

## Islamic Frontiers, Real and Imagined

by Asa Eger

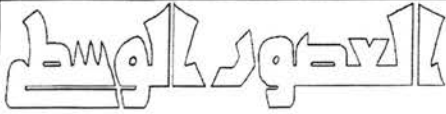
**B**eginning in the ninth century, Muslim historians, jurists, and geographers frequently discussed the Islamic-Byzantine frontier or *al-thughūr* and *al-ʿawāšim* provinces primarily as a militarized region, *dār al-ḥarb*. Warriors of the faith, in their view, performed ritualized yearly raids termed *jihād* against non-Muslims in *bilād ar-Rūm* or, as it was sometimes known, *bilād al-kufr*. This vision of the frontier has been largely left unchallenged by modern historians and untouched by archaeologists working on the periods of Late Antiquity and Islam.<sup>1</sup> However, the historical sources' retrospective and idealized, religious interpretations are problematic and do not adequately explain the choices of frontier settlement, yearly raiding, and diverse communities that comprised the frontier region. Recent evidence from survey and excavation now permits a re-examination of the infamous Islamic-Byzantine *thughūr* of the 7-10th centuries from an archaeological perspective.

Since 1995, the University of Chicago has conducted surveys in the Amuq

Plain (the hinterland of Anṭākiya/Antioch) in the *thughūr* region. A key pattern of early Islamic settlements in the Amuq comprised new sedentary sites in marshland and along rivers and canals. These sites functioned as foci for the administration, maintenance, and facilitation of waterborne transport and irrigation. This settlement pattern is also seen in all the *thughūr* frontier forts which, as outlined by Haldon and Kennedy, are unlike the Byzantine style of upland fortresses.<sup>2</sup> Al-Yaʿqūbī, the Muslim geographer/historian (d. 897 CE), further substantiates this by writing that the cities lay on level ground surrounded by mountains and inhabited by the Byzantines.<sup>3</sup> In seeking other alternatives for the choices of frontier settlement and yearly raiding, Kennedy introduces the hypothesis that the conflict between the Byzantines and Muslims over the frontier resulted from as competition over favorable land for pastoralism. Nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists living on the plain in association with sedentary communities

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## FRONTIERS, FROM PAGE 1.

would have seasonally migrated north to the uplands of the Taurus Mountains in the summer months for pasture. Therefore, summer raiding and winter garrisoning could be seen as related to semi-nomadic transhumance. This competition provides an alternative model for the study of the early Islamic frontier based in environmental factors and land use. Although these transhumance routes could have been protected militarily, such activity departs from conventional and historical explanations of *jihad* ideology.

Christian and Muslim communities coexisted on the frontier. Furthermore, there is evidence that Christian communities were also located on the plains. How is one able to differentiate Christian settlements from Muslim ones in the archaeological record, or to identify sites with mixed communities? Haldon and Kennedy established criteria for distinguishing Byzantine from Early Islamic frontier forts, but tracing an Early Islamic signature in a pre-established Byzantine landscape from ceramic surface collections becomes less clear. Preliminary results from recent excavations conducted in the last two years at Domuztepe in the lower Marash valley reveal a small Christian community living atop a tell.<sup>4</sup> The community would have been in close proximity to the early Islamic settlement at Mar'ash, which was most probably located in the southern part of the plain and not on the site of the modern city of Kahramanmaras as has been assumed. The evidence for this comes from the Kahramanmaras Survey where Whitcomb has demonstrated that many early Islamic settlements were also located in the marshy southern part of the plain, corroborating settlement patterns in the Amuq plain.<sup>5</sup> Limited excavation (a single 10 x 10 m. square) at the summit of Domuztepe revealed a multi-phase settlement with poorly preserved buildings. The buildings spanned a date from Hellenistic to Middle Islamic (12th-14th c.) centuries. Early Islamic ceramics were found in association with the remains of a large wall and several smaller subsidiary walls. On the whole, the ceramics were of local provenance and with the exception of one kerbschnitt sherd, included no imported wares. A local farmer

discovered a large chancel screen fragment in the field just to the west of the summit. The decorated screen would have been part of a church on the site, as yet undiscovered. To the south of the summit, a cemetery was found while excavating the prehistoric phases of the tell. The cemetery contained 30-40 bodies, men and women, dating to the 9th/10th centuries.<sup>6</sup> These were identified as Christian burials on the basis of the bodies' positions. Finally, preliminary analysis of the animal bone assemblage from the sounding excavation at the summit revealed the presence of a significant amount (30%) of pig bone in the early Islamic levels suggesting the presence of a non-Muslim community who raised and ate pigs.<sup>7</sup> Christians are known from the Mar'ash area in several medieval sources describing Jacobite Syrian communities. One states that in 778, the Byzantines relocated many Jacobites to Thrace due to reasons of religious persecution.<sup>8</sup> Michael the Syrian lists Jacobite bishops for the town, and a century after the Byzantine reconquest (950-1050) four new Jacobite bishoprics were established in the villages around Mar'ash.<sup>9</sup>

In order to address the significance of the Christian settlement on the frontier, it is necessary first to turn to the work of Frederick Jackson Turner and frontier theory. Turner's pioneering and controversial frontier thesis in 1893 viewed the western United States as a wilderness of savages ready to be tamed by civilization and democracy. Recent scholarship on frontier theory and medieval frontiers, however, has challenged many earlier assumptions of the frontier as a border among nations or as an untamed wilderness in the sense Turner conceived it. Frontier theorists, since then, have variously dissected, decried, or sometimes virtually deified his thesis. Certainly its monumental presence in frontier literature is a testament to its durability and provocativeness as a scholarly argument. Since Turner, study of the frontier has become almost a scholarly field in its own right, one that parallels the movement of the academy into wider and more interdisciplinary modes of thought.<sup>10</sup>

With regard to the medieval Islamic world, however, Turner's dichoto-

mies of the wilderness and the tame, the savage and the civilized, and the wild and the natural seem to come dangerously close the kind of essentialist thinking condemned by some as "orientalist" and, indeed, to some current anti-Islamic polemic.<sup>10A</sup> It is now generally accepted that the medieval frontier was never conceived as a specific border of demarcation between two entities but rather was seen as a zone that was both defined by its inhabitants and by its character as a peripheral land in relation to its central ruling body. As a result, frontier societies seldom consisted of different communities in a state of binary opposition but rather were made up of mixed and diverse populations that fluctuated over time. The evolution of frontier theory has moved from the zone to zonal interaction, or as White calls it, the Middle Ground. The simplistic military vision of medieval frontiers dissolved into a set of interactive conflicts amid mixed communities comprising nomadic populations and settled peoples, and the effect on these of frontier institutions and religio-political ideologies. Frontiers have been further broken down into a series of processes embodying the cultural interactions taking place within these diverse societies such as religious, ethnic, economic, linguistic, political, or urban frontiers. At present, the state of the frontier seems not to reside in its definition, which has been dismantled in its monumental form and rebuilt over and over again across diverse socio-physical geographies. Rather, it is a discursive framework in which historians and archaeologists can speak of change and process by testing various theories such as the influence of centralization or decentralization on 'marginal' societies, sedentary or nomadic, or the assimilation or liminalization of ethnic and religious identities.

