘Abbāsīds described in the last part of the tradition as just another difficulty to strike the unfortunate community of Muslims, and not as its imminent salvation. It is rather odd that ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is not mentioned in this tradition, but then, as we will see, he received an honorary position outside of that of the Umayyad dynasty as a whole.

Among Muslim apocalypticists the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II (r. 743–44) is seen as the end of the dynasty, or at least as the direct cause of its downfall.<sup>28</sup> The attitude of the apocalypticists to the Marwānid branch of the

Umayyad dynasty, as is usual with Muslim religious circles, is hostile. They are referred to as Banū l-Zarqā’ (the descendants of a blue-eyed woman, a serious insult because a *zarqā’* would be a Byzantine slave-girl),<sup>29</sup> and the descendants of a coward son of a coward (*wazagh ibn wazagh*),<sup>30</sup> meaning Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 683–85), the first caliph of this family, whose father was cursed by the Prophet, and who was himself allegedly responsible for the situation leading up to the murder of the caliph ‘Uthmān (r. 644–56), and even Mu‘āwiya is made to disparage them.<sup>31</sup> For example, the great caliph Hishām (r. 724–43) is attacked by the tradition that says: “When a boy was born [to ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705)], his mother called him Hishām, so he [‘Abd al-Malik himself!] said: May God crush her (*hāshamahā*) in the Fire [of hell]!”<sup>32</sup> The demise of the Umayyads is foretold in a *qunūt* (ritual) style curse voiced by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (r. 656–61), who says that groups from the east (meaning the ‘Abbāsīds) will kill them and disperse them, and count them [so that not one will escape].<sup>33</sup>

The ‘Abbāsīds are frequently described in the various sources, and are noted by both the Christians and the Muslims for the long hair of their armies.<sup>34</sup> This long hair was apparently unusual and perhaps reflected a vow of some type<sup>35</sup> These ‘Abbāsīd troops were not greeted by the apocalypticist with joy, despite the fact that they liberated the Muslims from the hated Umayyads:

<sup>29</sup>Nu‘aym, 57, 72; Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūh*, II, 159; V, 18; also Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XXXV, 36.

<sup>30</sup>Nu‘aym, 73; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XXVII, 430; and see the punishment for this type of person: Abū Ya‘lā, II, 144. Overall, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XXXIV, 177; XXXVII, 127.

<sup>31</sup>Nu‘aym, 73. There will be four heretics from Quraysh: Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (the ancestor of the Marwānids), al-Walīd II, the Sufyānī (Yazīd ibn Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya), and Sa‘īd ibn Khālīd, the governor of Khurāsān: Nu‘aym, 74; and cf. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh*, VIII, 113 (no. 7058). Some pro-Umayyad material can occasionally be found: al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, X, 91.

<sup>32</sup>Nu‘aym, 74.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 110; al-Hindī, XI, 364 (no. 31,756). The curse is virtually identical to that of Khubayb ibn ‘Adī in Wensinck, *Concordance*, s.v. *badād*. On *qunūt* see Bashear, “*Qunūt* in *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* Literatures,” *JSAI* 19 (1995), 36–65.

<sup>34</sup>Nu‘aym, 118, 121; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXVI, 140; al-Hindī, XI, 276 (no. 31,508). Compare “Bahira,” *ZA* 14 (1898), 224; *Zand-i Wahman Yasn*, 153. This is opposed to the first Muslims, about whom the “Apocalypse of Peter,” 435, says: “[its soldiers] . . . will shave the hair of their heads like men resembling demons.”

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Judges 13:4–5.

<sup>25</sup>Nu‘aym, 65, 113–14, 424–25 (the latter two versions go deep into ‘Abbāsīd times).

<sup>26</sup>Abū Ya‘lā, II, 176.

<sup>27</sup>Al-Hindī, XI, 260 (no. 31,456).

<sup>28</sup>Nu‘aym, 65, 111–12; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyīn*, 258; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-nubūwa*, VI, 505–506; al-Haytamī, VII, 313; and the commentary in al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuhfa*, VI, 392. He is probably the drunkard in “Apocalypse arabe,” 295.

When the black banners (the symbol of the 'Abbāsids, which will be dealt with below) appear, the first part of their [rule] is *fitna*, the second part is error, and the third part is infidelity.<sup>36</sup>

If the tradition is understood correctly, this would seem to be a progressive tradition involving the gradual decay of the 'Abbāsīd rule, leading from the general sin of *fitna* to eventual unbelief.

What do I (Muḥammad) have to do with the 'Abbāsids; they went forth through my community (conquered it, or possibly, caused dissension in the community), and caused them to wear black garments—may God cause them to wear garments of fire!<sup>37</sup>

Other traditions emphasize the fact that the coming of the 'Abbāsids heralded the beginning of the end of the "Arab" domination of the empire.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, they are described coming into Damascus, and taking a terrible vengeance on its people for their actions, shouting their slogan: "Kill, kill!" (*bakush*, *bakush*, in Persian).<sup>39</sup> Their followers are described as the vile or the misled of the Arabs, the lowest of the *mawālī* (freedmen, non-Arab Muslims), runaway slaves and all sorts of dissenters. It is said that those who will perish in the 'Abbāsīd revolution are the pure-blooded Arabs, the righteous *mawālī*, the possessors of wealth and the learned.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Nu'aym, 116; and see the variant in al-Dhahabī, *Tartīb al-mawḍū'āt*, 136 (no. 404). It is said that they will call for justice before their victory, and then afterwards people will ask them for the same and that they will not give it: Abū Ya'lā, IX, 18.

<sup>37</sup>Nu'aym, 116; al-Haytamī, V, 244; al-Dhahabī, *Tartīb al-mawḍū'āt*, 136 (no. 405). Though these traditions are quite strong, there are far less of them than there are against the Umayyads (though see al-Haytamī, V, 188, 235–36). Probably the balance were suppressed by the authorities. It may be that elements of other cycles are anti-'Abbāsīd traditions in disguise. It should also be noted that the worst charge against the Umayyads (that they destroyed the Ka'ba in 692) is rare in apocalyptic: Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 47 (no. 19,072).

<sup>38</sup>Nu'aym, 117–18.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 118; al-Hindī, XI, 283 (no. 31,529). The editor mistranslates this and misreads the slogan again in Arabic on 120. It would seem incredible that he could read the command *bakush* as *aqbil* instead of the obvious *uqtul*, especially since the slogan on the top of 120 is *amit amit!* (see Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 264; and Ibn 'Adī, V, 273, for *yā Manṣūr amit*). Persian is the most hated language in the eyes of God: Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mīzān*, I, 453; and receives low marks in Christian apocalyptic as well: "Apocalypse of Peter," 463.

<sup>40</sup>Nu'aym, 122; al-Hindī, XI, 219–20 (no. 31,297). See Sharon, *Revolt*, 61–66.

However, the event that stirred up apocalyptic expectations the most was the civil war that occurred in 809–13 between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn, the two elder sons of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809). This war was not only protracted and destructive, but took place close to the *hijri* year 200/815–16. Obviously this fact influenced certain groups to believe that this event was the "dissension" of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty, and that their fall was imminent. It should also be noted that this civil war fell about 70 years after the great revolt that propelled the 'Abbāsids into power in the first place. For many apocalyptic groups, the number 70 is one that would indicate the imminence of key apocalyptic events. A prophecy shows the spirit of the times: "In 196 (= AD 811) there will be a Bedouin revolt, in 197 there will be destruction (*fanā'*), in 198 the Banū Hāshim will be exiled,<sup>41</sup> in 199 the tribulation will be revealed, and in 200 (815) God's will will be done."<sup>42</sup> This tradition is amplified by noting that 'Abbāsīd rule will extend until two youths among them (probably al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn) have allegiance sworn to them, and that the dissension (*ikhṭilāf*) between the two of them will last for a long time. This gives the opportunity for rebels in the western part of the empire to revolt, since the conflict between the two erstwhile caliphs takes place mostly in the east.<sup>43</sup> It would seem that these traditions were circulated by pro-Umayyad groups in Syria and the Maghrib, who hoped for a repeat of the situation created by the internal Umayyad conflicts, which was used so brilliantly by Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī in 747–49 to bring the 'Abbāsids themselves to power. This success, however, was due to a number of factors that could not be recreated in the area of Syria, and therefore the 'Abbāsids remained in power despite their internal conflicts, and belied the apocalyptic traditions predicting their fall. Some also felt that the Mahdī would come after the passing of the seventh of the 'Abbāsids (al-Ma'mūn), a typical apocalyptic speculation based on the number seven.<sup>44</sup>

Cosmic phenomena are adduced to herald the end of the 'Abbāsids as well. This, of course, is not unusual in apocalyptic traditions, where anything out of the ordinary is often seen as a sign of the End. Comets are frequently

<sup>41</sup>Banū Hāshim in the apocalyptic traditions almost always means the 'Abbāsids.

<sup>42</sup>Al-Majlisī, LII, 213. On this subject see my "The Apocalyptic Year 200/815–16," in *Apocalyptic Time*, 41–67.

<sup>43</sup>Nu'aym, 119, 123–24.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 125–26. The fact that traditions clearly indicating al-Ma'mūn, and the messianic expectations about those following him, appear in Nu'aym, (who died in 844, only eleven years later) shows how fast these traditions spread.

mentioned, along with eclipses of the sun and moon. This material will not be dealt with much in this work, since it is an extremely involved part of apocalyptic literature. Earthquakes are also a standard feature of the expected transition between rulers in the apocalyptic traditions. These sort of apocalypses will not be featured here much, though they are to be found in the texts occasionally.<sup>45</sup>

A number of these traditions allow us to see the progression in the events leading up to the expected downfall of the 'Abbāsids, which, since it did not actually happen, allows us to view the standard apocalyptic version of what should happen during times like these:

In Ramaḍān (the year is not mentioned) there will be a pillar of light, and in Shawwāl tribulation, in Dhū l-Qa'da annihilation, and in Dhū l-Hijja, the *hajj* (the annual caravan from Iraq to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina) will be pillaged, while in Muḥarram, what a Muḥarram!!<sup>46</sup>

In the same vein:

There will be a sign in the month of Ramaḍān, and the troop (or band) will appear in Shawwāl, then there will be a bustle of fighters/battles in Dhū l-Qa'da, then the *hajj* will be pillaged in Dhū l-Hijja, then the inviolable (i.e. the women) will be violated in Muḥarram, then there will be a sound in Ṣafar, then the tribes will contend with each other in the two [months] of Rabī', then the most amazing of all things between Jumādā (both of them?) and Rajab. At that time a saddled camel will be better than a village yielding 100,000 [*dīnārs*]" (for some reason the month of Sha'bān does not appear).<sup>47</sup>

This is a very interesting tradition, in which many of the meanings of the month-names in the calendar are used to describe the event most exactly

<sup>45</sup>See Appendix I, no. 34, and the sources quoted there for a selection of astrological apocalypses.

<sup>46</sup>Nu'aym, 131; al-Hindī, XI, 275–76 (no. 31,505); XIV, 279 (no. 38,724); and cf. XIV, 274 (no. 38,705).

<sup>47</sup>Nu'aym, 131; cf. the variants in al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh*, II, 347; Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 38 (no. 19,047); al-Suyūṭī, VI, 63; al-Dhahabī, *Tartīb*, 286–87 (no. 1019), and see the optional ending to this last apocalypse trans. in Appendix I, no. 36: al-Hindī, XIV, 570 (no. 39,627).

opposite to their original connotation. For example, the *hajj* is pillaged during the sacred month for the *hajj*, the inviolable things (*maḥārim*) are violated during the month of Muḥarram, and the movement of fighters takes place during the month of Dhū l-Qa'da, when traditionally there is a truce. Of course, there are a number of variants on this theme.

Another scenario is described thus:

When the Turks have poured down on you, and the troops are prepared [to defend you], and your caliph, who was a miser (*kāna yajma' al-amwāl*), dies, and a weak man replaces him, then allegiance to him will be thrown off after two years. . . .

whereupon the Turks and the Byzantines break their treaties with the Arab Muslims and appear in their lands. A herald (*munādī*) will appear on the walls of Damascus crying out: "Woe to the Arabs from evil approaching!" Then there will be a village (called Ḥarastā) swallowed up to the west of the mosque of Damascus and the Sufyānī will appear.<sup>48</sup> It is a little difficult to date this tradition. Two caliphs are frequently called misers in the sources: Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 724–43) and al-Manṣūr (r. 754–75). Hishām stands out as the one described, since his successor, al-Walīd II (r. 743–44) really was overthrown after two years of rule.<sup>49</sup> But the Turks are far more prominent during the 'Abbāsīd period, and the Sufyānī legend probably did not gain wide acceptance until the beginning of their rule. The situation could also be of the time of al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61), since it was with his assassination that the Turkish domination began. As with many apocalyptic traditions, the historical interpretation is multilayered, and the ambiguity has served for many situations.

Other apocalyptic events that occur are difficult to identify. There is the revolt of a man from Qazwīn, whose name is that of a prophet. It is said that people will rush to swear allegiance to him, and he will fill the area of the

<sup>48</sup>Nu'aym, 206; Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 195; al-Sulamī, 116 (no. 82); al-Hindī, XI, 272–73 (no. 31497); al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 68; al-Majlisī, LII, 208. Ḥarastā was on the road from the Ḥijāz to Damascus and was the last stop, about a day's journey away from it: Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XII, 241.

<sup>49</sup>In Nu'aym, 419, the caliph Hishām is specifically called a miser: *yajma' al-māl jam'an lam yajma' aḥadun* ("he collected wealth like no one before him had ever done"); while in the "Apocalypse of Peter," 449, an unidentified caliph is described: "He will be so keen in exacting tribute from men that he will demand it even from people who have died. He will amass gold and silver in a quantity larger than that amassed by the previous kings."



Jibāl (western Persia) with fear.<sup>50</sup> This man could be the same as the *zindīq* (“heretic”) from Qazwīn, who is also described.<sup>51</sup> The revolt of the Zanj (the black slaves from the marshes in southern Iraq, 868–83) is also mentioned, noting that al-Basra will be destroyed by a man of ‘Alīd descent whom the Zanj will follow.<sup>52</sup> Many Shī‘ī apocalypses date from the middle ‘Abbāsīd period (861–1055), and mention events such as the invasions of the Daylamīs and the Seljuqs. Some contain king lists of the ‘Abbāsīds reaching to the 24th or sometimes even the 26th caliph (al-Qā‘im, d. 467/1074).<sup>53</sup> Another saga dates from the turbulent era just before the Seljuq conquest of Iraq in 1050. The petty Arab dynasties of this time are featured, including the Banū ‘Uqayl, who sack the towns of Naṣībīn, ‘Amād, al-Raqqā and its sister-city of Raqqā al-Sawdā’. They take captive the children of the Muslims and their property. Finally a certain man from the Banū Sulaym attacks the ‘Uqaylids and frees the captives and their possessions. The ‘Uqaylids then flee to Malaṭyā (after losing a third of their number) and win it from the Byzantines (losing another third).<sup>54</sup> This is probably one of the latest datable apocalypses preserved in Sunnī material, where it is very difficult to find historical apocalypses from beyond the early ‘Abbāsīd period (i.e. ca. 200/815).

