

الْبُلْتِنُ

VOLUME 17 NO. 1

APRIL, 2005

THE BULLETIN OF MIDDLE EAST MEDIEVALISTS

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The Muslim apocalyptic scene is basically dependent on the eschatological teaching of the Qur'ān and the *hadith*, the Muslim tradition. Still, interpretation of Muslim apocalyptic traditions, besides other matters, requires a search into the parallel Jewish and Christian literatures because of the similarities of themes, forms, images, symbols, and terminology. Some of my articles treat this issue.¹ Sometimes there is no way to comprehend the full meaning of a certain Muslim apocalyptic tradition without a search into parallels in Judaism and Christianity. But it can work the other way round: the study of the Jewish and Christian apocalypse might benefit from investigation of Muslim texts. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate these issues through one example, which I regard as belonging to basic research. The point is that despite important contributions by leading scholars, the whole field of Muslim eschatology has not been studied thoroughly even on the level of basic research. Our subject is a case-study for a single tradition, namely an apocalyptic tradition attributed to Daniel. It is one of the important Muslim traditions that tell of terrible eschatological wars between the Arabs and the Byzantines. Their central theme is the wars of the meadows (*a'māq*); in particular that of the meadow ('*amq*) of Antioch (Anṭākiya). As far as I know, some of these traditions are preserved only in the *Kitāb al-fitan wa-l-malāhim* of Nu'aym b. Hammād (d. 842). They were an important subject in studies by S. Bashear and W. Madelung, and according to both,

the time of their creation is the Umayyad period.² Madelung emphasizes the role of scholars from Ḥimṣ, a town in northern Syria; among them was Arṭā b. al-Mundhir al-Ḥānī (d. 162-3 AH/779-780 AD), an important traditionalist and ascetic.³

Our tradition is attributed to Arṭā, and it starts like this: 'And the first *malḥama* according to the Daniel will happen in Alexandria'. *Malḥama* (pl. *malāhim*), means a war with eschatological connotation. The *malāhim* are generally (but not exclusively) related to Muslim-Byzantine wars, the most important being the greatest *malḥama* that will precede the expected conquest of Constantinople.⁴ According to the tradition the first *malḥama* will be a Byzantine naval attack against Alexandria. The people of Egypt will ask for help from the people of Syria. Only after enormous effort will the Muslims prevail. The Byzantines (*al-rūm*) will then attack Jaffa of Palestine (*yāfā filastīn*), but again the Muslims will defeat them and kill their king. In the second *malḥama* the Byzantines will land at Acre led by the son of their dead king. This *malḥama* is portrayed as a crucial and deadly contest between the forces of Islam and Christianity. Despite terrible consequences, the Muslims will win yet another victory and the Byzantine king will die. In the third *malḥama* the Byzantines will arrive again by sea and will land at the meadow of Antioch ('*amq anṭākiya*). Only after two months' fighting will the Muslims triumph. But then the conflict will resume, and a final Muslim victory will be achieved only after diverse

battles extending far away as Spain.⁵ This tradition of Arṭā b. al-Mundhir follows another, on the authority of Arṭā as well (not related to Daniel). It tells of apocalyptic wars starting in Alexandria and ending in the Muslim conquest of Byzantium and Rome. An interesting stage of these wars is a disastrous defeat of the Byzantines in Jerusalem, where they will die in multitudes, like locusts (*mawt al-jarād*).⁶

General background

The Muslims' victory over *al-rūm* (the Byzantines), especially the conquest of Constantinople, is an old motif in the Muslim apocalyptic tradition, not only in apocalyptic compilations. Among other books, it is included in venerated collections of *hadith*⁷ and commentaries to the Qur'ān.⁸ It seems to me that the purpose of our tradition is to give hope to the Muslims by reminding them that the final promise of victory will certainly be realized; but even more, it says that there is still a long and painful process ahead. The historical background for such a tradition as ours need not relate to a concrete event. It was most probably created in the setting of the indecisive battles against the Byzantines on land, and still more the incessant Byzantine naval attacks against Muslim towns all down the Mediterranean coasts from Antioch to Alexandria. The huge number of traditions in praise of Muslim frontier towns, including the fortified towns along the coastline, marvelously document the mood of their inhabitants: horror, fear, despair, the constant need for reinforcements or propaganda to attract more inhab-

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itants and warriors to these cities. But they also attest to a great esteem accorded to the frontier towns, and sometimes even indicate their sanctification. Among the praise literature of these cities a special place is occupied by a city mentioned in our tradition: Alexandria.⁹ I found no concrete historical information relating to our tradition, but it seems to me that its historical background is indeed somewhere in the Umayyad period (661-750) and even earlier.¹⁰ The hazy reference in our tradition might also be due to the intentionally vague character of many apocalyptic traditions, which does not facilitate clear separation of history, legend, and fabrication, as well as the different layers forming a certain tradition.