Returning to Turner's wilderness model, while perhaps appropriate in identifying academic lacunae on the *thughūr*, it is certainly not physically appropriate in describing the thriving pre-Islamic landscape of North Syria. As shown by recent surveys in the region such as the Amuq Valley Regional Project and the Kahramanmaras Survey, the frontier experienced an explosion of settlement from the Hellenistic period through until the

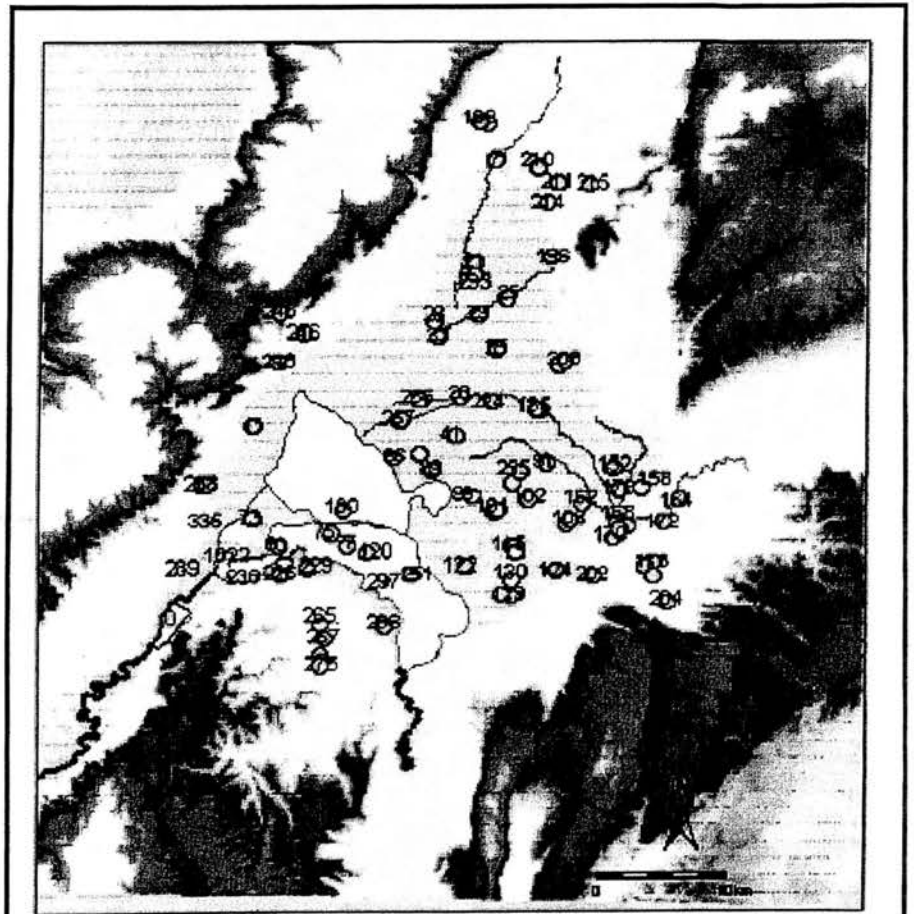


Figure 1. Early Islamic sites in the Amuq Plain.

10th century. These settlements on the plains and uplands were firmly invested in agriculture, irrigation, and the whole regional economy. However, Turner's thesis should not be dismissed outright, as it has significant implications for an imagined ideology of a frontier. Muslim sources such as Balādhurī and Christian ones like Michael the Syrian say that when the Muslims arrived the frontier was a wilderness, a no-man's land whose forts were destroyed and whose inhabitants had been deliberately removed in a 'scorched-earth policy' in the wake of Heraclius' retreat: 'What is known to us is that Heraclius moved the men from these forts, which he shattered. So when the Muslims made their raids, they found them vacant.'<sup>11</sup> Upon leaving, Heraclius utters from the Cilician Gates north of Tarsus: 'Peace unto thee, O Syria, and what an excellent country this is for the enemy' - referring to the numerous pastures in Syria.'<sup>12</sup>

While archaeological investiga-

tion would not be able to perceive a short-term depopulation followed by a resettlement, it would seem doubtful that it happened. First, a scorched-earth policy or deliberate destruction of forts would leave archaeological traces, besides involving an excessive amount of labor for a people in retreat. Second, as demonstrated by Robert Schick for the Christian communities in Palestine immediately following the conquest, Islamic settlement was initially very small and focused on administrative urban areas. It probably would have been even more marginal on the edges of Islamic territory. Arab tribes who practiced nomadic or seminomadic pastoralism were also part of the landscape. Furthermore, while many city-dwelling elites and garrisons may have fled with the advent of the Muslims, many other peoples, particularly those in rural areas such as Monophysite and other Christian communities of non-Orthodox monastic orders, welcomed the new rulers who administered with great





Figure 2. Mar'ash Valley (Landsat image). The former marshes along the river, where most Islamic sites were located, now show as the crazy-quilt of cropped fields near Domuztepe and south of the built-up area of Kahramanmaraş, at top.

religious tolerance, in contrast to Byzantine Orthodox theological persecution. Creating this concept of a mythic wilderness is a powerful legitimizing tool for a new rising power and important to the branding of a new ideological frontier. Adam Smith draws comparisons among similar phenomena in history with the establishment of the Urartian state and Theodore Roosevelt: 'Both rulers were speaking of "wildernesses" that had been occupied by other peoples for centuries; by reclassifying them as "waste spaces," expansion was not only conscionable, it was mandated.'<sup>13</sup>

Expansion certainly seemed to be the order of the day in the early conquests, but by the 'Abbāsīd period, the significance of the frontier had shifted significantly, becoming a staging ground for token raids that neither gained nor held new territory. Coincidentally, at least a century and a half after the initial conquest and settlement of the frontier, the notion of *jihād* began to take shape in the writings of Muslim jurists. Although retroactively applied, the division of *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* was established, thus perhaps for the first time delineating a frontier zone which was defined by an unending holy war against the unbelievers until they were converted or subjugated. The proselytizing intimation of this war and "call to arms" by the central authority added a "spiritual level" to the frontier.<sup>14</sup> As highlighted by Hillenbrand, stipulations also appeared, such as the notion that peace treaties could put off *jihād* for up to ten years.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, non-Muslims residing within Muslim lands must be protected, but this only applied to Christians and Jews and excluded pagans. Their position within Muslim society should be questioned however. Non-Muslims who didn't convert had to pay the *jizya* tax and had *dhimmī* status. As protected citizens (*musta'min*), they could also be given temporary safe conduct.