These historical apocalypses cover a very specific part of Muslim history. Just as the modern journalist is frequently accused of doing, they give a somewhat inaccurate vision of the events, illuminating a given point without giving much context. Perhaps one can forgive the apocalypticist his excessive pessimism about history. He is not just rumor-mongering about the seamy side of society (though we can thank him for giving us a glance into it); his theology demands that he see his society in this negative manner. If it were not so, he could not draw his audience to him. Thus, the historical apocalypses concentrate on several key events: the first civil wars, the ‘Abbāsīd revolution, the events concerning the civil war between al-Amīn and al-Ma’mūn, and the Zanj and tribal revolts of the third and fourth centuries AH. To the best of my knowledge, there are no identifiable apocalyptic traditions concerning historical situations after this time period in Sunnī

apocalyptic. This corresponds well with what we know about the state of the crystallization of Muslim tradition about this time. As the centuries wore on, the apocalyptic viewpoint of history became more and more the hallmark of the early traumatic period, and not something necessary for the Muslim community to continue to develop, since it had developed its own view of history. However, this early apocalyptic material served well in the sense that it covered a good many historical situations and could be put to secondary use in a number of others. For example, it is frequently reinterpreted, like the material concerning the A‘māq received new life during the Crusades.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, we find that historical apocalyptic material is not only relevant to the time in which it was created, but is universally relevant and is in constant use and reuse, with the aid of new interpretation, until our own time.<sup>56</sup>

### The A‘māq Cycle

The A‘māq are the valleys of northern Syria between Ḥimṣ and the Taurus Mountains, a frequently fought-over land between the two warring empires during the first centuries of Islam, and with the cycle of traditions about confrontations here we may begin discussion of the long struggle between the Muslim and the Byzantine empires, as this dominated the apocalyptic of both sides. The A‘māq Cycle does not tend to favor either the Byzantine or the Muslim side, since they join together to fight a third party, a fact that speaks highly for its authenticity as a historical source.<sup>57</sup>

This cycle is fundamental to the study of Muslim apocalyptic, since the basic story line is repeated in most of the major traditions, or used as a hinge between stories. It would seem, therefore, that the situation originated very early, and made a powerful impression on the Muslim audience. In one of its basic forms the tradition reads:

Then the Byzantines will send to you asking for a truce (*ṣulḥ/hud-na*), and you will make a truce with them. On that day a woman will cross the pass (in the Tarsus Mountains, the area of the

<sup>50</sup> Al-Majlisī, LII, 213.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, LII, 212.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, XLI, 334; LII, 278; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, VIII, 125–26; Ibn Tāwūs, 121 (see Appendix I, no. 21, for a translation).

<sup>53</sup> See below, 224, and Appendix I, nos. 22–24, for material of this nature.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rikh*, V, 357–58; Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 509–10.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Nawāwī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, XVIII, 235–36; Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 40.

<sup>56</sup> On this, see my “Muslim Fears,” and especially “Modern Muslim Apocalyptic Literature.”

<sup>57</sup> For a number of variants and a historical analysis see S. Bashear, “Early Muslim Apocalyptic Materials,” *JRAS*, 1991, 173–207; W. Madelung, “Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ,” *passim*.

fiercest fighting)<sup>58</sup> to Syria safely and the city of Caesarea in Anatolia will be built (rebuilt). During the truce al-Kūfa will be flattened like leather<sup>59</sup>—this is because they refused (lit. left off) assistance to the Muslims (i.e. of Syria), and God knows whether, in addition to this desertion (*khidhlān*), there was another event that made attacking them permissible [religiously speaking]. You will ask the Byzantines for assistance against them, and they will assist you, and you will go until you camp [with them] on a plain with hills (*marj dhī tulūl*). One of the Christians will say: “By means of our cross you obtained the victory; therefore give us our share of the spoils, of the women and children.” You will refuse to give them of the women and children, so they will fight and then go and return [to the Byzantine Empire] and prepare for the final apocalyptic battle (*malḥama*).<sup>60</sup>

This decisive conversation is recorded in a variant as:

You have only gained victory over them because of the cross, and the Muslims say: “Nay, because of Allāh and His messenger we have obtained victory over them.” It goes back and forth between them (i.e. the argument, *yatadāwalūna baynahum*), whereupon the Byzantines become angry, and one of the Muslims rises up and breaks the cross.<sup>61</sup>

Most of these variants end with the Muslims being massacred to a man. These traditions are the background situation given for the final apocalyptic battle in Syria. As one can easily see, there are three groups: the Syrian Muslims, the Iraqi Muslims and the Byzantine Christians. For an unknown reason there will be a temporary truce between the first and the last of these

<sup>58</sup>See C.E. Bosworth, “The City of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine Frontiers,” *Oriens* 33 (1992), 268–86. The term “pass” would seem to be a little flexible, since in variants the woman visits Jerusalem: Nu‘aym, 286—perhaps the meaning here is “road” (see Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*, s.v. *darb*).

<sup>59</sup>See above, 9.

<sup>60</sup>Nu‘aym, 268; cf. Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 142–44; Abū Dā‘ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 107 (no. 4292); and Madelung, “Prophecies,” 173–74.

<sup>61</sup>Nu‘aym, 273; Ibn Abī Shayba, V, 326; Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 297; Ibn Hibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VIII, 250 (no. 6673); Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Al-Āḥad wa-l-mathānī*, V, 120–23 (nos. 2658–63). Compare with al-Hindī, XI, 282 (no. 31,526).

groups, an unusual truce, which is kept by both sides. There exists a division between the two groups of Muslims so deep that the Muslims of Syria turn to the Byzantines for aid in punishing the Iraqis for their refusal to fight. This last is rather odd, since, if the refusal to fight and give aid hurt the Syrian Muslims so much that they were angry enough to launch a punitive raid against the offending Iraqis, then the enemy against whom the latter refused to fight was in fact the Byzantines themselves. If so, we have here a temporary realignment of hostile forces in which two groups unite against a third and fall out over the spoils.

In all likelihood, in this tradition we are given a unique glance into the final irrevocable split between Christianity and Islam, which may have been connected together by some common beliefs at a very early stage,<sup>62</sup> and by certain political ties as well. Here the focal point is the diametrically opposing attitude of the two parties towards the cross, which, as is well known in Christian apocalyptic traditions, is the symbol *par excellence* of the faith.<sup>63</sup> The Muslims seek to humiliate it and to deny its power. Hatred of the cross is a recurring polemical theme throughout Muslim apocalyptic. Here the humiliation is achieved by the story moving through a series of provocative actions culminating in a final split. No commander or leader makes any attempt to stop this; both sides speak collectively, without any attempt at compromise. Provocative stories of this nature appear throughout Nu‘aym,<sup>64</sup> always with religious symbols.

A similar occasion is described in Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>65</sup> Here the action

<sup>62</sup>Sharon, “The Birth of Islam in the Holy Land,” in M. Sharon (ed.), *Pillars of Smoke and Fire*, 225–35; *idem*, *Revolt*, 265–68; S. Bashear, “Qibla Musharriqa,” *MW* 81 (1991), 267–82; Koren and Nevo, “Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies,” *Der Islam* 68 (1991), 87–107.

<sup>63</sup>PsMeth, 136–37; “Andreas Salos,” 219; “Apocalypse of Peter,” 456; Christopher Walter, “The Apotropaic Function of the Victorious Cross,” *Revue des études byzantines* 55 (1997), 193–220; and in polemical-apologetical material: Griffith, “Bashir/Bešer,” *Le Muséon* 103 (1990), 319; *idem*, “Jews and Muslims in Syriac and Arabic Texts,” *Jewish History* 3 (1988), 76–80; ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, *Risālā*, 112–14; and cf. A. Jeffery, “Ghevond’s Text of Correspondence between Leo III and ‘Umar II,” *HTR* 37 (1944), 321–23; S.M. Stern, “‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Account of how Christ’s Religion was Falsified,” *JTS* 19 (1968), 143–44.

<sup>64</sup>E.g. Nu‘aym, 254, 306.

<sup>65</sup>“Pirqei ha-Mashi‘ah,” 336: “Israel will say to the king of the Arabs: ‘The Temple Mount is ours; take gold and silver and leave the Temple!’ The king of the Arabs will say: ‘You have no rights over the Temple, but chose for yourselves a sacrifice [first] and we also will sacrifice. Whichever sacrifice is received [by God] will have it (the Mount)... Israel

takes place at the Third Temple, which the Jews and the Muslims build jointly and both claim the right to sacrifice in it. After an argument, the two sides agree that whichever side has its sacrifice accepted will be the rightful owner of the site.<sup>66</sup> In this Jewish version it is the Muslims who win, largely because of Satan's machinations against the Jews, and so the Muslims invite the Jews to convert to Islam. This is refused with some scorn, and a battle breaks out, in which the Jews are destroyed, along with their messiah Nehemiah ibn Hoshiel.

Interestingly enough, both of these encounters involve a small minority faith (remembering that at this time the Muslims were a tiny minority in comparison to the Christians) seeking to define itself in the face of a majority faith. Apparently the willingness of these groups in the apocalyptic traditions to die for their faith was a powerful religious symbol. Both of these encounters could in fact be based on some historical kernel, since as we will note, the Muslims shared with the Jews the desire to build the Third Temple.<sup>67</sup>

Returning to the A'māq Cycle, there are a number of variants in which different enemies against whom these unnatural allies unite are identified by place. In certain cases the enemy is located behind Constantinople, on the European side of the Empire. This probably means the Bulgars or the Khazars.<sup>68</sup> In others, however, the enemy is located in Persia, and sometimes specified as the Turks.<sup>69</sup> It is possible that a tradition in the eighth-century Christian *Apocalypse of Peter*, speaking of the Muslim king, who is impossible to identify, refers to this alliance:

He will repair to Mesopotamia with a great army, and those who believe in Me (Christians) will make a pact with him and not forsake him. From Mesopotamia he will travel to Syria. . . .<sup>70</sup>

If we understand the meaning of "those who believe in Me" to have been Byzantine Christians (who else could have made a pact with a Muslim ruler?),

will sacrifice and it will not be received because Satan machinates against them before God. . . and then Beni Kedar (the Arabs) will sacrifice and it will be received."

<sup>66</sup>Cf. I Kings 18:16-39.

<sup>67</sup>See below, 54-58.

<sup>68</sup>See below, 67.

<sup>69</sup>See below, 87.

<sup>70</sup>"Apocalypse of Peter," 447; and cf. PsMeth, 233 (where the destruction of the Arabs takes place in Babylon); Sa'dia Gaon, *Perūsh li-Sefer Daniel*, 195-96.

and given the specific mention of a truce kept by both sides, which is invariably mentioned in the Muslim sources, then we could have mention of a similar situation.

Certain traditions seek to place the above account into a historical framework by mentioning three raids on Constantinople:

You will launch three raids on Constantinople. As to the first one, you will meet tribulation and hardship. As to the second, there will be a truce between you and them (the Byzantines), such that the Muslims will build in it (Constantinople) mosques, and you will raid together with them beyond Constantinople. . . . (continuing on to the conquest of the city, see below).<sup>71</sup>

The first raid described here is probably the disastrous attack of Mu'āwiya in 679, the failure of which resulted in his paying tribute to the Byzantines for a time. Dating the tradition above is difficult, because of the fact that the memory of the apocalypticist is probably not always to be relied upon. In all likelihood this tradition was reused every time the Byzantines defeated the Muslims, since in many cases such a defeat was indeed followed by a truce of some sort. Because of the constant raiding going back and forth during this time, the promise implicit in the tradition would seem very appealing. This is that the conquest of Constantinople is certain, despite past defeats and present humiliations (truces and aiding the Byzantines). Apocalyptic material of the very early period would not be likely to remain in circulation without this continual relevance.

It would seem that geography had an important part to play in the development of traditions about the A'māq. The whole area would seem to be a point of decisive change, of continual battles for the apocalypticist. No one can pass through this area without being fundamentally affected. This will be noted later, in the Sufyānī Cycle. This was the transitional area between the Muslim world and the non-Muslim world. Possibly the Christian traditions about Armageddon (since occasionally the A'māq are located next to

<sup>71</sup>Nu'aym, 288, 294. Building a mosque in Constantinople was probably the equivalent to diplomatic recognition. On the Muslim attacks upon Constantinople, see Canard "Les expéditions des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et la légende," *JA* 208 (1926), 61-121.

Acre)<sup>72</sup> influenced the creation of traditions like these. In Samaritan traditions, Abraham was the first to fight a battle in this area, when he fought the five Mesopotamian kings (Genesis 14:14–15).<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the A'māq is one of the prime regions of constant battle between the godly kingdoms and the infidels.

### Invasions of Christian Lands<sup>74</sup>

Continuing the Cycle of the A'māq, we find that the Muslims invade the Byzantine Empire. For example, in the three raids version quoted above, the last raid results in the successful conquest of Constantinople, which was the foremost goal of Muslim Syrian apocalyptic. In order to stimulate the desire for conquest, polemical motives are adduced. The foremost of these is the return to Jerusalem of the items (or relics) taken by the Romans/Byzantines from the Second Temple in 70 CE.<sup>75</sup> Other traditions state that the destruction of Constantinople will be in revenge for the destruction of Jerusalem. It should be noted that the connections between the Dome of the Rock and the

<sup>72</sup>Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 497 (quoting Ibn al-Munādī). In "Tfilat R. Shimon ibn Yohai," 278–79, the *benei italia* could belong to the *ṣāhib al-Rūmīya* mentioned above. Acre here is identified by B. Lewis, "An Apocalyptic Vision of Muslim History," *BSOAS* 13 (1950), 336–37, with the events of 371/981 (Fāṭimid invasion of Palestine). In light of the Muslim apocalyptic material, perhaps this should be redated to an earlier period, as he himself does to the reference in "On That Day," in *Melanges d'Islamologie*, 199, n. 11: "Edomites (i.e. Byzantines) and Ishmael will fight in the valley of Acre." Note that Sa'īd Ayyūb, *Al-Masīh al-Dajjāl*, 173–74, a modern Muslim writer, outright identifies the *marj dhī tulūl* in this tradition with the battle of Armageddon.

<sup>73</sup>Z. Ben-Hayyim, "Kitāb al-asāṭir," *Tarbutz* 14 (1943), 189–90. Other Jewish sources merely mention 'emeq shedīm (*Yalqūt Shemōnī*, 38), 'ayn ha-mishpaṭ (Natanel ibn Yeshi'ah, *Nūr al-zalām*, 82–83—in Genesis 14:7); however an 'emeq Yehoshafat is mentioned in connection to the apocalyptic battles: "Ma'mar Geula," 124; "Ma'ase Daniel," 226; and note the identifications in Jefet ibn 'Alī, *Commentary*, 116–17.

<sup>74</sup>Several messianic conquest cycles have been removed from this section and considered separately.

<sup>75</sup>Titus is mentioned specifically in al-Sulamī, 268 (no. 310) as Ṭāhir ibn Ismā' (Vespasian), an obvious corruption; al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 57; al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-'ulūm*, I, 151; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, I, 498–99 (see H. Schwartzbaum, "The Destruction of the Second Temple in Islamic Legend," *Adam-Noah Braun Volume*, 439–65, in Hebrew); Heribert Busse, "The Destruction of the Temple," *JSAI* 20 (1996), 1–17. Remarkably, in both Muslim (Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 132; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, I, 56) as well as Christian tradition (PsMeth, 140), the Byzantines are held responsible for the crimes of Antiochus Epiphanes (mentioned by name), as well as the destruction of the Second Temple. Compare Nu'aym, 284; and see further my "Banū Isrā'īl to the State of Israel," forthcoming.

Temple are strong and well documented in the various praise compilations (*faḍā'il*) on Jerusalem.<sup>76</sup> This makes it quite likely that these traditions all date from the first century of Islam, and that the items discussed below were intended to be placed in a projected "Third Temple" (i.e. the Dome of the Rock) designed for the millennial age. This idea appears in Jewish and Christian sources as well.<sup>77</sup> It should be noted, however, that it is by no means clear that the builders of the Dome (the Umayyads 'Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd I) had this messianic concept in mind when they built it.<sup>78</sup> It is probable that this belief was the interpretation of apocalyptic groups not necessarily in tune with the government's thinking. Modern scholars are still divided as to the meaning of the Dome of the Rock: whether it was intended as a statement against the Christians, or to divert pilgrimage from Mecca and so forth.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup>M. Sharon, "The Praises of Jerusalem," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 49 (1992), 59–66; and cf. Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 132; II, 523; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-bayān*, XV, 19 (version): *wakhariba Bayt al-Maqdis fa-lam yu'ammār ḥattā banāhu al-Muslīmūn fī zamān 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb* ["the Temple was destroyed and was not rebuilt until the Muslims built it during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb"]. In this context *Bayt al-Maqdis* means the Temple. The items are discussed in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, II, 612–15; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, I, 101.