Many Muslim apocalyptic traditions cannot be explained without understanding the special terminology, structures, and themes of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts. One important example is a Muslim apocalyptic tradition on fighting the Byzantines on the shores of Palestine. It carries a clear stamp of Jewish eschatology.¹¹ That tradition is typical of apocalyptic accounts that link present apocalypses to great authorities of the past, as it is attributed to the Patriarch Abraham. But the figure of Daniel in *malḥamat dānyāl* of our tradition is incomparably more important. The biblical book of Daniel inspired an entire Muslim literature attributed to Daniel, dealing with the future of the Muslim community, as well as matters of astrology, numerology, and so on.¹² It is interesting to see if there is any connection to the original text of Daniel, or to Jewish or Christian apocalypses associated with the Book of Daniel.

Malḥamat dānyāl attributed to Artā is probably connected to the vision of Daniel (chapter 7) of the four horrible beasts coming from the sea that correspond to the four last kingdoms on earth. The Jewish apocalypse named *Sefer Eliyahu* (Book of Elijah) was apparently written, according to Grossman, at the end of Byzantine rule in Palestine and the beginning of the Arab conquests, in the first half of the seventh century.¹³ According to Even Ezra's introduction to the Hebrew text, it

basically concerns the political and military events that preceded the Muslim conquests, especially the Persian-Byzantine wars.¹⁴ This text among other things concerns three apocalyptic wars. The second of these is called the second war (*milḥama shniyya* in Hebrew), and the third is *milḥama shlishit*, carrying the same meaning of apocalyptic war as the Arabic *malḥama*. The first war (although it is not called by the name *milḥama*) is an apocalyptic war between Persia and Rome. The text tells of a lesser king of the Romans, depicted as a kind of a monster (between his eyes there will be a long horn!), who will come from the sea to fight the king of Persia.¹⁵ One version connects this king clearly to the little horn in Daniel's vision (7:8): "... a King will rise from the sea ... and he is the horn which Daniel saw..."¹⁶ The second war is again a Roman invasion from the sea, and the third (probably yet another seaborne attack) will be launched from the Great Valley against Jaffa and Ascalon (*mi-biq'a gdola 'ad Yafo ve-'ad Ashkelon*). In the last two wars all the enemies will perish at the hands of the righteous ones (*ṣādiqim*) of God, or of his angels of destruction.¹⁷ It is connected to the same vision of Daniel ("... It will be then that God, blessed be He, will say to the nations: Woe to you, evil ones, that at the end of the four kingdoms all of you are thrown away from the world").¹⁸ Daniel's vision of the four kingdoms after which will come the rule of God was the basis for many Jewish and Christian apocalyptic speculations concerning historical events and political struggles.¹⁹ Can we point to a concrete connection between Artā's tradition and those parts of *Sefer Eliyahu* mentioned above?

Both texts use similar terminology: *milḥama* in Hebrew, and the Arabic *malḥama*, mean apocalyptic wars.²⁰ The word appears in both of them in the same context of invasions from the sea with an evident connection to the vision of Daniel (although the Jewish apocalypse is not attributed to Daniel). Both traditions predict the last victory for the true believers (Jews or Muslims), and in both the main enemy is the Romans (in the Jewish tradition), and the *rūm* (Byzantines) in the Mus-

lim tradition (both might also be identified just as Byzantines).²¹ Even the sites of the battles are sometimes similar. The expression *biq'a* means the same as *'amq*, a meadow or valley surrounded by mountains,²² and *biq'a gdola* of the Jewish apocalypse might in some way be compared with the *'amq* of Antioch of the Muslim tradition.²³ The Jewish text is much longer, and it refers to other eschatological matters, such as Israel's coming out of its diasporas, the war of Gog and Magog, or heavenly Jerusalem.²⁴ We cannot speak of a 'one-to-one' comparison, but parts of the general framework, some themes, and even certain terms show great similarity. These convincing likenesses still do not prove a direct borrowing from this Jewish source. It might be based on another Jewish source, or even a Christian source, although this needs proof. The Muslim tradition was undoubtedly built according to a non-Muslim apocalyptic tradition, which was based on Daniel's vision of the four kingdoms; like that tradition it reflects the strains, agonies, and hopes of its author in eschatological shades (the background was the warfare between the Persians and the Byzantines, and the Muslims' clashes with the Byzantines, especially along the coast). That some places appear in both traditions, in the Jewish apocalypse composed just before the Arab invasion, and in the Muslim tradition created after it, in the first place probably has to do with the historical conditions: these were the battlefields in both periods. Another reason is that certain places acquired special significance, and they appear and reappear in eschatological traditions.²⁵

This example of an eschatological Muslim tradition supports our assumption that the interpretation of Muslim apocalyptic traditions sometimes requires a search into the parallel Jewish and Christian literatures. In this case it was mainly a comparison with a Jewish source, but similar elements may well be found in Christian sources. Nor do we exclude the possibility that even our Muslim tradition, which seems monolithic, might itself be built of more than one layer.