By the tenth century, the articulation of the frontier from the central lands showed signs of adaptation. Scholars mention adjustments to the dichotomies of *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* by adding another metaphysical geographic layer: *dār al-sulh* (house of peace) or *dār al-'ahd* (house of covenant). In this ideological frontier, non-Muslims could remain au-



Figure 3. Byzantine/Early Islamic building, Domuztepe.

tonomous and protected from *jihād* fighting only if they recognized Muslim power and paid tribute. However, during this time, the *thughūr* frontier was already fragmented and ruled by local powers such as the Ḥamdānids of al-Mawṣil and Ḥalab and by the mid 10th century, the Byzantines reconquered much of the *thughūr* frontier lands. It is apparent, then, that the articulation and reinforcement of these ideological frontiers "on paper" were forms of propaganda from central lands on how to effectively administrate these changing peripheral lands. It is clear that for the original stage of the Islamic frontier and *jihād*, the curtain had fallen. Predictably, the tolerance for independent non-Muslim communities seems to have been fueled by economic motivation either through taxation or increased facility of commerce across the "frontier," rather than religious institutions.

In the midst of a Holy War, could the Christian community at Domuztepe have been incorporated by tax and treaty and incorporated as an Islamic frontier settlement? If so, was this practice of economic motivated religious tolerance distinctive of an Islamic frontier? While certainly possible, the questions raise more problems than they attempt to answer regarding the nature of societal interaction on the *thughūr* and the reality of *jihād*. How would they have perceived them-

selves, as subjects of the caliphate, original and rightful custodians of their land, or enemies of the state? Just as the authors of the Islamic sources were influenced by their patronage, audience, and own training, in many ways, the answers to these would involve a projection of one's own disciplinary outlook on past frontier societies. For example, how can an archaeologist perceive frontiers? In the medieval periods there were no linear borders. Natural features, such as the Taurus Mountains, were often used to demarcate areas. This can be seen in the early maps of some of the Muslim geographers such as Muqqadāsī and Idrīsī that show abstracted lines for mountains ranges and coasts. Therefore the concept of borders, so much a part of contemporary nationalism, may not have been felt as acutely. For the archaeologist, settlement patterns and evidence of Christian communities on the *thughūr* reflects the same patterning seen in the central Islamic landscapes of Early Islamic Palestine and Egypt. The contrasts then are twofold. On the one hand, the material culture at Domuztepe reflects a set of evidence that can be interpreted as Christian and suggests an ethno-religious makeup of a community in close proximity to Muslim sites, therefore delineating a zone where two groups were interacting. On the other hand, the material culture is not necessarily paradigmatic of a frontier society.



Domuztepe reflects the dominance of local traditions and industries dictated in part by subsistence in a marsh environment. These may differ from other frontier settlements for example around Malatya and Zibatrah that were in higher elevations and hillier terrain or even from other more central Islamic lands that exhibit wider connections, the importation of material culture and animals, and the proximity to larger and denser settlements and urban areas. These qualities are not exclusive to identifying frontier societies, however, based on the fact that the archaeological evidence is so site-specific. But they cast the idea of territoriality in an archaeological light that

is distinctly apolitical. As articulated by Smith on the subject of territoriality: 'Ecological change or alterations in the nutrient requirements of populations are the only clear determinants that might explain changes in attachments between people and place.'<sup>16</sup> Thus for the archaeologist, though categories of evidence may suggest ethno-religious frontier societies, the frontier as an identifiable regional space is imperceptible. The *thughūr* becomes an imagined frontier composed of religious/political ideologies. Stripped of its ideology, archaeology can show a "real" region of continuity, ecological subsistence, and local economy. However, frontiers,

whether real or imagined, all have historical relevance.

This final view seems decidedly deconstructionist, but should be taken as a point of departure. The study of frontiers thus far has expanded into an interdisciplinary discussion that at the same time has raised certain borders. Perhaps it is necessary to examine how our own disciplines, whether archaeology, history, or literature, determine where we place frontiers and whether they are, in fact, real or imagined. In studying these sets of liminal processes and change, our own interdisciplinary interactions become imbedded participants in the creation of frontiers.

#### Notes:

1 Kaegi in his examination of the frontier in the 7th century from textual sources, however, raises several important issues testing the physicality of the frontier from a military, economic, and transhumant perspective. Walter Emil Kaegi, "The Frontier, Barrier or Bridge?" *The 17th International Byzantine Congress: Major Papers*. New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1986.

2 John F. Haldon and Hugh Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine frontier in the eighth and ninth centuries: military organization and society in the borderlands," *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloski Institut (Recueil des Travaux de l'Institut d'Etudes Byzantines)* (Belgrade) 19 (1980), 79-116.

3 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. VII, ed. M.J. de Goeje, p. 362.

4 Limited information has been published thus far on the late periods at Domuztepe. See E. Carter. "Report on the Domuztepe Excavations, 2002." [www.sscnet.ucla.edu/ioa/domuztepe02.htm](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/ioa/domuztepe02.htm); J. Snead. "The Local Survey around Domuztepe." [www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/nelc/stelasite/james.html](http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/nelc/stelasite/james.html).

5 D. Whitcomb, "Letters from the Field: In Search of Lost Mar'ash," *The Oriental Institute News and Notes* 171 (Fall 2001).

6 Jessica Pearson (Univ. of Liverpool) is currently working on the skeletal remains which are currently unpublished.

7 I am grateful to Kate Grossman (Univ. of Chicago) for making available her preliminary analysis on the faunal assemblage from the 2003 sounding, currently unpublished.

8 Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, edited and translated by J.-B. Chabot, Vol. II, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901, p. 526. The text of a Syriac inscription from the church of St. Serguis at Ehnes (Gimn) not far from Domuztepe on the Turkish lower Euphrates corroborates the displacement of its Syriac Orthodox residents at this time. A. Palmer. *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993, p. 71.

9 Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, Essex, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1986, p. 281.

10 The most important contributions have come from three conferences on medieval frontiers published with a variety of papers, *Medieval Frontier Societies*, edited by R. Bartlett, Robert & Angus MacKay, Oxford 1989; *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1000*, edited by Daniel Power and Naomi Standen, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999; *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, edited by David Abulafia and Nora Berend, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002; and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. These contributions have explored, complicated, and redefined the frontier into a set of interactive zones operating on many levels, departing from the traditional two ways of observing frontiers, either as a Turnerian wilderness or a border between two entities.

10A Two articles by Ralph W. Brauer, "Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography," Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, vol. 85, pt. 6, 1995; Tetz Rooke, "Writing the Boundary: Khat al-Shām by Muhammad Kurd Ali." *The Concept of Territory in Islamic Law and Thought*, 2000, pp. 165-186 have focused on the idea of an Islamic frontier.

11 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*, translated by P.K. Hitti, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002, p. 253.