<sup>77</sup>Sharon, "Praises," *passim*; A. Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship*, 160–63; and cf. "Nistarot shel R. Shimon ibn Yohai," 189 (speaking of 'Umar): "He will be a lover of Israel, and will rebuild their breaches and the breaches in the Temple (*haykal*), and make a stone foundation for Mt. Moriah, and make it totally flat. Then he will call upon Israel to rebuild the building of the Temple," "Pirquei Mashi'ah," in *Midrashei Geula*; 336; and S. Brock, "Syriac Views of Emergent Islam," in *Studies on the First Century of Islam*, 12, n. 12. Cf. also al-Musharraf ibn al-Murajja', *Faḍā'il al-Bayt al-Maqdis*, 63–64 (no. 50), where Ka'b, quoting from *ba'd al-kutub* [one of the books], has God saying: "I will send my servant 'Abd al-Malik to build you (Jerusalem), and to decorate you, and I will return to Jerusalem (or to the Temple, *Bayt al-maqdis*) its previous dominion (*mulk*), and crown it with gold, silver and pearls. I will send My people (*khalqī*) to you and place My throne upon the Rock: I am the Lord God and David is the King of Israel" (quoted by Elad, though trans. is mine). Note, too, that the Iraqi St. Cyprian of Beth Magushe (*fl.* 750) says quite causally that he visited the Temple in Jerusalem: Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, 584.

<sup>78</sup>See Rosen-Ayalon, *The Monuments of the Haram al-Sharif*, 46–62, who shows the eschatological meaning of the structure, but does not imply that the Dome was constructed with the earthly concept of messianic redemption in mind.

<sup>79</sup>For the various theories see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, "al-Kuds" (S.D. Goitein); F.E. Peters, "Who Built the Dome of the Rock?," *GA* 2 (1983), 119–38; G. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 59–61; M. Rosen-Ayalon, *Monuments of the Haram al-Sharif*, 46–62.

The list of items to be returned to Jerusalem, according to this tradition, makes for interesting reading:

1. The *tābūt al-sakīna* (probably the Ark of the Covenant), located in Antioch, Constantinople (in the “Church of Gold”—Hagia Sophia?), or in Rome. This is probably the *tābūt šihyawān* mentioned in the sources.<sup>80</sup>
2. The *ḥulā Bayt al-Maqdis* (the decoration of Jerusalem or of the Temple), located in Rome.<sup>81</sup>
3. The rod of Moses, located in Antioch, Constantinople, or Rome.<sup>82</sup>
4. The pulpit of Solomon, located in Rome.<sup>83</sup>
5. The garment of Adam, located in Rome.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup>Antioch: al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 75; Constantinople: al-Qurṭubī, 708; Rome: Nu‘aym, 295; al-Sulamī, 265 (no. 307); *Papyrus*, 303; and also located in the Sea of Galilee: al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, II, 609. See al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr*, I, 153, for the contents: *alwāh Mūsā* (the tablets of Moses) and *al-ṭast* (a bowl in which the hearts of the prophets would be washed); Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 206; al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-‘ulūm*, I, 219; al-Ṭabarī, II, 608, 612–15; “Tfilat R. Shimon ibn Yohai,” 280; U. Rubin, “Prophets and Progenitors in Early Shī‘ī Tradition,” *JSAI* 1 (1979), 46–48.

<sup>81</sup>Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 491; *Papyrus*, 303; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 149; and cf. the *ḥilyat Bayt al-Maqdis* [“the decoration of the Temple”]: Nu‘aym, 295.

<sup>82</sup>Antioch: al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh*, II, 46; Constantinople: al-Qurṭubī, 708; Rome: Nu‘aym, 295; *Papyrus*, 303; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 149. This is identical to Adam’s staff according to al-Majlisī, LII, 318, and is demanded from the messiah in “Ma‘ase Daniel,” 223–24; see also A. Fodor, “The Rod of Moses in Arabic Magic,” *AO* 32 (1978), 1–21. Note the Shī‘ī claim in Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm, *Tafsīr*, 107; see *Akhbār al-‘Abbās*, 67, for its provenance; and R. Burton (trans.), *The Arabian Nights*, IV, 100. According to al-Qummī, *Ta‘rīkh-i Qumm*, 91, these items are said to be in Qumm.

<sup>83</sup>Al-Sulamī, 265 (no. 307), but note al-Tha‘labī, *‘Arā’is al-majālis*, 170, which says that Bukhtnaṣṣar took the *kursī* of Solomon to Antioch. There is still a *kursī* of Solomon on the Temple Mount today: see al-Musharraf ibn al-Murajjā‘, *Fadā’il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 129 (no. 158). The *mā’ida* of Solomon was among the pillaged items from Andalus when the Muslims first conquered it: ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, *Ta‘rīkh*, 141–43; al-Maqqārī, *Naḥḥ al-ṭīb*, I, 135.

<sup>84</sup>Nu‘aym, 272 (correcting *kaghūta* to *katūna*), 432; Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 491. Apparently this is the Hebrew *kutonet* glossed in Nu‘aym as *kisā’* or *ḥulla*. See Nu‘aym, 295; *Papyrus*, 303; al-Sulamī, 267 (no. 309); and cf. “Book of Jubilees” (trans. O. Wintermute) in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II, 603; C. Bezold, *Book of the Cave of Treasures* (Arabic), 15, where a *ṥawb al-mulk* is mentioned; while al-Qummī, *Baṣā’ir al-darajāt*, 178, mentions a *qamīš Adam*.

6. The earring of Eve, located in Rome.<sup>85</sup>
7. The *tābūt min jaz‘* (a container cut from a jewel containing Eve’s earring), located in Rome.<sup>86</sup>
8. Fragments of the Tablets (the Ten Commandments), located in Antioch, Rome or Yemen.<sup>87</sup>
9. The garment of Aaron, located in Rome.<sup>88</sup>
10. The table of Banū Isrā’īl (the table of shew-bread?), located in Rome.<sup>89</sup> Possibly this is the same as the table of Solomon located in Antioch.<sup>90</sup>
11. Two measures (*qafīz*) of manna, located in Rome.<sup>91</sup>
12. The gate of Zion (*šihyawān*), located in Rome.<sup>92</sup>
13. The cloth/headcovering (*ghifāra*) of Jesus, located in Constantinople.<sup>93</sup>

In all likelihood we have here items borrowed from Jewish legend (since only the last item is obviously Christian) that had belonged to the Second Temple and disappeared after its destruction. It is apparent that though there

<sup>85</sup>Nu‘aym, 272.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 272. This could be the same as the *tābūt* of Adam mentioned in al-Majlisī, LII, 351.

<sup>87</sup>Antioch: al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh*, II, 46; Rome: al-Sulamī, 265 (no. 307); Yemen: al-Majlisī, LII, 190; Abū l-Shaykh, *Kitāb al-‘azama*, 390. They are described as being inside of a hollow mountain: al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr*, II, 31–32; al-Qummī, *Baṣā’ir al-darajāt*, 140–41.

<sup>88</sup>Nu‘aym, 272.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 295; al-Sulamī, 265 (no. 307); *Papyrus*, 303.

<sup>90</sup>Al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh*, II, 46.

<sup>91</sup>Al-Sulamī, 265 (no. 307); “Ma‘ase Daniel,” 224. In ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, I, 101, only one *qafīz* is mentioned. Since, according to *ET*<sup>2</sup>, “Makāyīl” (E. Ashtor), a *qafīz* equals, at the very least, 24.1 kilograms, this is not translated literally. The idea is of a small quantity.

<sup>92</sup>Nu‘aym, 272.

<sup>93</sup>Al-Qurṭubī, 708, and note the request of the Byzantine emperor to receive the *mandīl* on which an imprint of Jesus’ face was to be seen in 331/942: Ibn al-Athīr, *Ta‘rīkh*, VIII, 405; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, XIV, 27. The “Gospel of Jesus” is also located in Rome: Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 149; while the cave at Antioch is supposed to contain (according to Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 101): 1) the staff of Moses and some of the tablets; 2) the table of Solomon; 3) the glass ink-bottle (*maḥbara*) of Idrīs; 4) the belt (*minṭaqa*) of Shu‘ayb (though one could wonder whether this is a corruption of the *makāyīl* and the *mizān* mentioned in al-Majlisī, LIII, 365; al-Mūsāwī, *Anwār*, II, 88); 5) the cloak (*burda*) of Noah.

are multiple locations given for many of the items, the favored location is in Rome (common to all the Jewish items). This is consistent with what is likely to have been the fate of the items, though many of these things had probably (in a historical sense) disappeared centuries before 70 CE, and are also present in Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>94</sup> Thus the Jewish legends of the fate of the Temple relics passed into Islam, and provided the latter with a potent polemical weapon. As far as the location of Temple items in Constantinople are concerned, we know that the people of this city did boast of possessing the rod of Moses, the staff of Aaron and the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>95</sup> The references to Antioch are reminiscent of the famous Cave of Treasures, which played an important part in Syriac Christian literature.<sup>96</sup> Despite all the unanswered questions about these items, the important fact remains that the cities in which they are said to be located are extremely important, religiously speaking, to Christians, and therefore their conquest has polemical as well as strategic value. Since the responsibility for the destruction of the Second Temple in Muslim apocalyptic has been transferred from the Romans to the Byzantine Christians, the apocalypticist can use this theme, which he undoubtedly took from Judaism, to bring about the destruction of Islam's foremost enemies. Frequently traditions are adduced in which the aforementioned cities will fall as the result of a steady methodical approach, one after the other: Amorium, then Qumūliya (?), then Nicaea, Constantinople and finally Rome.<sup>97</sup> Again, the strategic importance is coupled with religious

<sup>94</sup> "Asera Otöt," in *Midrashei Geula*, 317, 320, 336.

<sup>95</sup> J.R. Harris and A. Mingana (eds.), "Dionysius BarSalibi against the Melkites," *BJRL* 11 (1927), 150; for the function of these items in protecting the city see Norman Baynes, "The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople," *AB* 67 (1949), 165–77; also Walker, "The Apotropaic Function of the Victorious Cross," 193–220.

<sup>96</sup> E.A.W. Budge, *The Cave of Treasures*, 69; Bezold, *Cave of Treasures*, 31–33; Isho'dad of Merv, *Commentaries*, 20; while in the Jewish context note the "Letter of R. Chisdai" in Elkan Adler (ed.), *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, 30. Their presence is said to change the weather patterns and to cause the rain to fall there. Probably this is symbolic weeping for the treasures: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, IX, 471; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 99–104; al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh*, II, 46; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 129. One should note that this polemical motif was also used in the Spanish conquest: see al-Raḥīq al-Qayrawānī, *Ta'rikh Ifrīqiyyā*, 82–83, where the conqueror Mūsā ibn al-Nuṣayr asks about the table of Solomon and other items (it is unfortunate that the text is fragmentary at this point).

<sup>97</sup> Nu'aym, 291; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 133: "You will conquer Constantinople, Rome and Hamgalah (? a mistake for Heracleia);" and note the conquest of the three cities in al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-'ulūm*, I, 151 (correct Armenia to *Rūmiya*, i.e. Rome!). Another fortress mentioned is Bulā': al-Sulamī, 259 (no. 301) = Balān in al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam*

significance. The Muslim advance is often portrayed as a cake-walk, since every fortress opposing the Muslims collapses at the sound of the call *Allāhu akbar* ("God is great").<sup>98</sup>

Polemical motifs are also to be found in the imagery used to describe Constantinople. The city's capture is described very similarly to that of Jericho (Joshua 5:13–6:21), with the Muslims taking the place of the Israelites.<sup>99</sup> When the Muslims approach Constantinople, they encamp on the far side of the Bosphorus, which is full to overflowing. The Christians inside the city respond to this by thanking the cross for protecting them from the invaders, whereupon the straits immediately dry up and the Muslims cross over. "The waters (*baḥr*) were parted as [they were] for Banū Isrā'īl."<sup>100</sup> As noted above, here too the elements participate in the action by taking sides against the enemies of the Muslims, and make a theological statement. By proving the

*al-kabīr*, XVII, 15, and Bulān mentioned in al-Haytamī, VI, 219. This is probably the Bulāniya mentioned in Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 169, 329. Probably Qumūliya mentioned in the tradition is Kamouliana (if it is the same as the Qumudiya in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1198; see E. Brooks, "The Arabs in Asia Minor," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 18 [1898], 182–208). The cities of Amorium and Sa'īya (could this second one be the Sylaiion mentioned in "Andreas Salos," 220?) are also mentioned in these contexts: al-Hindī, XIV, 562 (no. 39,601).

<sup>98</sup> Al-Sulamī, 255 (no. 299). The Jews had a good deal more respect for the power of the Byzantines according to Jefet ibn 'Alī, *Commentary*, 29 (trans. mine): "The iron is the Byzantines (in commentary on Daniel 2:23) and the clay is the Arabs, and this is because the Byzantines ruled for hundreds of years before the Arabs; he (Daniel) likened the dominion of the Arabs to clay because they do not have the power of the Byzantines, nor do they have toughness like that of the Byzantines" (*fa-l-ḥadīd hum al-Rūm wa-l-fakhhār hum al-'Arab, wa-dhālika anna al-Rūm malakat qabla al-'Arab bi-mī'ah sinīn, wa-maththala mulk al-'Arab bi-l-fakhhār idh laysa lahum kamā li-l-Rūm min al-qūwa wa-la baṭsh ka-baṭsh al-Rūm*).

<sup>99</sup> The conquerors of Constantinople are identified as the best of people from Medina or the Hijāz: al-Sulamī, 253 (no. 295); al-Hindī, XIV, 209 (no. 38,419)—note the identification of "Medina" with Halab in Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 40! Banū Ishāq, 1,000 strong, is mentioned: al-Qurtubī, 707; or 70,000 strong: al-Suyūṭī, VI, 66; al-Sulamī, 253 (no. 295); Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' al-uṣūl*, XI, 75; Ibn al-'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-makkīya*, III, 327; al-Hindī, XIV, 305 (no. 38,795); al-Tuwayjūrī, *Ithāf al-jamā'a*, I, 329–30. Persians are said to be descendants of Ishaq: al-Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 11, 29; al-Daylamī, I, 497 (no. 1664), 507 (no. 1698). This group is called Banū Ismā'īl in al-Haytamī, *Al-Qawl al-mukhtaṣar*, 33, which is probably polemical.

<sup>100</sup> Nu'aym, 258; al-Dānī, III, 1139 (no. 621); al-Sulamī, 208 (no. 219); al-Haytamī, *Al-Qawl al-mukhtaṣar*, 59; and cf. Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāhim*, 146–47; "Agadat ha-Mashi'ah," in *Midrashei Geula*, 105. See on Banū Isrā'īl: Abū Ya'lā, VII, 133; and other use of this motif in the anonymous *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, 67.

inability of the cross to defend the city, the Muslims are trying to break down the psychological defenses of the city. They then cause the walls to fall down by shouting theophoric slogans.<sup>101</sup> Parallel to these Muslim accounts, there exist Christian apocalyptic traditions describing the fall of the city, some with obvious satisfaction.<sup>102</sup> This apparently is representative of an apocalyptic loathing of cities in general, to which the Muslims could be heir as well.

There were a number of polemical motifs used by enemies of the Byzantines to describe them. For some reason the Muslims frequently called them “horned ones” (*al-Rūm dhāt al-qurūn*), an idea also present in Jewish apocalyptic, where the reference is to a rhinoceros as part of the description of the enemy.<sup>103</sup> Muslim traditions refer to Constantinople as a “whore”,<sup>104</sup> and a decisive tradition in this regard reads:

I (Ka'b al-Aḥbār) have heard that [the destruction of] Constantinople is in return for the destruction of Jerusalem, since she (Constantinople) became proud and tyrannical, and so is called the haughty. She (the city) said: “The throne of my Lord is built upon the waters, and I (the city) am built upon the waters.” God promised punishment [for it] on the Day of Resurrection, and said: “I will tear away your decoration, and your silk, and your veil, and I will leave you when there is [not even] a rooster crowing in you, and I will make you uninhabited except for foxes, and unplanted except for mallows, and the thorny carob, and I will cause to rain down upon you three [types] of fire: fire of pitch, fire of sulphur, and fire of naphtha, and I will leave you bald and bare, with nothing between you and the heavens. Your

<sup>101</sup>Nu'aym, 261. This is probably what is meant by “the roar of the sons of Ishmael” in “Apocalypse of Daniel,” 764; and cf. “Agadat ha-Mashi'ah,” 336: “At the end of 40 days [of siege] at the time of the reading of the *shema*’, they will say: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One.’ and the walls of city will fall, and the city will be conquered.”