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Notes

1. See O. Livne-Kafri, "Some Notes on the Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 17 (1999): 71-94; idem, "Jerusalem in Muslim Traditions of the End of Days," *Cathedra* 86 (1998): 23-56 (in Hebrew); idem, "Some Observations Concerning Muslim Apocalyptic Literature in Light of the Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Traditions," accepted for publication in *Studia Islamica*; idem, "Is There a Reflection of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius in Muslim Tradition?," submitted.
2. Cf. S. Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars: A Review of Arabic Sources," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (3rd series) 1 (1991): 173-207; W. Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥims in the Umayyad Age," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31 (1986): 141-185. Another study on this subject, "Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihād," was published by D. Cook in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996): 66-104.
3. Madelung, "Prophecies," p. 144. Cf. also Madelung's report about Artā in his article "The Sufyānī between Tradition and History," *Studia Islamica* 63 (1986), pp. 20-21. According to one account he was even considered one of the *abdāl* saints: see Livne-Kafri, "Early Muslim Ascetics and the World of Christian Monasticism," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), p. 123. See also M. Cook, "An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52 (1993), p. 26, note 10.
4. See Madelung, "Prophecies," p. 156; Bashear, "Apocalyptic," p. 205. Cf. T. Fahd, "Malḥama," *EI2*, vol. 6 (1995), p. 247. On a connection to a similar Jewish term see H. Lazarus-Yafeh, "Is There a Concept of Redemption in Islam?" in *Types of Redemption: Contribution to the Theme of the Study - Conference at Jerusalem, July 1968*, eds. R.J.Z. Werblowski and C.J. Bleeker (Leiden, 1970), p. 51, note 6 (cf. our note 20 below). The term *malḥama* also means a writing of divinatory character, based, for example, on astrology. See also T. Fahd, "Djafr," *EI2*, vol. 2 (1965), p. 377, and D.B. Macdonald, "Malāḥim," *EI1*, vol. 3 (1936), pp. 188-189.
5. Nu'aym b. Ḥammād al-Marwazī, *Kitāb al-fitan wa-l-malāḥim*, ed. Majdī b. Maṣṣūr b. Sayyid al-Shūrā (Beirut, 1997), p. 310. This tradition is also mentioned briefly in Bashear, "Apocalyptic," p. 183. Among the many traditions collected in Nu'aym's book on the wars of the valleys (*al-a'māq*) see, e.g., Nu'aym, p. 323: 'when God routs the Byzantines from Jaffā [Yāfā; cf. our tradition, the first *malḥama*] they will go until they gather in the *a'māq*...'. Ours is not a general study of the *a'māq* traditions; many of them are recorded in the sources mentioned in note 2 above.
6. Nu'aym, *Fitan*, p. 309.
7. See, e.g., Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1313 AH), vol. 5, pp. 232, 245; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī* (Cairo, 1931-1934), vol. 9, pp. 90-91; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Cairo, 1950-1951), vol. 4, p. 157.
8. Cf. O. Livne-Kafri, "A Note on Some Traditions of Faḍā'il al-Quds," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 14 (1991), p. 81.
9. O. Livne-Kafri, "The Muslim Traditions 'in Praise of Jerusalem' (*Faḍā'il al-Quds*): Diversity and Complexity," *Annali* 58 (1998), pp. 173-181; A. Elad, "The Coastal Cities of Palestine During the Early Middle Ages," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 2 (1982), pp. 147-167; Bashear, "Apocalyptic," pp. 191-198. On important collection of traditions concerning Alexandria see Ibn al-Salāḥ, *Faḍā'il al-Iskandāriyya wa-'Asqālān*, MS Berlin 198 (the whole tract).
10. See Bashear, "Apocalyptic," pp. 198-204; Elad, "The Coastal Cities," passim.
11. See Livne-Kafri, "Muslim Tradition" (note 9 above), pp. 176-177; Bashear, "Apocalyptic," p. 193.
12. See G. Vajda, "Dānyāl," *EI2*, vol. 2 (1965), pp. 112-113; the entry "Malāḥim," *EI2*, vol. 6 (1995), p. 216.
13. See A. Grossman, "Jerusalem in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period 638-1099*, eds. J. Praver and H. Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem, 1996), p. 296. Eliyahu (Elijah) is generally considered to be an important eschatological figure (see, e.g. B. McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979), pp. 48, 50, 87; O. Limor, "Christian Traditions of the Mount of Olives in the Byzantine and Arab Period," M.A. thesis, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1978, p. 138; cf. Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Musharraf b. al-Murajjā b. Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wa-al-Khalīl wa-Faḍā'il al-Shām*, ed. O. Livne-Kafri (Shfaram, 1995), p. 219, no. 321).
14. Y. Even Shmuel, *Midreshei Geula* (Jerusalem, 1954), pp. 31-40. In fact geopolitical conditions (i.e., wars between Persia and Byzantium in different periods) make the dating of this apocalypse difficult, as it was also dated differently by certain scholars in the third century (ibid., pp. 33-34).
15. Ibid., p. 42.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., pp. 42-45.
18. Ibid., p. 44 (end of the second war).
19. See, e.g. B. McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979), p. 71.
20. Lazarus-Yafeh (note 4 above) quotes H. Rabin, *Qumran Studies* (Oxford, 1957), ch. VIII, on the Dead Sea Scrolls' use of *milḥama* to denote the last war.