12 Ibid, p. 210.

# A Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition Attributed to Daniel (in Light of a Jewish Tradition)

by Ofer Livne-Kafri

The Muslim apocalyptic scene is basically dependent on the eschatological teaching of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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-malāḥim* of Nu'aym b. Ḥammād (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.<sup>2</sup> Madelung emphasizes the role of scholars from Ḥimṣ, a town in northern Syria; among them was Arṭā b. al-Mundhir al-Alhānī (d. 162-3 AH/779-780 AD), an important traditionalist and ascetic.<sup>3</sup>

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. *malāḥim*), means a war with eschatological connotation. The *malāḥim* 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 filasṭīn*), 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.<sup>5</sup> 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*).<sup>6</sup>

## 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 *hadīth*<sup>7</sup> and commentaries to the Qur'ān.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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 Arṭā 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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..."<sup>16</sup> 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 (*sadiqim*) of God, or of his angels of destruction.<sup>17</sup> 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").<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> Can we point to a concrete connection between Arṭā'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.<sup>20</sup> 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).<sup>21</sup> 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,<sup>22</sup> and *biq'a gdola* of the Jewish apocalypse might in some way be compared with the *'amq* of Antioch of the Muslim tradition.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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 eschaological 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 eschaological traditions.<sup>25</sup>

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.



• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

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 Ḥimṣ 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 Sufyāni 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," *EII*, 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 Jaffa [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. Prawer 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-Musharrāf 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.

# NEWS OF MEM

## New MEM Board Members

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At the MEM Business Meeting last fall, held November 20, 2004 in San Francisco in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, the attending members elected two colleagues to serve on the MEM Board, to replace outgoing Board members Bruce D. Craig (University of Chicago) and Josef W. Meri (Ismaili Institute, London), whose terms expired December 31, 2004.

**Suleiman Mourad**, Assistant Professor of Religion at Middlebury College, earned a B.S. and M.A. from the American University of Beirut, and an M. Phil. and Ph.D. from Yale University. He specializes in early Islamic history and religious thought, and has a particular interest in the origins of Islam, Jesus in the Islamic tradition, the symbolism surrounding Jerusalem in Islamic tradition, and Arabic and Islamic historiography. He teaches courses on Islamic history and religion, Islam in the modern world, and comparative themes in Western religious history.

**Bethany Walker**, Assistant Professor of History at Grand Valley State University, received a B.A. in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College, an M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Arizona, and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Toronto. After teaching for several years at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, she joined Grand Valley State University's faculty in 2004. She specializes in archaeology of the Islamic period in the Near East and has for some years participated in excavation of the Mamluk-era levels at Tell Hesban in Jordan. Her teaching focuses on Middle Eastern history.

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### FRONTIERS, FROM PAGE 7.

13 Adam Smith. *The Political Landscape: constellations of authority in early complex polities*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, p. 23. Interestingly, a similar event occurs in 965 when, after most of the thughūr has been reconquered by the Byzantines, Nicephorus asks the Syrian Jacobites to resettle the area, filling in the deserted towns. Jean Maurice Fiey, "The Syriac Population of the Thughūr al-Shāmiya and the 'Awāsim, and its Relation with the Byzantines and Muslims." *Bilād al-Shām during the Abbasid Period, Proceedings of the Vth International Conference on Bilad al-Sham*, edited by Muhammad A. al-Bakhit and Robert Schick, Amman: 1991, p. 43.

14 These have been discussed in recent papers by Ian Straughn, "The Landscape of the Islamic Frontier: General remarks on archaeological features, medieval geographical representations and the importance of Islamic spatial discourses," Paper given at the Eurasian Archaeology Conference, University of Chicago, 2005; Saud al-Zaid, "The Apocalyptic Frontier: Tarsus and the End of the World." Paper given at MEHAT Conference, University of Chicago, April 2004; and Fred Donner, "The Development of the Concepts of Dār al-Islām and Dār al-harb," Paper given at MESA Conference, 1991.

15 Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 98-99.

16 Adam Smith, *The Political Landscape*.

## 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:

Chair, Prize Committee  
Mamluk Studies Review  
Pick Hall 201  
5828 S. University Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637

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.

### APOCALYPTIC, FROM PAGE 9.

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'.



# ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone/Fax/Email/Web
<b>Middle East Studies Association</b> (2005 Meeting)	Nov. 19-22, 2005 Washington, DC [Abstract Deadline: Feb. 15, 2005]	MESA Secretariat University of Arizona 1232 N. Cherry Ave. Tucson, AZ 85721	(520)-621-5850 mesa@ccit.arizona.edu www.mesa.arizona.edu
<b>Middle East Studies Association</b> (2006 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2006 Boston, MA [Abstract Deadline: Feb.15, 2005]	see preceding	see preceding
<b>American Oriental Society</b> (2006 Meeting)	Mar. 17-20, 2006 Seattle, WA	American Oriental Society Hatcher Graduate Library University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205	(734)-764-7555 www.umich.edu/~aos
<b>American Oriental Society</b> (2007 Meeting)	Mar. 16-20, 2007 San Antonio, TX	see preceding	see preceding
<b>American Historical Association</b> (2006 Meeting)	Jan. 5-8, 2006 Philadelphia, PA [Paper Deadline: Past]	American Historical Assn. 400 A Street, S. E. Washington, DC 20003	(202)-544-2422 www.historians.org
<b>American Historical Association</b> (2007 Meeting)	Jan. 4-7, 2007 Atlanta, GA [Paper Deadline: Feb. 15, 2006]	see preceding	see preceding
<b>The Medieval Institute</b> (2006 Meeting)	May 4-7, 2006 Kalamazoo, MI [Abstract Deadline: Past]	The Medieval Institute Western Michigan Univ. 1903 W. Michigan Avenue Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5432	Tel.: (269)-387-8745 Fax: (269)-387-8750 mdvl_congres@wmich.edu www.wmich.edu/medieval
<b>Seminar for Arabian Studies</b> (2005 Meeting)	July 21-23, 2005 London, UK	Seminar for Arabian Studies c/o Venetia Porter Dept. of Oriental Antiquities The British Museum Gt. Russell Street London WC1B 3DG, UK	Tel.: 44-207-323-8843 Fax: 44-207-323-8561 seminararab@hotmail.com www.arabianseminar.org.uk

# ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone/Fax/Email/Web
<b>College Art Association</b> (2006 Meeting)	Feb. 22-25, 2006 Boston, MA [Proposal Deadline: Past]	Suzanne Schanzer 275 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001	(212)-691-1051 ext13 www.collegeart.org
<b>International Medieval Congress</b> (2005 Meeting) "Youth and Age"	July 11-14, 2005 Leeds, UK [Abstract Deadline: Past]	M. O'Doherty/J. Opmeer IMC, Parkinson 1.03 University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT, UK	Tel.: +44 (113) 343-3614 Fax: +44 (113) 343-3616 imc@leeds.ac.uk www.leeds.ac.uk/imi/imc/imc.htm
<b>Dumbarton Oaks Conference</b> (2005 Meeting) "Urban and Rural Settlement in Anatolia and the Levant, 500-1000 AD: New Evidence from Archaeology"	April 22-24, 2005 Washington, DC [Paper: Invitation only]	Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-339-6940 www.doaks.org
<b>ARAM International Conference</b> (2005 Meeting) "Pilgrimages & Shrines in the Syrian Orient (Including the Holy Land and the Sinai) in Pre-Modern Times"	July 4-6, 2005 Oxford, UK	ARAM The Oriental Institute Oxford University Pusey Lane Oxford OX1 2LE, UK	Tel.: 44-1865-514041 Fax: 44-1865-516824 aram@ermine.ox.ac.uk users.ox.ac.uk/~aram
<b>ARAM International Conference</b> (2006 Meeting) "The Mandaean"	July 3-5, 2006 Oxford, UK	see preceding	see preceding
<b>American Academy of Religion</b> (2005 Meeting)	Nov. 19-22, 2005 Philadelphia, PA [Abstract Deadline: Mar. 2005]	American Academy of Religion 1703 Clifton Rd., Suite G-5 Atlanta, GA 30329-4019	(404)-727-7920 aar@emory.edu www.aarweb.org/annualmeet
<b>American Academy of Religion</b> (2006 Meeting)	Nov. 18-21, 2006 Washington, DC [Abstract Deadline: Mar. 2006]	see preceding	see preceding