<sup>102</sup>“Andreas Salos,” 221; “Apocalypse of Daniel,” 764 (images reproduced in Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 518); and cf. PsMeth, 194; E.A.W. Budge, *History of Alexander the Great*, 193; and in Jewish apocalyptic, see Jefet ibn ‘Alī, *Commentary*, 120.

<sup>103</sup>Nu'aym, 292; al-Hindī, XII, 303 (no. 35,127); and cf. Sa'dia Gaon, *Perūsh li-sefer Daniel*, 129. Though one could understand the word *qarn* in the sense of “generation, age” this meaning is unknown to me when attached to the demonstrative pronoun *dhū* (cf. the Qur'ānic use of *dhū l-qarnayn* in 18:83, 86, 94). See Bashear, “Apocalyptic Materials,” 191.

<sup>104</sup>Nu'aym, 303 (quoting *kitāb Allāh ta'ālā*, possibly a reference to Isaiah 23:16–17).

voice and your smoke will reach Me in the heavens, because you have for such a long time associated [other deities] with God and worshipped other than Him. Girls who will have never seen the sun because of their beauty will be deflowered, and none of you who arrive will be able to walk to the palace (*balāt*) of their king [because of the amount of loot]—you will find in it the treasure of twelve kings of theirs, each of them more and none less than it [the one before], in the form of statues of cows or horses of bronze, with water flowing on their heads—dividing up their treasures, weighing them in shields and cutting them with axes. This will be because of the fire promised by God that makes you hurry, and you will carry what of their treasures you can so you can divide them up in al-Qarqadūna (Chalcedon).<sup>105</sup>

In addition to this, Christian apocalypses portray merchants mourning over the fall of the city.<sup>106</sup> Thus, in all likelihood, both Muslims and Christians derived their imagery from the fall of Babylon described in Revelation 18:1–24—a very strong polemical statement. This, however, would be consistent with the fact that Constantinople was considered to be the New Rome, and the original apocalypse in Revelation was directed against the pagan idol-worshipping city of Rome (code-named Babylon). One should note the feeling in the tradition that the worship of the Trinity was idol worship, and therefore the punishment is a continuation of the punishment of the idol-worshippers. Also to be found in Muslim apocalypses is the image of Constantinople as the idol-worshipping city of Tyre described in Ezekiel 27–28: “Say to Tyre, the city of the Byzantines, she that has many names, say to Tyre. . . .”<sup>107</sup> Obviously, Tyre here is a code-name for Constantinople, which is frequently described as a city surrounded on three sides by the sea, very like Tyre, and the curses and warnings heaped upon the former by the prophet are easily transferred to the latter. It should be noted, however, that the quote is far from literal, and even to call it a paraphrase would be an exaggeration. It is the apocalypticist's attempt to make new use of ancient imagery, an adaptation of Biblical material.

<sup>105</sup>Nu'aym, 284; and cf. the variants in al-Dānī, III, 1125 (no. 605); al-Sulamī, 285 (no. 339); al-Musharraf ibn al-Murajjā', *Faḍā'il al-Bayt al-Maqdis*, 231–32 (no. 342).

<sup>106</sup>“Andreas Salos,” 223–24; “Apocalypse of Daniel,” 766–67.

<sup>107</sup>Nu'aym, 299.



There is a key addition in this Muslim version: the name Saba' (= Sheba, i.e. the Yemenite Arabs), which is not mentioned in the Biblical text and is obviously designed to show that the Muslims' projected capture of the city is a fulfillment of prophecy.<sup>108</sup> These Yemenites are said to be protected from sicknesses and plagues by virtue of their sacrifices in the attempt to take the city.<sup>109</sup> Also included here are various dirges about the anticipated fall of Constantinople, and its destruction by fires that fall from the heavens as already described.<sup>110</sup> There is, of course, a tension between those who felt that the city should fall in an apocalyptic fire-and-brimstone end and those who foresaw its fall by armed conquest.

Two features of importance should be noted here: first, the utter and complete confidence on the Muslim side that Constantinople will fall soon, and the knowledge that by making such bold predictions they were placing themselves out on a limb. Anything less than the conquest of the city would be utter humiliation for the Muslims, something that many may have felt when this in fact did not happen.<sup>111</sup> Second, the Muslim attack here is portrayed as a land affair. There is no mention of any sea power to speak of. In the case of the Bosphorus overflowing mentioned above, it is rather curious that this would present any problem to the Muslims, who, after all, had attacked Constantinople twice by sea during the period in which these traditions were circulated. Apparently the failure of these attacks had impressed upon the Muslims that they should not rely on their sea power in Byzantine home waters. Another possible reason for this reticence is the fact that the Muslim fleets relied, especially at this early stage, upon Christians (frequently Copts), and so the mention of a fleet would dilute the religious force of the apocalyptic tradition. The Muslims did not want to share the victory with anyone else, and to use a fleet would have brought that element to the fore.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup>In Nu'aym, 285, there is mention of the descendants of *seba'* and *qedhar* (= Kedar), both of which are described in Ezekiel 27:21–22 as merchants, but not as conquerors. Kedar is usually assumed to be Quraysh: Maimonides, "Iggeret Teman," in *Iggerot ha-Rambam*, I, 109, but Sheba in Genesis 10:7 is translated by Sa'dia Gaon as "Hind" = Indians, perhaps to prevent the above identifications.

<sup>109</sup>Nu'aym, 286; and see on the general issues L.I. Conrad, "*Tā'ūn* and *Wabā'*," *JESHO* 25 (1982), 268–307; *idem*, "Arabic Plague Chronologies and Treatises," *SI* 54 (1981), 51–93.

<sup>110</sup>Nu'aym, 284.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>112</sup>See my "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*" for this element.

A constant and recurring theme in this cycle and the next one are the fantastic reports of the spoils taken. Often the loot is weighed out in the shields of the soldiers or in containers, probably to indicate the frantic free-for-all that will ensue when the city is taken. Pseudo-Methodius, on the Christian side, says that the Muslims will live for despoiling and plunder.<sup>113</sup> The Muslim sources support this view entirely. One finds that large numbers of people are taken captive or killed during the sack of the major Christian towns (more in the case of Rome, at least, than probably lived there at that time!). Mention is made of 400,000 captives from Constantinople, and 600,000 are killed in Rome.<sup>114</sup> 70,000 virgins are ravished at the *dār al-balāṭ* (said to be the royal palace) in Constantinople, and another 300 ('*adhrā'*) are given to each soldier as booty.<sup>115</sup> Christian apocalypses back up these accounts with equally lurid tales.<sup>116</sup> After the dust settles over the conquered city, the muezzin will call the people (presumably the Muslims, since there does not seem to be anyone else left alive) to prayer.<sup>117</sup> It would seem that in these traditions we have the double motif of showing how evil and depraved the Christians were, because of their theological errors and their opulent and arrogant lifestyle, in addition to the secondary motif of how much booty could be had by those who would destroy them and exact divine vengeance upon them. These last would be serving God by punishing the Christians, and receiving worldly benefits as well.

Occasionally the historically desperate nature of the conflict with the Byzantines is revealed by the extreme measures needed in order to achieve the victory. One of these is the suicide squad called *shurṭa li-l-mawt*, which takes an oath not to return from the battlefield unless it is victorious.<sup>118</sup> In a crucial battle with the Christians, accompanied by a mass (or terrible) apostasy (*ridḍa shadīda*), the Muslims are said to send a suicide squad to their deaths on four successive days, until on the last day the last group will be victorious, with one man prevailing over 100 foes. They will press on to conquer Constantinople, where they will find enough spoils to fill their hearts

<sup>113</sup>PsMeth, 142–43. Compare the Prophetic injunction in Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XVII, 11–12, to these traditions.

<sup>114</sup>Al-Sulamī, 257 (no. 299); and in al-Qurṭubī, 704, 400,000 fighters are killed in Rome.

<sup>115</sup>Nu'aym, 261, 293; al-Sulamī, 260–61 (no. 303). Several of the apocalypses upon which this section is based are translated in Appendix I, nos. 11, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30.

<sup>116</sup>PsMeth, 145.

<sup>117</sup>Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 157 (no. 19,369).

<sup>118</sup>Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, II, 460.



with joy (*sic.*).<sup>119</sup> The circumstances of this tradition are quite interesting. Islam is attacked both from without and from within, so the troops have no choice but victory or death. This is precisely the sort of apocalyptic situation in which the believer is not victorious by means of his skill in battle, but because of the fervor of his faith. This allows him to enter into a life-or-death situation with the single-mindedness necessary for victory. By virtue of this faith he acquires a superhuman ability.

Rome is not ignored in Muslim apocalyptic traditions. There were frequent discussions in apocalyptic circles, apparently, as to which city (Constantinople or Rome) would fall first. Generally the honor went to the former.<sup>120</sup> Unlike the attack on Constantinople, that upon Rome is to be a sea attack (in other apocalyptic accounts there is an awareness that Rome is not located on the sea). An army from the Maghrib, commanded by Aṣḥāb ibn Yazīd will set out and put down anchor at Rome.<sup>121</sup> This mission will be divinely protected from all the things that normally go wrong during military expeditions (no cables or oars will break during the voyage, for example).<sup>122</sup> The shipbuilding materials will come from all over the former Roman Empire (Syria, Egypt, Baysān (= Bayt Shean), Lebanon and Mārīs),<sup>123</sup> presumably so that all the peoples wronged by the Romans will have a chance to take revenge on them and participate in the city's downfall. In other accounts this fleet will be built on an island in Egypt (al-Fuṣṭāṭ), then they will attack Rome.<sup>124</sup> Also belonging to this family of traditions is the story of a fleet setting off from Acre, in which there is also mention of international participation in the venture.<sup>125</sup> The soldiers themselves are described as being the

<sup>119</sup>Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ al-sunna*, XV, 41–42; Abū Ya'lā, XI, 164–65, 259–60; 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 386 (no. 20,813); al-Qurṭubī, 669; al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, I, 213–14; Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 138 (no. 19,326); Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' al-uṣūl*, XI, 75; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VIII, 276 (no. 6748); al-Majlisī, XLII, 151; al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, X, 129–30; al-Nawāwī, *Sharḥ Muslim*, XVIII, 241–42; al-Barzanjī, *Ishā'a*, 103. Compare Nu'aym, 263; and see al-Hindī, XI, 261 (no. 31,458) for the meaning of the expression *ridḍa shadīda*.

<sup>120</sup>Nu'aym, 294, 299; Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 148; al-Suyūṭī, VI, 67; al-Sulamī, 264 (no. 306); and see A. Abel, "Une *ḥadīth* sur la prise du Rome," *Arabica* 5 (1958), 1–14 (about much later material).

<sup>121</sup>Nu'aym, 290–91, and in 249, Aṣḥāb ibn Zayd. Both names are unknown from other sources.

<sup>122</sup>Nu'aym, 290–91; al-Sulamī, 278–79 (no. 322).

<sup>123</sup>Nu'aym, 292, 295; al-Sulamī, 256 (no. 299). Mārīs appears in Ibn Bīṭrīq, *Ta'rikh*, 17.

<sup>124</sup>Nu'aym, 295.

<sup>125</sup>Al-Sulamī, 256 (no. 299).

sons of the *muhājirūn*.<sup>126</sup> Though these traditions have much less of a historical ring to them than the traditions concerning Constantinople, one should note the use of a name for the commander of the expedition against Rome, whereas none is listed for the attack on the former. However, it should also be noted that Aṣḥāb has not yet been identified. It is tempting to recall the actual historical raids on Rome, and see the apocalypse as an idealized version of them.

As with Constantinople, the goal is polemical: to return the stolen treasures of the Temple to Jerusalem, a goal of which the Romans themselves are well aware. When the invaders arrive, a monk will come out from the city, question them as to their beliefs, accept Islam and reenter the city shouting that the descendants of Ishmael mentioned in the holy book (the Bible) have arrived. The Romans will kill him for this, and then God will rain fire down on the city, destroying it.<sup>127</sup> Just as with Constantinople, the apocalypticist cannot decide whether the city deserves to be sacked and destroyed, or burned by fire from the heavens. In the projected conquest of Rome exact instructions are given as to where to look for the treasures of the Temple: enter the great eastern church (St. Johns Lateran?) and count seven paving stones (*balāṭāt*) inward, and lift the eighth under which will be the items.<sup>128</sup>

This attack is probably the one described in the *Apocalypse of Peter*. The enemy in that account is also from the Maghrib (Mawrikīya, which the editor says is corrupt) or Ifrīqiya (Yukiya, which is also corrupt). Contradictory statements are given as to the fate of the city: at first Peter is assured that Rome will never fall, while later on it is admitted that there will be great slaughter and rape in the city, and that its inhabitants should flee. Then God will intervene and send his angels, with Michael at their head, to fight the Muslims in Rome.<sup>129</sup>

Obviously Rome and Constantinople receive the harsh treatment that they do because of their lengthy resistance to the Muslim onslaught. They also are the most guilty of evil deeds committed in ages past against the holy city of Jerusalem. Since one of the principal components of the messianic age is that of justice, old wrongs must be righted before this period can begin.

<sup>126</sup>Nu'aym, 296; and on *muhājirūn* see P. Crone, "The First-Century Concept of *Hijra*," *Arabica* 41 (1994), 352–87. The conquerors are sometimes said to be 3,000 Persians: al-Sulamī, 285 (no. 338).

<sup>127</sup>Al-Sulamī, 258 (no. 299); trans. in Appendix I, no. 25.

<sup>128</sup>Nu'aym, 288; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 149.

<sup>129</sup>"Apocalypse of Peter," 456–57.

The Muslims apparently saw themselves as avengers of these deeds, even though they personally did not suffer from them in the first place. Thus, God sends a third party to attack the guilty in lieu of the first wronged group (probably the Jews). In all likelihood this attitude represents the Muslims' supersessionism, since they are here usurping the rights of the Jews in taking vengeance for them. The idea that the Muslims have taken the place of the Jews would also explain the traditions about the Temple and the reasons for the building of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount. Since it is well known that the inscriptions on the Dome are entirely anti-Christian polemic,<sup>130</sup> this would fit in well with the world view of the Muslim apocalyptic groups to whose traditions we are privy here. The traditions in this section would probably be the earliest of all of the historical apocalypses (with the exception of the A'māq Cycle and parts of the purely historical material), since they represent an Islam whose total confidence in its victory can only be placed at this period. The key here is this polemical version of the purpose of the Dome of the Rock, which we can assume did not continue much beyond the first century of Islam. After this point it would have been an embarrassment for the Muslims to recall as Islam began to form into an independent faith how closely they had tied their apocalyptic expectations to those of the Jews. Therefore we should expect, as indeed is true, that the traditions in this section explaining the motives for the *jihād* were the first ones to disappear from the stage. They are not easily found in the *ḥadīth* literature outside of Nu'aym (they were probably preserved by apocalyptic groups only in Syria); only the material designed to show the ultimate conquest and judgment of the Christian holy cities of Constantinople and Rome was allowed to survive in other literature.

### Christian Counter-Invasions

This cycle is a defensive one for the Muslims, though generally at a particular point their fortunes take a turn for the better. For the most part, it describes them receiving the treatment that they meted out to others in the previous section. First, we will detail the groups that are described as invading the Muslim lands. They are a vast coalition comprised of twelve kings (i.e. a "full complement of kings and troops"), of whom the Byzantine monarch commands the smallest army. Mentioned first are allies from *al-*

<sup>130</sup>For the text: Christel Kessler, "'Abd al-Malik's Inscription in the Dome of the Rock,'" *JRAS*, 1970, 2-14; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 696-99.