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The Bruce D. Craig Prize for Mamluk Studies

The Prize Committee is pleased to announce that Tamar el-Leithy (Ph.D., Princeton University) has been named the inaugural recipient of the Bruce D. Craig Prize for Mamluk Studies for his dissertation:

"Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo: 1293-1524."

The Committee based its decision on el-Leithy's insightful and original interpretations of the topic, based upon his close and careful use of previously neglected sources from the medieval Coptic Community of Egypt. His critical approach to previous scholars' work on conversion results in important questions regarding their conclusions. The Committee commends el-Leithy for his valuable contribution to the field of Mamluk Studies. An abstract of the dissertation is appended to this announcement.

The Bruce D. Craig Prize is awarded annually by Mamluk Studies Review for the best dissertation on a topic related to the Mamluk Sultanate submitted to an American or Canadian university during the preceding calendar year. In the event no dissertations are submitted, or none is deemed to merit the prize, no prize will be awarded. To be considered for the 2005 Prize, dissertations must be defended by December 31, 2005, and submitted to the Prize Committee by January 31, 2006. Submissions should be sent to:

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The Prize Committee for 2005 consisted of Donald P. Little (McGill University); Marlis Saleh (University of Chicago); and Warren C. Schultz (DePaul University).

Abstract: Tamar el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293-1524."

When Islam was half as old as it is today, Egypt was swept by mass conversions that irrevocably altered its religious history and demographic composition. In the early 8th/14th century, various pressures on the Coptic Christian community triggered a pivotal wave of conversion to Islam. While conversion protected lives and jobs, it did not guarantee immunity: converts often fell prey to the suspicions of their new co-religionists, provoking further regulation and Muslim anxieties of influence. Conversion rendered Copts socially marginal, but concomitantly culturally central.

Supplementing traditional Muslim accounts with unpublished legal documents and Coptic sources, this dissertation investigates how conversion was experienced, negotiated, and represented. The first section discusses hitherto unknown responses to the conversion wave, including the legal ruse of single-generation conversion, by which converts maintained their progeny as non-Muslims; a wave of Coptic martyrs in the late 8th/14th century; and a Coptic rite of quasi-rebaptism through which converts reverted to Christianity. The second part examines representations of converts in Muslim biographical dictionaries, including the epithets applied to converts and the tropes of religious suspicion. The third section investigates everyday social practices of converts like residence and patronage patterns and compares these to the suspicious charges of Muslim authors. The final section uses an unpublished collection of the correspondence of Patriarch Yuhanna XIII (1484-1524 A.D.) as a prism onto the long-term effects of the conversion wave on Coptic Christianity and culture.

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21. See, e.g., their image of the 'sons of Esau' in Livne-Kafri, "Muslim Tradition" (note 9 above), p. 177, note 31.

22. Cf. "Biq'a", in A. Even Shoshan, *Ha-Milon He-Hadash* (Jerusalem, 1980), vol. 1, p. 266; Madelung, "Prophecies," p. 158.

23. Cf. *ibid.* Cf. also the assertion by Even Shmuel, editor of *Sefer Eliyahu*, pp. 38, 45, that the war between Byzantium and the Persians was fought all over Palestine, from *biq'a gdola* [the Big Valley, the Valley of Jezreel] to Jaffa and Ascalon; cf. Nu'aym, *al-Fitan*, p. 323: 'when God routs the Byzantines from Jaffa (Yāfā) they will go until they gather in the *a'māq*' (cf. the first *malhama* in our tradition).

24. Even Shmuel, pp. 41-48.

25. See, e.g., Livne-Kafri, "Some Observations," section 'Historical apocalyptic'.