# The Study of Islamic Law in the West\*

by Farhat J. Ziadeh

*The following is the text of remarks made by Prof. Ziadeh at the MEM Business Meeting during the Annual MESA Conference, San Francisco, CA, Nov. 20, 2004. -- Ed.*

In the mid-fifties of the last century, when I was a young assistant professor at Princeton University, I approached the chairman of the Department of Oriental Studies, as the Department of Near Eastern Studies was called then, to teach a course or graduate seminar in Islamic law. I was aware that the tradition in Near Eastern Studies was to teach languages and their literature, history, religion, and philosophy, but law was beyond the pale. I argued that SAIS of Johns Hopkins was offering such a course, taught by Majid Khadduri, and that, in any case, the emphasis would be on culture and not on what might be termed lawyer's law. The chairman had noticed that at the Colloquium on Islamic Culture, which was held at Princeton University and the Library of Congress in 1953, and to which was invited a large number of scholars from Muslim countries, there was a keen interest in Islamic law and its reform. After some reflection mixed with skepticism, he agreed that I should offer a graduate seminar; undergraduate courses at the College being considered something special and very hard to push through the Curriculum Committee. Today, Princeton boasts of two experts on Islamic law in Near Eastern Studies, and a third in Anthropology! Harvard has established a center for the study of Islamic law at the Law School, and the center is thriving. At a recent workshop on Islamic law sponsored by the American Association of Law Schools, the American Society of Comparative Law, the Law and Society Association, and the Islamic Legal

Studies of Harvard University, 15 of the participants were teaching either full or part-time at U. S. law schools. Moreover, former students of Majid Khadduri, George Makdisi, Joseph Schacht, and me offer courses on Islamic law, as culture, at a considerable number of American and Canadian universities, and the publications of all of these scholars, which must be known to this audience, are legion. Of the two main internationally known journals dealing with Islamic law, *Islamic Law and Society* and *Arab Law Journal*, the former has been founded and ably edited by David Powers of Cornell University. Thus, from a rather hesitant beginning, the discipline of Islamic law in the United States is well and thriving. [For almost two thousand titles of books and articles in English and French on Islamic law, reference is made to John and Marianne Makdisi, *Islamic Law Bibliography*, Law Library Journal, Vol.87, No. 1, 1995]

But it was the Europeans who pioneered the study of Islamic law. Several factors can be said to have given Europeans an impetus for that study. Among the earliest is what might be called the higher criticism factor. The books of the Bible had been subjected in Europe to investigation of their authorship and authenticity through internal and other evidence, and the spirit that motivated that investigation extended to the study of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly those forming the basis for law. The pioneer in this endeavor was the Hungarian scholar I. Goldziher whose *Muhammedanische Studien* (2 vols, 1889-90) was a landmark in the field. It claimed that the 'great majority of traditions from the Prophet are documents not of the time to which they claim to belong, but of the successive stages of development of doctrine during the first centuries

of Islam.' On that basis Joseph Schacht built his *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1950) which claimed that legal traditions went back to about the year 100 A.H. only, and that Umayyad administrative practice formed the basis of Islamic law-- a claim that some modern scholars have questioned.

Another factor is pragmatic in nature: knowing the Islamic community so as to deal with it in a colonial relationship or otherwise. Perhaps of this nature was the interest of S. de Sacy in writing "Sur la nature et les revolutions du droit propriétaire territoriale en Egypte ( *Mémoires de l'Institut Royal de France*, 1815, 1821, 1824 ). He was appointed Professor of Arabic at the School of Oriental Languages by the Directorate of the French Revolution 'because of the need of the Directorate for Oriental languages.' Of this same nature was the interest of A. Perron (1805-1876) - who had been appointed director of the Medical School in Cairo- in translating *al-Mukhtaṣar* of al-Khalil ibn Ishāq, the Maliki jurist, in 7 volumes (1848-54). The French War Office assumed the cost of printing it because 'the Algerians depended on it for their military regulations.' We shall come back to this factor while dealing with scholars of the individual colonialist countries.

A third factor giving rise to interest in Islamic law was the general interest in history and in the nature of the Islamic state. Books written by Muslim authors on the nature of state and government were of special interest. These books are of two types: (a) practical manuals on government descended from a Persian tradition of rule where expediency is the cardinal principle, and (b) books written by jurists who stick closely to the dictates of the Shari'a in that they see the state and the caliphate as



the fulfillment of God's design. Of the first type is *Siyāsāt Nāmāh* of Niẓām al-Mulk, the Seljuk vezir, which was translated into French by Charles Schefer (d.1902). Also of this type is a book entitled *Qābūs Nāmāh* and attributed to Kai Kā'ūs ibn Iskandar, a Ziyarid prince, which was translated into English by Reuben Levy under the title *A Mirror for Princes* (London, 1951). Of the second type is al-Māwardī's *al-Ahkām al-Sulṭāniyah*, parts of which were translated by H. F. Amedroz (1854-1917), a barrister of Swiss origin, and published in the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (1910, 1911, 1916). Two French scholars, Cte. L. Ostorog and M. E. Fagnan (1846-1931) also translated it, the first partially (1906) and the second completely under the title *Les Statuts Gouvernementaux* (Algiers, 1915).

If we move now to a consideration of individual European colonial countries and examine their interest in Islamic law, we find that the French scholars in North Africa excelled in that field. These scholars must have felt that French destiny was to be bound up with North Africa for a long time, so they applied themselves to the study of the basis of Islamic civilization, namely Islamic law. This is especially true of professors of law at the Law Faculty of the University of Algiers who went beyond the study of the Muslim state to a detailed study of many aspects of the law. Examples are Fr. Peltier who translated Bukhārī's chapter on 'Wills' (Algiers, 1909), and chapters on 'Sale and Options'; M.E. Fagnan, mentioned earlier, who wrote on 'Jihad' (Algiers, 1908); Henri Bruno, the batonnier of the Bar in Algiers who wrote on Berber 'Urf law (1918) and G. H. Bousquet who wrote on many subjects, from 'inheritance' to 'conditional marriages' to 'birth control' in many journals, in addition to the translation of Sidī Khalīl's *al-Mukhtaṣar* in Maliki law, and his well-known textbook on Islamic law generally. Even a professor of Arabic at Algiers, O. Houdas (1840-1916) translated *Tuḥfat al-Ahkām* of Ibn 'Asim - a long poem on Maliki law consisting of 1698 verses with a legal commentary (Algiers and Paris (1882-1893).