*Rūmīya* (probably meaning Byzantine Italy).<sup>131</sup> Wherever this is, the help sent is formidable: 80 "flags", under each "flag" 12,000 troops transported in fleets.<sup>132</sup> Also included in the coalition are Turks, Slavs and the Burjan (the Bulgars? or the Khazars?).<sup>133</sup> Perhaps some sort of northerners are also indicated by the tradition "the ones with blue [eyes] of the *Rūmīya* (from the area of Italy) will soon push the community of Muḥammad out of the places where wheat grows (*manābit al-qamḥ*),"<sup>134</sup> though it should be noted that blue eyes are a sign of an enemy (for example, in Shī'ī lore their archenemy 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb has blue eyes).<sup>135</sup> Andalusians are also mentioned, as well as Armenians. These latter are specifically said to be enraged for the sake of the Byzantine Emperor, and send 180,000 troops to aid him, a very different attitude from that usually expressed by the Armenians toward the Empire!<sup>136</sup>

A rather obscure tradition, which must be quoted in part, should illustrate the difficulties of identifying some of these groups:

In the west (*al-maghrib*) there is a queen, who rules a nation that asserts Christianity [falsely]. They would build ships, intending [to attack] this nation (the Muslims) until, after they finished building them and garrisoning them with soldiers, she (the queen) would say: "We will sail whether God wills or not!" Therefore, God would send a gale-force wind and destroy her ships. She continued to build [ships] like this and to speak like this—and God continued to act like this towards her—until He wished to permit her to sail. She will say: "We will sail if God wishes!" and she will sail with her ships—they will be 1,000 ships the

<sup>131</sup>Nu'aym, 274, 259—mention of *ṣāḥib al-Rūmīya*.

<sup>132</sup>Nu'aym, 259, 274; al-Sulamī, 260 (no. 303); Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VIII, 238 (no. 6640); al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-shāmīyīn*, I, 133 (no. 212); al-Hindī, XIV, 215-16.

<sup>133</sup>Nu'aym, 287; compare with the coalition assembled in the "Apocalypse of Peter," 454-55.

<sup>134</sup>Nu'aym, 269. Bashear's translation of "blue men" in "Muslim Apocalyptic Materials," 185, seems inaccurate.

<sup>135</sup>See E. Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī Shī'ī Views on the *Ṣaḥāba*," *JSAI* 5 (1984), 162, n. 102.

<sup>136</sup>Nu'aym, 274-75. Many of these groups are listed in Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 220. Armenia was not a place recommended to attack: "If you are offered [the opportunity] to raid, do not chose Armenia, because it has in it one of the punishments of the grave." (*idhā 'uriḍa 'alaykum al-ghazwu fa-lā takhtarū Arminiya fa-inna bihā 'adhāban min 'adhāb al-qabr*): Ibn Abī Shayba, V, 326.

like of which has never been put to sea—and they will sail until they have passed the land of the Byzantines. The Byzantines will be terrified of them, and they will say: “Who are you?” They will say: “We are a nation claiming [to believe in] Christianity intending [to attack] a nation that overcomes nations—whether [it be] to plunder them or to be plundered by them.” The Byzantines will say: “These (the Muslims) are those that have destroyed our country, killed our men and enslaved our sons and women<sup>137</sup>—so help us against them!” Thus they (the newcomers) will aid them (the Byzantines) with 350 ships, and they will sail until they have anchored at Acre. They will disembark from their vessels and burn them, saying: “This is our land; we will live here and die here. . . .”<sup>138</sup>

There is a huge battle following this: the apocalyptic battle of Acre. Despite the historical problems, this sounds very much like a Viking attack.<sup>139</sup> This interpretation is, of course, rather difficult, and is not proposed as a final answer. If, however, the Muslims in Syria had been subjected to a sea raid at this early date that is not mentioned in the histories (which is plausible), then this could be a description of it. One should note the uncertainty about the origins of the invaders, their sea-based power, and, above all, that their version of Christianity is a good deal different from that of the Byzantines, and frankly frightens the latter. Historically, before the Crusades there is no group that could fit this description other than the Vikings. Given that the tradition is to be found in Nu‘aym, who died in 844, this former possibility is excluded, though the use of the phrase “God wills it” is rather interesting here. No Viking raid is known, to me at least, which could have reached Byzantium, with such force, so early. Another unique fact about this tradition is the fact that it is related, at least partially, from the point of view

<sup>137</sup>The verb here is *ikhṭadama*. The term *khādīm* also meant a eunuch, but it is unlikely that this is the meaning here.

<sup>138</sup>Nu‘aym, 278; variants are in al-Dānī, III, 1136–37 (no. 621); al-Sulamī, 262–64 (no. 305), and note the similar story told about the Byzantines in Nu‘aym, 303–304, where the women take vengeance upon the Muslims for having killed their men.

<sup>139</sup>See *King Harald’s Saga*, 58–59; and note the historical description of Viking raids (in Spain) already in the year after Nu‘aym’s death: *EI*<sup>2</sup>, “al-Madjūs” (A. Melvinger); Amin Tibi, “The Vikings in Arabic Sources,” *Islamic Studies* 35 (1996), 211–17; el-Hajji, “Andalusian Diplomatic Relations with the Vikings during the Umayyad Period,” *HT* 8 (1967), 67–110. This could account for the version in al-Dānī, who was Spanish.

of the Christians. It shows a total cognizance of the tremendous destruction and rapine that the Muslims caused in the Byzantine Empire through their endless raiding. One feels the desperation of the Byzantines who desire to fight back, attack the Muslims and take vengeance. They need any help they can get. There is, in addition to this, an attempt by the apocalypticist to point out that, despite the fact that this queen is invading the Muslim lands, she is doing so in accordance with the will of God (compare with the Turkish traditions below). He has already shown, in numerous occasions, that she cannot even put to sea without His approval, and so there is an element of judgment of the Muslims in this tradition that is not very common, in addition to the sympathetic description of the Byzantines’ plight. In other versions a king is mentioned, though his field of operations is to the north, near the mouth of the Orontes River.<sup>140</sup>

The Byzantines have other allies as well. One group frequently placed in their camp are the local Christians, often from al-Jazīra (north Mesopotamia). A force 30,000 strong will help the Byzantines in the final battle.<sup>141</sup> In other traditions the Christians of both al-Jazīra and Syria help the Byzantines; these are contemptuously called *musallimat al-‘arab* (the Arabs’ deserters), and listed by name: Bahrā’, Tanūkh, Ṭayyi’ and Ṣāliḥ.<sup>142</sup> It is sometimes rather difficult to tell on the basis of traditions like these whether these tribes are still Christian or whether they have outwardly converted to Islam. There are accounts in which the Byzantines demand that all apostates (*kull man kāna aṣluhu minnā*) return to them. The Muslims agree to this and tell the ‘*ajam* (non-Arab Muslims) to join up with the Byzantines. These latter refuse, saying that they do not want to become unbelievers after their belief (in Islam).<sup>143</sup> In yet other accounts, the Christians betray the Muslims in Ḥimṣ, locking up the gates of the city against them and violating their women. This is a typical event expressing the fear of the Muslims about the sexual honor of their women. It also illustrates just how many Muslims there really were in Ḥimṣ at the time. Probably almost every able-bodied

<sup>140</sup>Nu‘aym, 286.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, 258, 260; Ibn al-‘Adīm, I, 491, 501; al-Dānī, III, 1095 (no. 596, where the Christians of al-Ḥīra are mentioned as well); and cf. on these tribes I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, 470–76, 544–45; *idem*, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, 3, 27, 242–44, 414–16, 420, 504, 507–509. These are probably the people described in al-Haytamī, V, 302–303, as the worst of people.

<sup>143</sup>Nu‘aym, 281, 291; and cf. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, II, 44.

male left when there was a raid against the Byzantines, so the Muslims' home front was by no means secure. One should note that after the betrayal of the Christians of al-Jazīra, we find the interesting statement: "It will not be permitted for a Christian to carry weapons after this until the Day of Resurrection."<sup>144</sup> All of this is indicative of the hardening Muslim approach towards the subjected faith, and the attempt to draw lines on the basis of religion.<sup>145</sup> It is assumed that all Christians will aid the Byzantines. These traditions reflect the world view of a tiny military aristocracy to whom all outsiders were suspect. In addition to these groups there were renegades. It should be noted that the idea of going over to the other side does not seem to have bothered the apocalyptists of this early period. They certainly do not attach any undue condemnation to it; indeed, the cowards on the Muslim side are treated far worse in the punishments that they receive than are the renegades. Certainly Islam accepted Christian renegades, one of whom, Abū Muslim al-Rūmī, who appears in the apocalyptic narrative. Since he claims to have known the emperor personally, most probably he was a Byzantine convert, and not a local Christian.<sup>146</sup> Here, however, we speak of Muslim renegades, of whom mention can be found in the sources.<sup>147</sup> There is, for example, the story of the Umayyad prince who defected to the Byzantines. This story appears in both Muslim and Christian apocalyptic, and would

<sup>144</sup>Nu'aym, 293 (one should add that the Christians take vengeance for this prohibition on the Muslims in their own apocalyptic—in the "Apocalypse of Peter," 445: "From that time none of the children of the wolf [the Muslims] will ever be allowed to bear arms. . ."). It is interesting to compare this with the thesis of J. Moorhead, "The Monophysite Response to the Arab Invasions," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 579–91. No one who has ever read the Christian apocalyptic material would doubt for one minute that the Christians did not welcome the Muslim invaders, or at least that there was substantial opposition to them. See also Reinink, "Tyrannen und Muslime. Die Gestalt einer symbolischen Metapher bei Pseudo-Methodius," in *Scripta Signa Vocis: Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East*, 163–75.

<sup>145</sup>See M.J. Kister, "Do not Assimilate Yourselves. . .," *JSAI* 13 (1989), 321–53; A. Ferre, "Chrétiens de Syrie et de Mesopotamie aux deux premiers siècles de l'islam," *Islamochristiana* 14 (1988), 71–106. Note, however, Abū Ya'lā, I, 204.

<sup>146</sup>Nu'aym, 258.

<sup>147</sup>S. Griffith, "Bashir/Bešer," 293–327. The story in Nu'aym, 257–58, is a version of this story; and cf. M. Gil, *A History of Palestine during the First Muslim Period*, I, 68–69 (Hebrew), 44 (English trans.). Other examples of apostates from Islam during this period: I. Dick, "La passion arabe de S. Antoine Ruwah," *Le Muséon* 71 (1961), 108–33; S. Griffith, "'Abd al-Masīh al-Ġassānī," *Le Muséon* 98 (1985), 331–74; Vassiliev, "St. Theodore," *passim*; and see my "Apostasy from Islam Revisited," forthcoming.

seem to have caused a sensation at the time. In the Muslim sources we have mention of a member of Banū Umayya (in the text: *raġul min abnā' al-jabābira*), described as snub-nosed (*akhnas*), who is a governor of Egypt and is stripped of his office. He thereupon flees to Byzantium and leads the Byzantines to Syria. In a further account, it is said that he does this because of the rage he felt (*min ghaḍbatin yaġhḍabuhā*) when his authority is taken away from him.<sup>148</sup> On the Christian side he is described:

When you see the king bringing out the young man who is a scion of the mighty kings of the sons of Ishmael, and when [this young man] believes in Me and becomes one of My lambs and enters My fold and goes to My holy city (Constantinople)—he is one of the descendants of Ishmael, and it is he who will induce the lion's whelp (the Last Roman Emperor) to cause the kings to appear on earth.<sup>149</sup>

It continues to describe the invasion. Clearly, both sides saw this defection as an important sign of the approaching End. Of course, the Muslims explained his defection as the result of temporal causes (in other words, he lost political office, probably through incompetence, and so fled to the enemy), while the Byzantines ascribe the event to the pure belief of the prince. It is also significant that even in the Christian version there is a recognition that this man would precipitate a war not entirely to the Byzantines' liking.

What are the attitudes and objectives of both sides towards each other? We find a good deal of resentment on the Byzantine side that the *ākilat al-jimāl* (derogatory for the Arabs) lived in their land (probably meaning Syria and Egypt).<sup>150</sup> These traditions could be the earlier ones in which Byzantium retained a sense of possession as far as these territories were concerned. In other texts their goals are quite limited: they are said to have demanded the return of the area of Ḥimṣ in northern Syria.<sup>151</sup> This probably represents a desire to safeguard the Byzantine homeland of Anatolia from attacks by the

<sup>148</sup>Nu'aym, 291, 295, 298, 300; Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 133; al-Haytamī, *Majma' al-bahrayn*, VII, 267 (no. 4432); *idem*, *Majma' al-zawā'id*, VII, 318; al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 91; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XII, 444–45; al-Hindī, XI, 126 (no. 30,888). The word *jabābira* is occasionally applied to Muslim rulers—see Nu'aym, 126; and below, 241–42—and most specifically to the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad family.

<sup>149</sup>"Apocalypse of Peter," 492–93.

<sup>150</sup>Nu'aym, 258.

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*, 274.

Muslims more than anything else, since this land was the base from which these attacks were launched. It is apparent that the Arabs' strongest fear was that the Byzantines would push them back into the deserts from which they came. This finds literary expression in the polarity between *manābit al-qamḥ* (the places where wheat grows) or *manābit al-za'farān* (referring to saffron) versus *manābit al-shūḥ* (growing places of wormwood, a typical desert plant).<sup>152</sup> In other words, the Arabs were painfully aware of the immense difference between the lands from which they had come, and the lands that they now occupied. They could be pushed back:

The Byzantines will push you out village by village, until they have caused you to reach Jashm and Judhām (the territories of these two tribes in the northern Ḥijāz), until they put you in the outback [lit. the shin-bone] of the earth" (*la-tukhrījannakum al-Rūm kafran kafran ḥattā yuridūnakum Jashman wa-Judhāma ḥattā yaj'alūnakum fī zanbūb min al-ard*).<sup>153</sup>

This is borne out by Byzantine apocalypses, in which one of the principal components of the millennial age is that the Arabs go back to Arabia.<sup>154</sup> Another Christian goal is to purify their own land of the presence of the invaders. It will be recalled that during the A'māq Cycle a mosque or mosques are built in Constantinople as part of the truce. This was obviously felt in Byzantium to be a great humiliation, and there is frequent talk of cleansing the land of Muslim structures. Immediately after a victory, for example,

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*, 175; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 508; Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 87 (no. 19,186), 175 (no. 19,430); al-Hindī, XI, 254 (no. 31,429); al-Suyūṭī, VI, 63; 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 383 (no. 20,806); and cf. the letter that the Byzantines supposedly send to the Arabs: Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 177; the use of the expression *manbat al-shūḥ* in al-Majlisī, XLI, 322; XLIX, 118; that of *al-za'farān* v. *al-qayṣūm* in Shādhān ibn Jibrā'īl, *Faḍā'il*, 163; also al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, X, 93; and the expression of *manābit al-lawn* in Appendix I, no. 24 (from al-Ṭabarī, *Dalā'il*, 254); Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XXXI, 18 (in Yemen v. Syria, *manābit al-qaraz* v. *manābit al-zaytūn*). For similar themes in Syriac apocalyptic literature: Reinink, "Ismael, der Wildesel in der Wüste. Zur Typologie der Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," *BZ* 75 (1982), 336–44.

<sup>153</sup>Nu'aym, 286. Considerably different versions are related in al-Hindī, XI, 245–46 (nos. 31,394, 31,399), 253 (no. 31,423—again different); Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XXXVIII, 426; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, II, 406. Probably the version in Nu'aym is the most accurate, although Ibn 'Asākir adduces archaic names not present in the other versions. Note that Bashear, "Muslim Apocalyptic Materials," 185, reads this tradition as "Ḥismā' of Judhām," which could be the better reading.

<sup>154</sup>PsMeth, 149–50, 233; "John the Little," 38–39.

there is a pogrom against the Muslims in the Byzantine Empire.<sup>155</sup> Christian apocalypses speak of ridding the land of Muslims.<sup>156</sup>

In these sagas of attack, the action never really ends—it continually flows into the next cycle. This illustrates how the different religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) were able to draw from the same pool of apocalyptic stories. The story lines remained the same, or at least very similar in each faith; only the identities of the victorious parties were changed to order. The Muslim apocalyptist, for example, could change even the most amazing Christian victory into a Muslim one simply by having God fight on his side after being decisively defeated, in order to turn the tables again. For this reason this cycle, and not the cycle of Muslim conquests, is the heart of Muslim historical apocalyptic. In truth, Islam had no need for the triumphalism of the earlier cycle. It does not bring out the total identification of God with their side. His power is certainly present, especially during the miraculous fall of Constantinople, but the impact of an apocalypse lies in victory over overwhelming odds. For this reason the coalition attacking the Muslims is so large, and the betrayal by their own side so extensive, a conjunction of events unlikely to occur in the real world. In the previous cycle it is really the Muslims themselves who obtain the victory, while here God achieves it.