Officers and administrators in North Africa were also active in this field, emphasizing the practical approach. A na-

val officer, R. Montagne (1893-1954) wrote on tribal judicial systems in southern Morocco (Hesperis, 1924). An Army officer, Leon Bercher-- later, Director of Higher Studies in Tunis-- translated a small manual on Maliki law, al-Qayrawānī's *Risālah* (Algiers, 1952). Earlier, two French scholars associated with administration in North Africa were fascinated by the dichotomy between theory and practice in Islamic law. The first was G. Salmon who wrote about 'urf in North Africa in *Archives Marocaines* (1905), and the second was George Marcy (1905-1946) who wrote several articles on the law compared to 'Urf in *Revue Algerienne* (1930-32).

It is to be noted that French scholars in metropolitan France tended to write on historical legal subjects and followed a more academic or theoretical approach. Examples are Gaudefroy-Demombynes, H. Brunshvig, H. Laoust, L. Milliot, and Y. Linant de Bellfonds.

Italian scholars, on the whole, like scholars of Metropolitan France, directed their attention to the broader and more humanistic aspects of Islamic law. One could suspect that Eugenio Griffini's (1878-1925) translation of the *Majmū'* (Milan, 1919) attributed to Zayd ibn 'Alī - which forms the basis of the Islamic law of Yemen -- was a manifestation of the interest of the Italians in extending their sway into Yemen. For Griffini had experience in the colonial life as secretary to the administration of the government of Tripoli (1911-1913). Also one can point to the fact that David Santillana (1855-1931) served the French Residency in Tunis in preparing the Civil and Commercial Codes -- based on Islamic law. But these two men and a couple of other Italian scholars were highly regarded in Islamic countries for their scholarship and humanistic interests. Griffini, who later became the professor of Arabic at Milan, was invited to be the director of the Royal Library in Egypt (1920-1925), obtained the title of Bey and died in Cairo. Santillana, who translated the second part of Khalīl's *al-Mukhtaṣar* (Milan, 1919) and wrote a book on Maliki law compared to Shāfi'i law (2 vols. 1938, 1943) and taught Islamic law at the University of Rome, was invited for one year (1910) as a professor of philosophy to the Egyptian University. Ignazio Guidi (1844-

1935) who translated the first part of *al-Mukhtaṣar* (Milan, 1919) was appointed professor of Arab geography and history (1908) at the Egyptian University. He had the distinction of lecturing in Arabic. Finally, Carlo Alfonso Nallino (1872-1938) who taught at Palermo and devoted one volume of his six volumes of works - published by his daughter posthumously - to Islamic law (Rome, 1942) was also invited to lecture at the Egyptian University. Guidi, Santillana, and Nallino taught many Egyptian scholars.

In England, aside from such scholars as Sir Thomas Arnold (1854-1930) who wrote *The Caliphate* (Oxford, 1924) about the history of that institution and its legal justification, and D.S. Margoliouth (1858-1940) and Sir Hamilton Gibb (1895-1971) who dealt with that institution in penetrating articles, the Islamic law tradition, until recently, has been a product of the colonial experience. It starts with a gentleman who impresses one as being a dilettante because of the variety of his interests. Sir William Jones (1746-1794) was a poet, linguist, lawyer and judge. He learned Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Chinese. Then he passed the Bar exams and was appointed a judge in the High Court of Calcutta (1783) where he learned Sanskrit! It was there that he translated a little book on inheritance, called *al-Sirājīyah* (Calcutta, 1792) by Sirāj al-Dīn al-Sajawandī, and supervised the translation of Ḥillī's *Sharā'i' al-Islām*, and Ibn al-Muṭahhar's *Tahrir al-Ahkām* (the translation was done by Lt. Col. John Baillie) (Calcutta, 1805) -- both being important Shī'a works.

The colonial interest moved Charles Hamilton (d. 1824), a scholar of Oriental languages, to translate the main Sunni work used in India, namely, *al-Hidāyah* of al-Marghinānī (London, 1791). In dedicating the book to the late Governor-General of Bengal he expressed the hope that 'its future beneficial effects, in facilitating the administration of Justice throughout our Asian territories, and uniting us still more closely with our Mussulman subjects, may reflect more additional lustre on your administration'.

It would serve no purpose to enumerate all other contributions in this colonial tradition. Suffice it to mention B. E.

Baillie who published *Digest of Moohammudan Law* (Parts I and II, London, 1869-1875) for both Sunni and Shi'a law for the purposes of the Indian administration, and my late professor, Seymour Vesey-Fitzgerald who served in India as a judge before becoming the Professor of Islamic law at the University of London, and who authored *Muhammadan law* (London, 1931). Even J. N. D. Anderson, the author of several works on the development of the Shari'a in modern times, and late professor of Islamic law at the University of London, started his career as a missionary and a servant of the Crown in the Middle East. It was only after Britain ceased to be a colonial power that British scholars, like the late N. J. Coulson, N. Calder, and others were motivated by purely academic considerations.

The colonial tradition was also represented in Holland because of the Dutch colonies in the East Indies or Indonesia. Here the name of C. Snouck-Hurgronje (1875-1936) comes to the fore. This scholar who served in Java for 17 years, visited Mecca, and later became the Professor of Arabic at Leiden, was among the pioneers in the study of Islamic law. Schacht and Bousquet translated some of his works into English and French under the title *Selected Works* (Leiden, 1957). He says about Islamic law (p.267): 'The more intimate the relation of Europe with the Muslim East becomes, the more Muslim countries fall under European suzerainty, the more important it is for us Europeans to become acquainted with the intellectual life, the

religious law, and the conceptual background of Islam'. In this effort he was preceded by two of his countrymen, L. W. C. Van den Berg (born 1845) who published Nawawi's *Minhāj al-Ṭālibin* in both Arabic and a French translation (3 vols., Batavia, 1882-4), and A. W. Th. Juynboll who translated into Latin *Kitāb al-Tanbīh* of al-Shirāzī (Leiden, 1879). These two works represent the Shafi'i school of Islamic law which finds sway in Indonesia. Nowadays, though, with the colonial age behind them, Dutch scholars, like Rudolph Peters, are a fine example of disinterested scholarship.

Germany had no colonies in the Muslim world; the interest of the scholars in Islamic law was, therefore, as purely academic as it was thorough. Their treatment of Islamic law was only as a part of the total study of Islamic history and civilization. Names like E. Sachau (1845-1930), C. E. Becker (1876-1933) -- the famous historian-- and Otto Spies (b.1901) come to mind. But the really famous international personality in the field was Joseph Schacht (1902-1971) who seems to have devoted his entire energy to this subject. Aside from numerous articles and a couple of monographs on it, he wrote the original, but controversial, *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1950) and the textbook *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964).