For God is not a neutral character in these traditions. An extreme level of identification with His purposes is reached when the Muslims are hopelessly outnumbered and surrounded on all sides. At this point, God intervenes and personally takes the side of His servants, the *muhājirūn*, since they are the only ones left serving Him in the world.<sup>157</sup> This is the idea of the god taking the side of his people that is so prevalent in ancient Near Eastern religious texts.<sup>158</sup> The combination of the Muslims' superhuman valor and angelic help wins the day.<sup>159</sup> It is rather curious that the idea of God so personally identifying himself with a particular group or sect in Islam did not seem to bother anyone theologically. It should be apparent, since God is already basically on the side of the Muslims in the apocalyptic traditions, that this tradition is really directed against other Muslim groups who apparently do

<sup>155</sup>Nu'aym, 260.

<sup>156</sup>"Andreas Salos," 216 (and Jews too, of course).

<sup>157</sup>Nu'aym, 285; 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 377 (no. 20,790); and note that God names the Arab tribes by name and calls out their battle cries in al-Dānī, III, 1117 (no. 600).

<sup>158</sup>J.J. Collins, "The Mythology of Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975), 599, 607–609.

<sup>159</sup>Nu'aym, 272, 276, 293.

not share the activist inclinations of the apocalypticist. This can be seen in the way that he dismisses the other groups from the fighting, and therefore from God's protection and care.

In many accounts the Byzantines land their troops along the coast of Syria. Most of their attacks are directed towards the northern area, along the part of the Lebanese-Syrian coast that is hospitable to the large-scale amphibious landings described. Frequently the area between Jaffa and al-Aqra' (north of Antioch) is specified. Many of these traditions use the twelve kings scheme already mentioned.<sup>160</sup> The numbers of ships and soldiers are truly amazing: 10,000 "sails" (= ships)<sup>161</sup> for example. All along the coastline landings are mentioned: Tripoli, Sūsiya (a ruin on the coast land of Ḥimṣ) and northwards.<sup>162</sup> The effect on the Muslims will be a mass flight called *al-jafta* (the "pell-mell flight") towards Damascus, and terror in the area of Ḥimṣ and Qinnasrīn. At the same time, the Muslims will be caught in a pincer, betrayed by mutinous local Christians and threatened by the armies advancing from the A'māq. As a result, 70,000 will die fleeing in the direction of Damascus along the pass of Thāniyat al-'Iqāb.<sup>163</sup> Again one can note the confluence of circumstances and the paranoid atmosphere that gave rise to it.

The Arab troops defending Syria are not entirely reliable in Muslim apocalyptic traditions. The tendency is to have the defending troops divide into three or even four groups at a time of crisis, of which only one remains loyal to Islam totally. Usually one of the groups is killed, one flees to the desert (or joins the local peasantry) and one joins the enemy, whoever he may be.<sup>164</sup> This is a recurring pattern in other cycles as well. However, the group reproved in the strongest terms is the one that flees. Remembering that apocalypticists try to achieve a clear boundary between belief and unbelief, we should not be surprised that they waste no time warning apostates and renegades. These will be fought and killed just like any other infidel. They cannot, however, deal lightly with the hesitant, those who choose to flee from

the situation. It is for this reason that so much material concerns the fate of the doubter. The issues here are not merely military, but religious as well. Cowardice on the battlefield is a major sin.<sup>165</sup> Therefore the punishment is directly from God (being swallowed up by the earth, and never to see their homes or families again).

At this crucial point there are also recriminations between the Arabs and the *mawālī*, and the former seem to invite the latter to go and join the Byzantines, as they are not wanted.<sup>166</sup> However, the *mawālī* do not heed this advice, and their *khalīfa* (in this context, I am not sure what this means exactly) goes and defeats the Byzantines single-handedly in the A'māq.<sup>167</sup> These situations are designed to show how strong the feelings of the newly converted Muslim *mawālī* are through their willingness to fight their former co-religionists, and unwillingness to abandon Islam, even when it seems that it would be advantageous for them to do so. Frequently in these traditions there is mention of an expedition of the *mawālī* who are "the noblest horsemen of all the Arabs", so perhaps the word means something different than usual. It is possible that these *mawālī* are those who, though Arab by ethnic origin, have been expelled from their tribes for one reason or another. If so, then their defeat of the Byzantines is the apocalypticist's way of saying that nobility of descent does not count in the End times, only actions (whether good or evil). Or it is possible that the *mawālī* here are the usual non-Arab Muslims given the title of the "noblest of the Arabs" by groups that wished to denigrate the latter. It is by no means clear whether indeed the non-Arabs would be better horsemen than the Arabs, since this would be a point of honor for all Bedouin tribes. This could have another polemical meaning in the conflict between the two groups of Muslims. The one thing that can be said is that the attitude of the apocalypticist to this group is quite positive in general.

Key to this whole saga is the Byzantine occupation of Jerusalem, an event featured in Muslim, Christian and Jewish apocalyptic. From the Mus-

<sup>165</sup> Qur'ān 8:16; and al-Haytamī, *Al-Zawājir 'an iktirāf al-kabā'ir*, II, 283-85.

<sup>166</sup> Nu'aym, 281; and Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 486. Apparently some of these were Persians: al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 117, 128; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XXI, 357-59; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 179, 501; and K. Athamina, "Arab Settlement during the Umayyad Caliphate," *JSAI* 8 (1986), 200 n. 112.

<sup>167</sup> Nu'aym, 295. He is probably the same as Šāliḥ ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Qays ibn Yassār on 272 (trans. in Appendix I, no. 11); and cf. the situation with the Turks: Ibn Tāwūs, 155.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 274-75 (mentioning two, then ten), 279.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 297 (it is possible that the place-name *wajh al-Hajar* is identical to al-Aqra', mentioned in the previous traditions). In other versions 12,000 *band* (which the text glosses as flags) are mentioned: al-Daylamī, II, 465 (no. 3305). Sūsiya is probably the Sīsiya in Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 225.

<sup>162</sup> Bashhear, "Muslim Apocalyptic Materials," 191-98.

<sup>163</sup> Nu'aym, 280-81; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 498.

<sup>164</sup> Nu'aym, 281, 285, 293, 297; and see Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VIII, 176.

lim accounts, this destruction (which is how it is described) is equivalent in its seriousness to the Roman destruction of the Second Temple. “Has not Jerusalem been destroyed once?”<sup>168</sup> (not forgetting that in apocalyptic literature there is no differentiation between the Byzantines and the Romans) This, of course, is yet another polemical charge to be laid at the door of the Byzantines. In other traditions they are less destructive, merely ringing the church bells for forty days and nights.<sup>169</sup> This is an obvious statement of political power, since ordinarily under the terms of the Pact of ‘Umar Christians are forbidden to ring the bells of the churches.<sup>170</sup> Even in Christian apocalypses it is not expected that the Byzantines will be able to hold Jerusalem for very long, though the reason given is the approaching End, when the Last Roman Emperor will surrender his authority to God at Golgotha (= the Church of the Holy Sepulchre).<sup>171</sup> In Jewish apocalyptic this latter figure also appears. He defeats the Ishmaelites (= the Muslims), pushing them back to the Yemen (Ḥijāz) where they regroup under the command of a figure known as Ḥoṭar (who is also called by the Muslim messianic title Maṣṣūr), and return to defeat the Byzantines. After his death, the Byzantines retake the city, where the monarch places his golden crown upon the *even ha-shteya* (the “foundation rock” on the Temple Mount), and surrenders his authority to God.<sup>172</sup> In Muslim traditions the occupation of Jerusalem lasts only 40 days, with the Byzantines camping on the Mount of Olives. At this point the Muslims win a decisive victory, and push the Byzantines back down to the coast, with a great slaughter occurring in the ravines along the way (renamed *awdiyat al-jiyaf*, i.e. “ravines [full] of corpses”).<sup>173</sup>

<sup>168</sup>Nu‘aym, 295, and 273, 297; and cf. “Ma‘mar Geula,” in *Midrashei Geula*, 121, “Tfilat R. Shimon,” in *ibid.*, 281.

<sup>169</sup>*Papyrus*, 303; and cf. Abū Ya‘lā, XI, 398 for traditions about church bells.

<sup>170</sup>See A. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects*, 5–17, 100–101; and on the problems with the *shurūt ‘Umar*, A. Noth, “Abgrenzungsprobleme zwischen Muslimen und nicht-Muslimen. Die ‘Bedingungen ‘Umars’ (*al-shurūt al-‘umariya*). . .,” *JSAI* 9 (1987), 290–315; Cohen, “What was the Pact of ‘Umar? a Literary-Historical Study,” *JSAI* 23 (1999), 100–51.

<sup>171</sup>PsMeth, 150.

<sup>172</sup>Sa‘dia Gaon, *Amānāt*, 246–47: *fa-awwal dhālīka anna al-Rūm ta’khudhū al-Bayt al-Maqdis ‘inda waqt al-yeshū‘a. . . wa-anna al-ghāzī yazfar bihim wa-yasbiyahum wa-yuhlikuhum* [“the first part of this (apocalyptic war) will be that the Byzantines will take Jerusalem at the time of the salvation. . . and then the fighter will be victorious over them, take them prisoner and destroy them”]; and “Otot ha-Mashi‘ah,” in *Midrashei Geula*, 310.

<sup>173</sup>Nu‘aym, 280, 286–87.

It should be noted that this is one of the most interesting examples of a shared tradition between the three faiths. Each one for their own reasons saw fit to include the Byzantine recapture of Jerusalem in their apocalyptic schemes, though for different reasons and with totally different outcomes. Victories are cheap in the apocalyptic world; they can be manufactured and added on to a given story line in a manner that will satisfy the audience to whom they are directed. It would be fascinating to know for certain which group originated this apocalypse, and to what factors its phenomenal success can be attributed.

In addition to the Byzantines, the major player in the coalition would appear to be the Andalusians, who send a fleet 50 miles long and thirteen miles wide to the A‘māq.<sup>174</sup> In another tradition 1,000 “sails” (ships) are landed between Jaffa and al-Aqra‘.<sup>175</sup> The Andalusians, like the proto-Vikings above, burn their ships after landing to make the men fight harder. It is said that all of Syria will be conquered except Damascus and the Balqā’ region of Jordan.<sup>176</sup> Once again, this is a very desert-oriented approach. Whenever the Muslims are in danger in these traditions, they flee to the edge of the desert, and there regroup and attack once more.

The Byzantines do not confine their attack to Syria, but attack North Africa as well. A fleet of 800,000 ships arrives there, but the local population defeats them, and turns the tables on them by taking their ships and using them to attack Rome.<sup>177</sup> The question that the scholar must ask with material like this is: do we have here native North African apocalyptic in this account (like in the accounts above about the raid on Rome), or is this Syrian material that is niggardly in giving information about the warfare there because it was so peripheral to the flow of the story. We unfortunately have no evidence as to whether there was a Muslim North African apocalyptic tradition, despite the apocalyptic writers such as al-Ṭurṭūshī and al-Dānī who worked in the area of Spain–Andalus and Ifrīqiya.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>175</sup>*Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*, 267; Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar*, I, 246; while in Jewish accounts the Byzantines capture Damascus: “Ma‘ase Daniel,” in *Midrashei Geula*, 221–22. It is rather curious, therefore, that the Sufyānī wears red clothing, though one should note (below, 125) that the Greeks according to Zoroastrian apocalyptic wear red clothing as well.

<sup>177</sup>Nu‘aym, 290; al-Sulamī, 254–55 (no. 298).

<sup>178</sup>Note the citation in Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Al-Bayān al-mughrib*, I, 219, from *kutub al-ḥidhān* [“books of disasters”], some few traditions from which could be native to this area and are unknown from other sources.



There also exists a whole family of traditions about a Christian attack on the most sensitive heartland of Islam: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. As part of their attack on Syria, the Byzantines send outriders to Medina that reach all the way to Mt. Sal', just to the north of the city. This is mentioned in both Christian and Muslim accounts.<sup>179</sup> Apparently this is part of a coordinated all-out attack on the holy places in conjunction with the Ethiopians, who are led by a figure known as *dhū l-swayqatayn al-habashī* (the Ethiopian with the two small shanks), and who attack Mecca, intending to destroy the Ka'ba.<sup>180</sup> There are several versions of this story: in one he succeeds in taking the city and continues towards Medina. There the Syrians send an army to defeat him and take his soldiers and sell them as slaves in Medina.<sup>181</sup> In several traditions the destruction of the Ka'ba is described in some detail, indicating that while the invasion is ultimately a failure, the Ethiopians are successful in destroying the building. "He (*dhū l-swayqatayn*) will steal its decoration and strip off its covering (*kiswa*), and it is as if I see a little bald (*aṣṣa'*), distorted-joint (Ethiopian) hacking at it with his iron shovel or with his pickax."<sup>182</sup> There are rather strong pejorative terms about this individual; he is described among other things as walking with his toes turned in, with red thighs, blue eyes (!), a flat nose, a large belly, small ears and bald (*aqra'*).<sup>183</sup> This, of course, is hardly surprising given the nature of the action in which he is involved and the generally unfavorable comments about blacks in early Muslim literature. In

<sup>179</sup>Nu'aym, 269; and cf. PsMeth, 149 (though it is a little unclear what the meaning of the Sea of the Kushites is in this context); "XIVth Vision of Daniel," 445 (the desert of Thribon = Yathrib/Medina); F. Rosenthal, "The Prophecies of Baba the Harranian," in *A Locust's Leg*, 222–23; and cf. al-Qārī, *Maṣnū'*, 287 (no. 375) for the punishment of someone who attacks the Ka'ba.

<sup>180</sup>Nu'aym, 408; al-Daylamī, V, 440 (no. 8424); al-Azraqī, *Ta'riḫh Makka*, I, 289–91; Abū Ya'lā, V, 139; al-Maqdisī, *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'riḫh*, II, 209; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫh*, III, 335; XII, 403; al-Majlisī, LII, 215; al-Barzanjī, *Ishā'a*, 259; al-Tuwayjūrī, *Ithāf*, I, 312.

<sup>181</sup>*Papyrus*, 281 (correcting *uftahaj* to *ufayhaj*); al-Safarīnī, *Aḥwāl*, 81; al-Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam*, XI, 99 (no. 11,238); Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VIII, 265 (nos. 6716–17).

<sup>182</sup>Al-Hindī, XIV, 251 (no. 38,610); al-Safarīnī, *Aḥwāl*, 81.

<sup>183</sup>Al-Safarīnī, *Aḥwāl*, 81–82; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫh*, XII, 403; al-Majlisī, XLI, 304. There is anti-black propaganda in these traditions (similar to the anti-Berber and anti-Byzantine material): Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 558; Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 168–69; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 145; al-Daylamī, I, 471 (no. 1565); II, 430 (no. 3193); Ibn 'Adī, V, 384; al-Hindī, XII, 301 (no. 35,119); XVI, 317 (no. 44,694); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ta'riḫh*, II, 19–20. Muslims are warned to stay away from Ethiopians: Ibn 'Adī, VI, 62. See B. Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 28–29.

other related traditions the Black Stone itself is saved from the Ethiopians and deposited at al-Kūfa, though the Ka'ba itself is destroyed.<sup>184</sup> This is the Shī'ī transfer of the messianic capital of the world from Mecca to al-Kūfa. Another optional ending is that Jesus sends a small group of horsemen to attack the Ethiopians, but before they reach them the "divine wind" collects the Muslims.<sup>185</sup> Probably here we have an example of a cyclical ending of an era. The Muslim prophetic age opened with an Ethiopian attempt to destroy the Ka'ba (that of Abraha, the governor of the Yemen during the early sixth century), which was repelled by God.<sup>186</sup> Just as the Romans/Byzantines are eternally trying to take and destroy the Temple in Jerusalem, so the Ethiopians' age-long desire is to destroy the Ka'ba. Only at the very end do they succeed, because the Day of Judgment is so close, and the messianic capital of the world will be moved to Jerusalem (in most accounts, see below). Interestingly enough, the traditions about Ethiopia in Christian apocalyptic are also well-developed.<sup>187</sup> This connection was noted by the Muslims.<sup>188</sup>

In all likelihood the figure of Tiberius featured in Muslim apocalyptic is the representative of the figure known as the Last Roman Emperor.<sup>189</sup> This figure, as previously noted, will rule the Christians during the last days, and at the End surrender his authority to God, who will henceforward rule the world personally. "A king will rule the Byzantines who will not be disobeyed, or almost not disobeyed, and he will take them to settle in such and such a land..."<sup>190</sup> Of course in Muslim texts he is described as a monster while in Christian ones he is a savior. This is one of the most common themes in apocalyptic as a whole: to take the figure adored by one's opponent and use

<sup>184</sup>Al-Majlisī, LII, 215. Concerning the Qarmāṭians see al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Khaṣā'is al-kubrā*, II, 273–74.

<sup>185</sup>Al-Suyūṭī, IV, 371; al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, VI, 24.

<sup>186</sup>Qur'an 105:1–5; and see M.J. Kister, "The Campaign of Ḥulubān," *Le Muséon* 78 (1965), 425–36.

<sup>187</sup>PsMeth, 135–37.

<sup>188</sup>Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, II, 173.

<sup>189</sup>Alexander, *Apocalyptic Tradition*, 151–84; G. Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, 93–106; *idem*, "Die syrischen Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende von römischen Endkaiser," in *Non nova, sed nove: Melanges de civilisation médiévale dédiés à Willem Noomen*, 195–209; H. Suermann, "Der Byzantinsche endkaiser bei Pseudo-Methodius," *OC* 71 (1987), 140–55; and cf. "Apocalypse of Peter," 488. For other aspects of this tradition see J. Wortley, "The Warrior-Emperor of the Andrew Salos Apocalypse," *AB* 88 (1970), 43–59.

<sup>190</sup>Nu'aym, 257; 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 387 (no. 20,814).



him for the demonic or satanic figure in one's own story line. We will return to this in the context of the Dajjāl.<sup>191</sup> Supernatural creatures are featured on the Byzantine side. For example, there is the demon child born to rule the Byzantines who grows the equivalent of thirteen years' growth in one year. He initiates an invasion of Syria with 7,000 ships, landing between al-'Arīsh and Acre. His invasion is only defeated by the direct intervention of God, who slays the ruler while the Muslims take Constantinople.<sup>192</sup> However, he is not the only inhuman foe to face the Muslims, for one of the captains of the fleet of Rūmīya (Rome) is the son of a *jinnīya*,<sup>193</sup> while one of the Andalusian commanders is the son of a *shayṭān*.<sup>194</sup> The Byzantines are the only foe that receives such supernatural demonic aid; apparently their skill on the battlefield had to be explained in these terms.

### The Trials of Egypt

Of a similar nature to the previous cycle, the traditions about Egypt are based on material that is probably far older. For some reason Egypt, even in classical apocalyptic texts, is especially cursed.<sup>195</sup> In many schemata, Egypt is listed as the first country to be destroyed, followed by a long list of other countries,<sup>196</sup> while in others it is given its own section. Uniquely it will be destroyed by four bow-shots (invasions, as it were) from the four corners of the compass: north (Byzantines), south (Nubians and Ethiopians), east (Turks) and west (Andalusians<sup>197</sup> and later, Berbers). Apparently Egypt's greatest curse was the legendary wealth that the Pharaohs supposedly left buried, which attracted the attention of plundering raids.

Historically speaking, the first "shot" to be fired at Egypt was from the Byzantines, since they had been its masters previous to the coming of the

<sup>191</sup>See below, 102.

<sup>192</sup>Nu'aym, 290–91; al-Hindī, XI, 221 (no. 31,301); XIV, 560–61 (no. 39,600). For this *topos* see Ibn Ṣayyād, 111, and Abraham in C. Matthews (ed.), "Muthīr al-gharām," *JPOS* 17 (1937), 124; and cf. "Tfilat R. Shimon ibn Yohai," in *Midrashei Geula*, 284.

<sup>193</sup>Nu'aym, 268; and cf. al-Hindī, XIV, 580 (no. 39,652, trans. in Appendix I, no. 27).

<sup>194</sup>Al-Haytamī, VIII, 319.

<sup>195</sup>E.g. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, s.v. "Egypt"; Y. Abarbanel, *Yeshu'ot meshi'ho*, 91. In light of this it should be noted that a number of Muslim "praise" compilations (written by Egyptians) exempt it from the *fitan* at the end of time: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, III, 306; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥādara*, I, 16 (these two writers are late).

<sup>196</sup>*Papyrus*, 250; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥādara*, I, 15–16 (see below, 264–66, on these Sibylline traditions).

<sup>197</sup>Nu'aym, 406; al-Hindī, XI, 274 (no. 31,501). Compare "Apocalypse of Peter," 492.

Muslims. Once again we meet the character of Tiberius (an emperor who never reigned, since his father was deposed and his dynasty destroyed before he came of age), who attacks Alexandria with 400 ships in the first wave and 400 in the next to reach the great lighthouse.<sup>198</sup> Comparatively speaking, this invasion is minor, though it is mentioned in Christian sources.<sup>199</sup> As already noted, the major invasion is initiated by the defecting Umayyad prince.<sup>200</sup> He is, however, not the only renegade from Egypt. One of the apocalyptic signs is a mass defection of Arab noblemen (*dahāqīn al-'arab*), which occurs just before the last battle. A man from Quraysh is also mentioned as fleeing to the Byzantines for a period of 20 months and then leading a fleet back to Egypt.<sup>201</sup> These ships are expected to anchor also in Syria at Caesarea.

After this the Ethiopians are expected to attack. They will cause the Muslims to flee from Aswān and will come to Memphis (Manaf), one day's ride from al-Fuṣṭāt, looking for the treasures of Pharaoh. However, they will be defeated and sold as slaves.<sup>202</sup> One should note that this is backed up in Christian apocalyptic by the accounts of Nubian invasions, and that Aswān is indeed the focal point of the conflict. They are described as raiding and pillaging the cities and villages of Egypt.<sup>203</sup> The principal question is whether the Ethiopians in the Muslim texts are the same as the Nubians of the Christian ones. It would seem rather doubtful that Ethiopians would indeed invade Egypt, given the distance between the two countries and the geographical difficulties involved in such a long-range invasion. If, however, this is true, then who are the Ethiopians mentioned (since the Nubians, in the texts surveyed, are not confused with the Ethiopians)? Clearly this tradition

<sup>198</sup>Nu'aym, 272, 294, 313; M. Cook, "The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology," *Al-Qantara* 13 (1992), 3–24; *idem*, "Eschatology, History and the Dating of Traditions," *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992), 23–48.

<sup>199</sup>"14 Sibyl" (trans. J.J. Collins) in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I, 468; "Apocalypse of Elijah" (trans. O.S. Wintermute), I, 741–43. It is greatly expanded and attached to the figure of Constantine in A. Perrier (ed.) "Lettre de Pisuntios," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 19 (1914), 309–10, which probably dates from the ninth or tenth centuries.

<sup>200</sup>See above, 71.

<sup>201</sup>Nu'aym, 312–13. The word *dahāqīn* is acceptable in the context of Egypt: Abū l-Shaykh, *Kitāb al-'azama*, 342; Ibn Abī Shayba, XIII, 41 (no. 15,693).

<sup>202</sup>Nu'aym, 288–89, 409–10; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 488 (trans. in Appendix I, no. 30, and reading Manaf for *madaf*); Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 33; al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 92. Compare Rosenthal, "Baba the Harranian," 222.

<sup>203</sup>"XIVth Vision of Daniel," 407–408, 424 (Ethiopian invasions), 426–27 (reaching Smoun = Aswān).

rests on a treasure-seeking expedition, since there are no religious overtones. Even the Christian apocalypses are rather negative regarding these raids, which could have been the first step in their liberation from the Muslims, had they desired to take advantage of them. For these reasons it is difficult to see this as historical.

The major danger to Egypt came from the west, first from the Berbers and later from the Andalusians. The Berbers are said to be designated by yellow flags: "When those of the yellow flags (*aṣḥāb rāyāt al-ṣufr*), meaning the Maghribīs, enter Egypt, then let the people of Syria dig underground conduits [to protect themselves]."<sup>204</sup> In many of these traditions Egypt is not an end unto itself, but an obstacle on the way to the occupation of Syria by the Berber armies. These are frequently described as occupying important towns of Syria like Damascus, Ḥimṣ and Baalbek.<sup>205</sup> In Egypt itself it is only recorded in Muslim sources that they occupy the region of Lake Fayyūm,<sup>206</sup> but Christian apocalypses clarify that they will rule the whole country for a period of seven years.<sup>207</sup> It would seem that their principal goal is also to plunder the area, and that they succeed admirably in it.<sup>208</sup> The coming of the Berbers is one of the signs of the appearance of the Mahdī.<sup>209</sup> Again, as with the Ethiopians, it would seem rather difficult to believe that the Berbers would be able to mount a serious attack against Syria, given the distances involved. Probably we have here the Egyptian equivalent of the Turkish and Christian "reconquista" traditions featured in their cycles. Egypt in this tradition is little more than a minor interference, a way station between the Berbers and Syria.

Another western invasion cycle is that of the Andalusians, who are led by a certain Dhū l-'Arf, a Christian from Andalus who conquers all of North

<sup>204</sup> *Papyrus*, 258; al-Sulamī, 121 (no. 94); and see Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XV, 242, on the identity of the yellow flags with one Abū Tamīm (unidentified). Yellow flags are also associated with the minor messianic figure al-Yamānī: Nu'aym, 174.

<sup>205</sup> Nu'aym, 161; al-Sulamī, 123-24 (nos. 98-100); and cf. Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 524; "Apocalypse of Peter," 452-53, 460-61, 492. In al-Dānī, III, 1021 (no. 543) they are said to reach Lajūn (in Palestine), though the reading is not certain. The people of Damascus will be the happiest about this, while the people of Ḥimṣ are the most unhappy: Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar*, I, 247.

<sup>206</sup> Nu'aym, 160; and cf. "Tfilat R. Shimon ibn Yohai," in *Midrashei Geula*, 276.

<sup>207</sup> "Arabic Sibylline Prophecy," 87-88; "Bahira," *ZA* 14 (1898), 223; and cf. Nu'aym, 154.

<sup>208</sup> "Apocalypse of Peter," 460-61, 492; "Bahira," *ZA* 14 (1898), 254.

<sup>209</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 169.

Africa after landing in Tangiers. The Muslims all flee to Egypt, and Dhū l-'Arf follows on their heels. He camps between the Pyramids and Tarnūt. At the town of Wasīm a battle will be fought in which the Andalusians will be defeated, and the survivors will flee to Nubia. Dhū l-'Arf himself, however, becomes a Muslim after reading a book commanding him to do so.<sup>210</sup> In a variant ending to the tradition, the Muslims continue to pursue the Andalusians towards Libya, and then return to find the Ethiopians attacking Egypt with 3,000 ships.<sup>211</sup>

Non-Muslims are not the only ones to attack from the west; on occasion disgruntled governors from the Maghrib will also wreak havoc on Egypt. The revolt of one 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān is particularly disastrous. He defeats the Egyptians at the bridge (*al-qanṭara*) and 70,000 are killed. The Muslims are pushed out of Egypt and Syria village by village until his forces control the whole area for a period of sixteen or eighteen months. Then they are forced back into Egypt again.<sup>212</sup> In some traditions this conflict has a messianic tinge, since one of the messianic characters, al-A'raj al-Kindī, is said to come from the Maghrib.<sup>213</sup> His yellow flags will do battle with the black flags (of the 'Abbāsids) for seven days straight, pushing them back to Ramla (in Syria). Then the Sufyānī appears.<sup>214</sup> Another messianic figure appearing from the west is an unknown *amīr* of Ifrīqiya, who rules for twelve years and then dies. His place is taken by a brown-skinned man (*rajul asmar*) who fills the area with righteousness and then goes to the Mahdī to swear allegiance to him.<sup>215</sup>

All in all, Egypt is very vulnerable to attack. Few of the attackers are actually defeated, and most succeed in plundering the country. The impressive thing is the relative distances that attackers are willing to come in order to accomplish this. Egypt, compared to Syria, is not an easy place to conquer, given the fact that it is surrounded by deserts or the sea. Yet none of these foes seem to have any difficulty in doing so. These "trials" were perhaps

<sup>210</sup> Nu'aym, 288-89, 406-407; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 489 (trans. in Appendix I, no. 30); al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, I, 165; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, s.v. *wasīm*; al-Barzanjī, *Ishā'a*, 264; and cf. S.M. Imaduddin, "Cordovan Muslim Rule in Crete," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 8 (1960), 300-302.

<sup>211</sup> *Papyrus*, 303.

<sup>212</sup> Nu'aym, 158, 174; al-Hindī, XI, 220 (no. 31,300, with slight variations).

<sup>213</sup> Nu'aym, 174; al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 71; al-Safarīnī, *Aḥwāl*, 26.

<sup>214</sup> Nu'aym, 159-60, 175.

<sup>215</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 68.

designed for those who saw Egyptian life as too easy and complacent, and desired to jolt the inhabitants into a state of insecurity that would deepen their spiritual lives. Probably from the point of view of a Syrian Arab, the people of Egypt were comparatively well-off, having no enemies on their frontiers (with the exception of the Nubians, who kept the peace for the most part), and a climate blessed by nature. As with the North African material above, it is rather difficult to ascertain whether this is native Egyptian material or not. It is probably foreign. The apocalypticist shows little familiarity with the names that a native would know. Most of the action in this cycle, with the exception of the area of Alexandria, takes place in Upper Egypt. The names are archaic: surely Memphis was not inhabited at this stage in Egyptian history, for example. Natural disasters are also promised: floods in Damietta and Tanis are mentioned.<sup>216</sup>

#### Turkish Invasions<sup>217</sup>

Turks are primarily connected with the 'Abbāsids, who are blamed for bringing them into the Muslim lands, and where they were frequently seen as supporters of this dynasty. There was some difficulty in fitting the Turks in the traditional genealogical schemes; some classify them with apocalyptic peoples like Yājūj and Mājūj,<sup>218</sup> while others opposed this idea.<sup>219</sup> Many traditions deal with the physical appearance of the Turks, deeming them to be one of the portents of the Hour:

The Hour will not arrive until you (the Muslims) fight a group with small eyes, wide faces, as if their eyes were the pupils of locust, as if their faces were beaten shields, wearing shoes made of hair, taking up leather shields until they fasten their horses

<sup>216</sup> *Papyrus*, 251–52, 263.

<sup>217</sup> Thanks to Dr. Reuven Amitai, who read this part of the research and discussed it with me.

<sup>218</sup> Nu'aym, 415 (and see below, 182–83). The identification of the Turks with Yājūj and Mājūj has some basis in historical fact, since undoubtedly the Biblical peoples of Ezekiel 38 were those nomads who periodically debouched upon the settled areas of the Middle East). Sa'dia Gaon translates the name Gomer (Genesis 10:2) as "Turks"; and see Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, IV, 566–71; trans. III, 149–57, for their classification in Christian schemata.

<sup>219</sup> Al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuhfa*, VI, 482. Sometimes they are identified as the remnant of the people of Tubba' and of Ḥimyar: al-Qurṭubī, 682.

on a palm tree [in Iraq] (*lā taqūm al-sā'a ḥattā tuqātīlu qawman ṣighār al-a'yun 'irād al-wujūh ka-anna a'yunahum ḥidāq al-jarād ka-anna wujūhahum al-majānn al-muṭraqa yanta'ilūna al-sha'r wa-yattakhidhūna al-daraq ḥattā yarbuṭu khuyūlahum bi-l-nakhl*).<sup>220</sup>

Other traditions add details to this description, such as having ruddy faces and small noses.<sup>221</sup> They are also identified by the horses that they ride: Turkish ponies that have had their tails docked (*barādhīn mujadhdhama*).<sup>222</sup>

In many cases the horses that are ridden by various groups in these traditions symbolize them by using imagery already clear to the listener. This type of horse does not command much respect in the horse-centered Arab culture. They do not bestow an aura of nobility the way a Bedouin is ennobled by his horse; instead, they provide a focal point for the ridiculous picture painted in the first traditions about the Turks.