Schacht's departure from Europe and his filling the chair of Arabic at Columbia University strengthened the purely academic interest in Islamic law in this

country, an interest that had been inaugurated in that university by a Ph. D. dissertation by N. P. Aghnides entitled "Mohammadan Theories of Finance" - especially, the Introduction which dealt with the sources of Islamic law (New York, 1916). As I said earlier, Schacht's students and those of Majid Khadduri, George Makdisi, and me, as well as others, are now carrying on with the teaching and publication in the field of Islamic law in this country and Canada. They and their publications are well known to you.

One final observation is that the great majority of publications in books and journals deal with *uṣūl-fiqh*, or jurisprudence, not with *fiqh*, or law proper. This is understandable because the majority of Islamic law scholars go into the subject through the disciplines of history or theology, not through the discipline of law. But now, with the establishment of the Islamic law center at Harvard Law School, and with the appointment of several scholars of Islamic law at other law schools, and with the fact that several Middle Eastern countries have incorporated Islamic law elements into their civil and other codes, the expectation is that Islamic law proper and its institutions will become a part of the legal traditions of the world, worthy of study and research for making meaningful comparisons and insights.

\*This survey is based on Najib 'Aqiqi, *al-Mustashriqun* and on my notes collected over many years.

# REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS

FROM • THE • MIDDLE • EAST

## REVIEW POLICY

Members of MEM are invited to submit reviews of recent books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or other Middle Eastern languages that they have read and that deal with subjects of interest to MEM's membership. In exceptional cases, reviews of books in English or other European languages will be printed, but the main focus will be books in Middle Eastern languages, because generally these are not reviewed in Western journals. *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* relies on the voluntary submission of reviews because review copies of books in Middle Eastern languages are not usually made available.

Reviews should be brief, 250 words or, if possible, fewer. A short note is sufficient in many cases, as it serves the main purpose of bringing a worthwhile work of scholarship to the attention of MEM members who may be interested in the subject it treats. Be sure to include full bibliographical information: full name of author, full title, place and date of publication, publisher, and number of pages. Send reviews directly to the editor.

Abū Bakr, 'Umar Īmān. *Al-Imām al-Nasā'ī wa-kitābuhu al-Mujtabā* [The leader al-Nasā'ī and his book *The Selection*]. (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1424/2003), 141 pp.

Hitherto, the main study of the traditionist al-Nasā'ī has been James Robson, "The Transmission of Nasa'ī's 'Sunan'," *JSS* 1 (1956): 38-59. Abū Bakr's efficient study, an extract from a doctoral dissertation, goes further, thanks especially to the publication of Nasā'ī's *K. al-Sunan al-kubrā* (henceforth *SK*), once thought lost (e.g., *GAS* 1:167). The *Mujtabā* (henceforth *M*) comprises 5,758 hadith reports, of which over half are repeats, meaning that they appear more than once under different headings, sometimes with different *isnāds*. Not all of them are found in *SK*. The present edition of *SK* (ed. 'Abd al-Ghaffār Sulaymān al-Bundārī and Sayyid Kisrawī Ḥasan, 6 vols. [Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1411/1991]) comprises 11,770 hadith reports, a little over twice as many (but approximately the same number as

Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*); however, a superior edition to come will probably add more. *M*, not *SK*, is usually identified as the fifth of the Six Books; however, books on *atrāf* by Ibn 'Asākir, al-Mizzī, et al., have treated *SK*.

*M* was transmitted by just one man, Ibn al-Sunnī (d. 364/975?), *SK* by many men. Therefore, some have inferred that it was Ibn al-Sunnī himself who abridged *SK* to come up with *M* (e.g., al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt, et al., 25 vols. [Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1401-9/1981-88], 16:256). However, especially since *M* is not merely an abridgement of *SK*, Abū Bakr argues that it must have been Nasā'ī himself, near the end of his life, who came up with *M*. Going by ratings of traditionists as synthesized by Ibn Ḥajar, Abū Bakr finds that *M* includes the fewest weak hadith reports of the four *Sunan* (i.e., the four of the Six after Bukhārī and Muslim). He finds no difference between *SK* and *M* in the soundness of the hadith included (*contra* a story related by Robson, 39, among others, by which Nasā'ī came up with *M* precisely by weeding out weak hadith from *SK*). The two books sometimes differ in the distribution of hadith among section headings, occasionally in the *isnāds* attached to particular hadith reports. Abū Bakr concludes with a long discussion of Nasā'ī's method of identifying weak hadith reports, with just emphasis on the comparison of *isnāds*. Like the criteria of the other five, it apparently defies concise formulation.

- Christopher Melchert

Abū al-Ḥasan, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad and 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Aḥmad. *Al-Multaqaṭ fī daf' mā dhukira 'an al-imām Aḥmad raḥimahu Allāh min al-kadhib wa-al-ghalaṭ* [The collection concerning the refutation of what has been said of the imam Aḥmad, may God have mercy on him, by way of lying

and error] (Riyadh: Dār Aṭlas al-Khaḍrā', 1425/2004) (*Silsilat daf' al-rayb 'an al-a'imma dhawī al-rutab* 1). 482 pp.

After a brief survey and refutation of accusations made against various otherearly Muslim jurisprudents (Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Shāfi'ī, al-Muzanī, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Dāraqūṭnī), 'Alī and 'Umar take up missteps by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Normally, this means quoting some surprising opinion from Ḥanbali sources, then quoting mitigating arguments from medieval Ḥanbali scholars, most often Ibn Taymīyah and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah.

For example, in the *masā'il* collection of 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad, one sees the following exchange: "I asked my father about the one who sacrifices to Venus (*al-zuharah*). He said, 'It does not please me.' I asked my father whether it was forbidden to eat it. He said, 'I do not say *forbidden* (*ḥarām*) but it does not please me.' I asked my father, 'Then what about the man who sacrifices to a star (*kawkab*)?' He said, 'It does not please me. I dislike everything that is sacrificed to anything besides God. Some dislike what is sacrificed to the synagogue (*kanisah*)'" (ed. Zuhayr al-Shāwīsh [Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1401/1981], 266). 'Alī and 'Umar quote Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah as explaining that Aḥmad often said he disliked something when he meant it was forbidden. This seems a weak argument in light of Aḥmad's express refusal here to use the word "forbidden."

The example shows the strength and weakness of the book as a whole. On the one hand, it is a fascinating collection of aberrant statements from the embodiment of Sunnism in the ninth century. On the other hand, 'Alī and 'Umar are apparently determined to deny that orthodoxy can change—that Aḥmad could have had significantly different opinions from those of later Ḥanābilah-, which is a lost cause. Orthodoxy always changes over time, like everything else in history.