However, the tone quickly changes. The Turks were considered to be among the Arabs' most deadly enemies. Like the apocalyptic traditions concerning the Byzantines, those involving the Turks show an awareness that this group could force the Arabs back into the desert from which they came.<sup>223</sup> In these sources a triad of players can be identified: the Arabs, the Byzantines and the Turks. It is rather interesting to note the shifting alliances between the three groups. On the one hand, historically speaking, over the long run, the Turks became Muslims and helped the Arabs in their

<sup>220</sup> Al-Hindī, XIV, 206 (no. 38,407); oddly in Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 157, this tradition is placed under the section about fighting the Berbers. Al-Mubārakfūrī says that the hair for the Turks' shoes is their own, which grows down to their feet. Sometimes the palm tree to which they fasten their horses is located in Najd (Arabia): al-Hindī, XIV, 239 (no. 38,551); or in Uḅulla: Ibn al-Munādī, 159.

<sup>221</sup> Nu'aym, 413–14; al-Hindī, XIV, 205–206 (nos. 38,407), 571 (no. 39,630); al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, IX, 175–76; Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 175 (no. 19,430); al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, III, 337 (no. 2312); al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ*, XV, 36–37; Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi'*, XI, 72–73; al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad*, I, 87 (no. 120); 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 380 (no. 20,798); al-Haytamī, VII, 310–13. A somewhat different description is given in al-Majlisī, XLI, 335.

<sup>222</sup> Al-Haytamī, VII, 312 (with their ears cut). Horses of this type are mentioned in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 432; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, II, 66. Martyrs will ride into heaven on these horses, but made of fire: al-Hindī, XII, 297 (no. 35,103); and cf. 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, II, 94; al-Daylamī, I, 63 (no. 62, about *barādhīn tarkhīya*). The invaders from the Maghrib will also ride *barādhīn* (*shuhub*): al-Dānī, III, 1021 (no. 543).

<sup>223</sup> Nu'aym, 413, 415; Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 175 (no. 19,430); al-Hindī, XIV, 239 (no. 38,552), 571 (no. 39,629); al-Haytamī, V, 304; VII, 311–12.

age-long struggle against the Byzantines.<sup>224</sup> It is only fair to note that the apocalyptic texts show no awareness of this fact, and there is nothing that would indicate that they were considered to be Muslims. In fact the contrary is true; Turks are almost always grouped together with those infidels that the Muslim community will be required to fight before the End (a number of these traditions may date from before the wholesale conversion of the Turks, anyway). On the other hand, there are a number of traditions showing the Byzantines helping the Arabs by attacking the Turks, which should be understood in light of the hatred felt by the people of Iraq towards them from the middle of the ninth century onwards.<sup>225</sup> It is said that a Turkish horseman would not venture out of his camp into Baghdad alone at night because the enraged populace would kill him. This was one of the reasons for the building of the capital at Sāmarrā in the 830s.<sup>226</sup> This is reflected in the apocalyptic traditions:

The incomprehensible ones (*al-tamātīm*) are coming, the incomprehensible ones are coming! They will cut off your heads, steal (lit. eat) your land-spoils (*fay'*), settle in your land, expose your shame (*yahtakūn sutūrakum*), enslave the best of you, and humiliate your nobility. . . [they are] ugly of color, [with] rough necks, renowned swords; their sticks are peeled (?), and their whips are knotted at the end. They will be harsher on my (Muḥammad's) community than Pharaoh was on the Children of Israel.<sup>227</sup>

While the identification of this tradition is not absolutely certain, since the Turks are not mentioned by name, a number of the characterizations are the same. Like the traditions mentioned below, here too the Turks are a punitive factor against the Muslims. However, unlike the other traditions, here there

<sup>224</sup>C.E. Bosworth, "Barbarian Invasions: the Coming of the Turks into the Muslim World," in *Islamic Civilization*, 1–16. According to the traditions in al-Maḥdī, *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 171, one should differentiate between the Muslim Turks and the infidels (and not fight the former).

<sup>225</sup>Al-Sulamī, 116 (no. 82); al-Hindī, XI, 272–73 (no. 31,497); al-Suyūṭī, *Hāwī*, II, 68. See I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, 245–46 (who adduces the positive traditions about the Turks—the mirror image of these apocalyptic traditions); Ulrich Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: the Arab Image of the Turk from the 'Abbāsids to Modern Egypt," *IJMES* 20 (1988), 175–96.

<sup>226</sup>See Bosworth, "Barbarian Invasions," 7–8.

<sup>227</sup>Ibn Ṭāwūs, 115, and other traditions on 116.

is no laudatory attitude towards them. In yet other traditions the Turks join the Byzantines in the final apocalyptic battle against the Arabs.<sup>228</sup> In general, invasions of Turks and invasions of Byzantines are grouped together.

According to the early sources, the Turks will mount two great invasions of the Muslim lands: one through Ādharbayjān and the other reaching the Euphrates River.<sup>229</sup> It would seem that the apocalypticist was under the impression that these comprised a coordinated double-pronged attack, whereas to us they were more disorganized nomadic invasions. Examples are given of the Turks' *modus operandi*: during a raid on al-Jazīra, for example, they take captive those wearing silver anklets (meaning the women), whereupon God aids the Muslims in destroying them.<sup>230</sup> Other traditions emphasize the total helplessness of the men to protect their women from rape, and the insolence of the invaders—they even tie their horses inside the mosques.<sup>231</sup> Another scheme deals with a three invasions scenario: during the first invasion those who flee will be saved, during the second some will be saved while others are not, but during the third all will be finished off (*fa-yaṣṭalimūn man baqiya minhum*).<sup>232</sup> With a tradition like this, of course, we have come full circle from the traditions using similar schemes to destroy the Byzantines.

A recurring theme is the vengeance that God will take on the Turks. In some traditions a plague (*ṭā'ūn*) will destroy them, while in others they will be frozen to death (though it is not clear how Turks, who manage to survive the deadly cold of Central Asia, would freeze to death in Iraq).<sup>233</sup> However, the Turks are not the only ones being punished. As previously noted, certain traditions indicate that the Turks were seen as God's righteous judgment upon the Muslims for having disobeyed His commands, and that their actions, heinous though they may be, occur with His sanction. Perhaps it would be profitable to quote once again the tradition referred to here:

<sup>228</sup>Nu'aym, 129, 133, 416; al-Daylamī, I, 146 (no. 364); and the discussion in Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 203 (trans. in my "Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 98–99). In Zoroastrian apocalyptic, too, the Turks help the Greeks: *Zand-i Wahman Yasn*, 160–61.

<sup>229</sup>Nu'aym, 128; al-Hindī, XI, 276 (no. 31,501); Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 517. Note that in the year 145/762 the Turks, together with the Khazars, did invade the area of Ādharbayjān and Armenia.

<sup>230</sup>Nu'aym, 413; al-Hindī, XI, 275 (no. 31,504).

<sup>231</sup>Nu'aym, 412–14; al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, X, 93; al-Haytamī, VII, 311.

<sup>232</sup>Al-Hindī, XI, 169 (no. 31,073); Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, 160–61.

<sup>233</sup>Nu'aym, 412; Ibn al-'Adīm, I, 516.

God most high says: "When My servants had disgraced My sanctity, declared lawful the things prohibited by Me, [and] broken My commandments, then I gave them into the hands of an army from the East called the Turks. They are My horsemen, and take vengeance on those who rebel against Me. I have removed mercy from their hearts: they take no pity on those who weep, and do not answer those who complain, killing the fathers and the mothers, the sons and the daughters. . . ." <sup>234</sup>

One should note that God Himself has decreed this punishment for the Muslims, so to resist it would be to fight the Almighty. Yet, the Turks are not deemed to be morally better than the sinful Muslims; they merely happen to be the instruments of God's wrath. Therefore, we have here an apocalyptic situation in which both the punished (the Muslims) and the punishers (the Turks) are deemed to be in the wrong. This situation is very reminiscent of Biblical ideas that led to the beginnings of Jewish apocalyptic, for example in Jeremiah 25:8ff. and Zechariah 1:13–15, where punishments inflicted upon the Israelites by foreign nations are portrayed as the work of God.

Another group similar to the Turks is also mentioned—the Banū Qunṭūrā'. <sup>235</sup> They are described as coming from the East, leading the peoples

<sup>234</sup> Al-Sulamī, 117–18 (no. 86). This tradition should be compared with the Christian "Bahira," *ZA* 14 (1899), 246–47: "Then will come forth from the East men clothed in bloody garments. All their wisdom, their anger and their rage shall [vent itself] upon the sons of Ishmael. They will send [them] and drive them to the mountains of Ethrab [Medina]. They will not have mercy upon the sons of Ishmael, nor show them grace; but will kill them at the edge of the sword; men and women, young people and children. They will not have pity on the pregnant women. . . ." Though one could say that this refers to the coming of the 'Abbāsids, the latter are not usually described in such a hostile manner in Christian apocalyptic.

<sup>235</sup> Al-Tuwayjūrī, *Ithāf*, I, 305–307, enumerates their possible origins. One possibility is that they are the Banū Qunṭūrā' ibn Karkar, meaning blacks, Turks or Chinese (see al-Ṭūsī, *Amālī*, I, 5; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XXXI, 283–84; al-Majlisī, XLI, 325; XCVII, 61; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, IV, 113). The other is that they are descendants of Qeturah, Abraham's concubine (Genesis 25:1–4; and see I. Eph'al, "The Sons of Qeturah and the Sons of Ishmael," *The Ancient Arabs*, 231–40). Compare al-Hamdānī, *Iklīl*, I, 66 (where they are descendants of Canaan ibn Hām); Ibn Biṭrīq, *Ta'rikh*, 23 (name given as Qaytura); al-Sam'ānī, *Ansab*, III, 39 (identified with the Turks); Natanel ibn Yeshi'ah, *Nūr al-zalām*, 91; "Bahira," *ZA* 14 (1898), 233 "the seed of Yoktan, who are the Kaṭraye;" "Bahira," *ZA* 14 (1898), 256: *hādā mālik al-qaṭranīyīn al-lādhīna hum banī [sic] yuqṭān*. I have hesitated to speculate on the identity of the Banū Qunṭūrā' myself, but many of the traditions (see Appendix I, no. 22) would be consistent with the Seljuq invasions (Dih-Khoda'i, *Lughat-i*

of Khurāsān and Sijistān<sup>236</sup> down through the area of Khūzistān and Fars, ending up in al-Ubulla (the port of al-Baṣra). There they demand that the local inhabitants make room for them to settle by the Tigris River. The response of the people is rather unimpressive: they divide into three groups, one of which goes to Syria, another goes and joins the Bedouin and the last joins the Banū Qunṭūrā' themselves.<sup>237</sup> In some variants, one group does actually fight, though not very convincingly.<sup>238</sup> Basically, in this scenario the Arabs will be pushed out of Iraq by these invaders.<sup>239</sup> Another nomadic group operating in the same fashion is called the Kirmān and Khūz.<sup>240</sup> Traditions about them are reworks of those about the Banū Qunṭūrā'. These two tribes are probably peoples that lived in the mountainous area of south Persia, and, like other peoples who dwelt in similar regions, were never fully conquered by the Muslims.<sup>241</sup> Yet another unidentified group is called al-Thaṭṭ (or perhaps Thuṭṭ; the vocalization is uncertain):

Woe to them (the people of Iraq) from the Thaṭṭ. Al-Ṣādir said: "O my lord (Ja'far al-Ṣādiq), who are the Thaṭṭ?" He said: "A group whose ears are like the ears of a mouse in their smallness, their clothes are iron [armor?], their speech is the speech of

*nāma*, XXX, 498, outright identifies them as Turks). Clearly, however, there is a level that is historically previous to this (e.g. in Nu'aym).

<sup>236</sup> Or the people of Kaysān: al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Ba'th wa-l-nushūr*, 20 (no. 21, correct Ayala = Ubulla).

<sup>237</sup> Nu'aym, 413; Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāhim*, 164–65; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VIII, 264 (no. 6713); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 155.

<sup>238</sup> Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 92 (no. 19,199); al-Hindī, XIV, 218 (no. 38,461); and cf. the version in Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 111 (no. 4306).

<sup>239</sup> Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 381 (nos. 20,799–800); Ibn Abī Shayba, XV, 107 (no. 19,236), 112 (no. 19,251).

<sup>240</sup> *Khūz* is pointed thus in al-Hindī, XIV, 205 (no. 38,406); al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, IX, 176; idem, *Dalā'il*, VI, 336; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, II, 87; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 391. In light of the fact that the modern province of Iran is called Khūzistān, it would seem that this is the correct reading (note that Sa'dia Gaon translates the Elam in Genesis 14:1 as "Khūzistān"). The following other options are given: 1) *hūr*: Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāya*, I, 20; Abū Ya'lā, X, 380–81; 2) *jūr*: Nu'aym, 414; Hammām ibn Munabbih, *Ṣaḥīfa*, 61 (no. 125); al-Ṭūsī, *Amālī*, I, 271; 3) *hazaz*: 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 375 (no. 20,872), while the editor notes the possibility of 4) *jūz* as well; 5) *khūr*: Hammām ibn Munabbih, *Ṣaḥīfa* (2nd ed. by Rifa't Fawzī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib), 632; 6) *ghūra*: Laylā Mabruk, *'Alamāt al-sā'a al-kubrā wa-l-sughrā*, 108 (she does not say what her source is for this). In al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh*, II, 212–13, it is recommended not to marry these people (the Khūz).

<sup>241</sup> Note the description of the "Qufs" who lived in this area: *ET*<sup>2</sup>, "Kirmān" (B. Weischer), and see the apocalypse about them below, 264, 265 n. 133.

demons (*shayātīn*), [with] small pupils, and hairless (*mardajurd*). Take refuge in God from their evil; God will restore [true] religion (Islam?) at their hands, and they will be a cause of our (i.e. the Prophet's family) rule (*amr*)."<sup>242</sup>

It would seem that here we have yet another nomadic invasion, though the date and origin of this material remains unclear. This is especially true in light of the last sentence—how (or why) this nomadic group is seen as bringing about the rule of the Prophet's family is a difficult question to answer.

This cycle, though not very well organized, is an authentic Muslim development stemming from the fear of the nomadic peoples continually seeping through into the Islamic heartland from the Central Asian steppe, beginning from the middle of the second century AH and culminating in the Mongol invasions. For this reason it has a topical relationship to the Cycle of Yājūj and Mājūj, which also depends upon this fear to communicate the apocalypticist's message. We should view this cycle as an extremely important part of the apocalypticist's expression of public opinion. Whereas the other cycles are those involving penetration and conquest of foreign lands and ultimate victory (even if this victory is delayed until God steps in), this cycle is a totally defensive one. No one is suggesting that the Turks will be uprooted and conquered; at best they will be defeated by God *after* they have wreaked their destruction. In many cases the resolution of the conflict is not even this clear cut. The Turks have their way, they are fought briefly and then the apocalypse comes to an end. Clearly the apocalyptic material (if there was any doubt in the matter) was first circulated when the resolution of the conflict was very much in doubt. There are no satisfactory endings here for the Muslim Arab, for the Turks are never adequately defeated. Even in the messianic conquest cycles, when the Mahdī sends an army to pillage the cities of the Turks (perhaps the Khazars), nothing is said about the success of this raid. The common tradition of the fighting of the Turks quoted at the beginning of the section ("the Hour will not arrive until. . .") is ambivalent as well; one

<sup>242</sup>Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Amālī*, 65. This people could be the Zutt, which is the Arab name for the Jatt (an Indian tribe that migrated to the Middle East. My thanks to Dr. Reuven Amitai for this suggestion); on them during the Buwayhid period see M. Kabir, *The Buwayhids of Baghdad*, 45, 81. On the other hand, Dih-Khoda'i, *Lughat-i nāma*, XIII, 23, defines *thatt* as a man with little facial hair, a description that sounds Turkish. On this basis I have grouped them here.

should note that the tradition does not speak of the Muslims defeating the Turks, only of their fighting them. This is a very different attitude from that of the apocalypticists who circulated traditions on the Byzantines.