- Christopher Melchert



## REVIEWS

Omid Rezai, ed., *Fihrist wa asnād-i mawqūfāt-i Irān, Daftar-i awwal: Ustān-i Fārs*. (Tehran: Intishārart-i Uswa, 1993). 202 pp. + index + appendix

Omid Rezai, ed., *Fihrist wa asnād-i mawqūfāt-i Irān, Daftar-i duwwum: Ustān-i Kirmān*. (Tehran: Intishārart-i Uswa, 1993). 270 pp. + index + appendix

Omid Rezai, ed., *Panjāh wa yik 'arīza wa hukm-i shar'ī: majmū'a-i az pursish-hā wa pāsukh-hāyi 'ulamā'-yi barjīstah-yi dawra-yi Qājār dar mawzu '-i waqf, 1253 AH-1346 AH*. (Tehran: Mu'āwinat-i Farhangī-yi Sāzmān-i Awqāf wa Umūr-I Shar'ī, 1994). 205 pp. + index + appendix

A young researcher at the Center for waqf documents in Tehran, Omid Rezai, has undertaken the publication of a series of catalogues of waqf documents housed at the Center for Pious Endowments and Charity Affairs (*Sāzmān-i awqāf wa umūr-i khayrīya*), in Tehran. The catalogues are classified on the basis of provenance, the first catalogue, issued in 1993, focuses on the province of Kirmān. The second, on Fārs, followed in the same year.

Research on the institutional history of pious endowments in Iran has been hampered by the inaccessibility of many archival collections dispersed throughout the country. One of the stated objectives of this pioneering project is to produce, for the first time, a reliable, well-organized and comprehensive catalogue of waqf documents held in the scattered collections, with a short entry on each individual document, listing its author and a brief summary of the subject matter. The utility of both volumes is enhanced by Rezai's concise and informative prefaces.

A separate publication is *Panjāh wa yik 'arīza wa hukm-i shar'ī* (translated on the back cover as Fifty-one Questions and Answers: 'Ulamā' Decisions on Waqfs in Qājār Irān) published in 1994. In this volume, Rezai has presented fifty-one rulings by the 'ulamā', ranging from 1253

AH/1838 CE to 1346 AH/1928 CE, produced in response to individual complaints and queries, and written, as is the norm, on the margins of the same letter. As Rezai has explained in his introduction, three principles have guided the selection of material for his anthology: diversity of subject matter, diversity in the formal production of the judgment, and the celebrity of the faqih issuing the ruling. The anthology includes ruling by such prominent jurists as Akhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī, Āyatullāh Muḥammad Kāzīm Yazdī, Sayyid Muḥammad Mujtahid Bihbihānī, Shaykh Faẓlallāh Nūrī, Sayyid 'Abdallāh Bihbihānī, Sayyid Ḥasan Muddarris, some of whom are of course well known figures in the political history of Iran in the turbulent years spanning the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. Important topics covered in the collection range from the appointment of deputies, identification of legitimate legatees, designation of overseers over waqf properties, division of income from waqf properties among legatees, and the confirmation of jurists nominated to take over those waqf properties that were either subject to dispute or left without a legally acceptable overseer.

The wealth of material in these three volumes and the dedication with which they have been compiled in such a relatively short space of time are most welcomed at a time when the importance of reliable collections of waqf documents for the study of the formulation as well as the application of Islamic law from the medieval period to present times is recognized by most scholars.

- Neguin Yavari

Cook, David, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*. (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc. 2002) (*Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* 21). 470 pp.

Muslim apocalyptic literature mainly emerged as a part of the *ḥadīth* (the Muslim Tradition) literature. It had its roots

in the powerful eschatology of the Qur'ān, but it mostly reflects the historical, cultural, and social circumstances of Islamic society in the first centuries of the Muslim era. Although important studies are dedicated to that field, there has been a great need for a more universal approach that might lead to a more comprehensive presentation. This task undertaken by David Cook was not an easy one: the special character of Muslim apocalyptic traditions (like those of Jews or Christians) at times is vague, is usually not concrete, and frequently blends historical reality, fabrication, and legend. This makes their study very difficult. Other obstacles are that many apocalyptic traditions are a re-editing of older materials (sometimes in response to new historical circumstances), which creates some confusion. There is also an obvious connection to themes, content, and terminology from Jewish and Christian apocalypses, which require interpretations according to the Muslim system of values and the special circumstances of the Muslim community. Years of work are needed just to collect and classify the huge number of apocalyptic traditions scattered among the different genres of Medieval Arabic literature, Sunnī and Shī'ite (in special compositions dedicated to apocalyptic traditions, in the Canonical Collections of ḥadīth, chronicles, commentaries to the Qur'ān, the "Adab", geographical works, biographies, etc.).

The results of the investigation of such matters as reflected in *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* are a most valuable contribution not only to the study of Muslim apocalyptic, but also to our understanding of medieval Islamic society in general. This is the most comprehensive work ever written on the subject. Cook presents a broad picture of the historical apocalypses (in which one can recognize elements of historical events), the metahistorical apocalypses that are "entirely unconnected with historical events, and are set in the eschatological future", and Messianic cycles. Special chapters are devoted to Shī'ī apocalyptic and its relation to Sunnī materials, the moral apocalypses, and the interaction of Qur'ān, *tafsīr*, and apocalyptic. There are also useful

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appendices, including a selection of translations from Muslim apocalypses. This is an excellent example of hard work, based on clear methodologies, the constant raising of research questions (which are not always evident from the texts), with boundless skill in arranging the vast amount of material systematically in various categories (while not ignoring the complexity of such divisions). Cook's definitions and observations are sometimes highly original and very helpful in the creation of a more overall framework for the study of Muslim apocalyptic. One might take a different approach or have different interpretations from those of Cook, yet one will still find in his book a solid, well documented ground to tread. The author demonstrates a well prepared background in the general field of *hadith* studies to which apocalyptic traditions belong (this might

have to do with the '*hadith* school' at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he first entered the world of Muslim studies in general, and Muslim apocalyptic in particular). An especially strong side of Cook's work is his ability to portray texts in their different geographical dimensions. He makes extensive use of non-Muslim sources, including apocalyptic literatures (especially Jewish and Christian). In keeping with important studies in the field of Muslim apocalyptic he offers original suggestions, for example, regarding the complex materials on al-Dajjāl or al-Sufyānī, the major figures of antichrists in the Muslim tradition, and on the role of messianic figures such as al-Mahdī and 'Īsā (Jesus). He also wrestles with difficult questions about the dates and places in which these traditions originated, the background against which they emerged, such as civil

wars, military confrontations with infidels (the Byzantines are a foremost example), plagues, natural disasters, debates over political power and the legitimacy of rulers and dynasties, theological disputes, religious polemics, and so on.

This book is a very good example of a scholarly work not only in its wide perspectives, but also because of the treasury of its detailed information, making the work of future scholars much easier. The many translations of apocalyptic texts throughout the various chapters and in the appendices are extremely valuable for those unacquainted with Arabic, and this too required enormous efforts. Together with Cook's other articles on Muslim apocalyptic, his book becomes a most important part of this research field.

- Ofer Livne-Kafri

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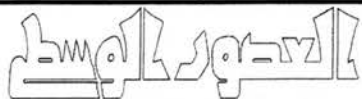
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