

APOCALYPSE AND THE ANTICHRIST DAJJAL IN ISLAM

AHMED BIJAN'S ESCHATOLOGY REVISITED



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privately published

Asch

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So far I have been going to the office for a day or two each week, for the sake of my salary. The rest of the time I have fortunately been able to spend in discussion, reading, and writing. It is my hope that the rest of my life may pass in just this way.

Kâtib Çelebi (1656 A.D.)

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

It all began with a simple question: ‘Why would Dajjal, the Islamic Antichrist, fry fish?’ This puzzling detail featured in a Turkish eschatological treatise, *Aḥvâl-i kıyâmet* (Signs and Portents of the Last Day), a Leiden manuscript I was working on at the time. Collation with a sister ms from Berlin revealed that both at some point in time had become scrambled, whereupon later hands, quite oblivious of this fact, numbered their folios incorrectly. Once the correct reading order had been reestablished, it subsequently became clear that there were text fragments missing in both documents in at least twenty four instances. And wherever there was a gap on the Leiden side, there would still be a lovely little miniature in the Berlin ms...

But it was not this exposed plunder or the host of strange events and even stranger creatures in the text that kept lingering in my mind. It was that almost pastoral scene of a giant wading along the seashore to snatch some hearty snack and fry it in the sun’s heat. What allusions did this tiny topos convey, what images did it evoke? Surely it was deemed important enough to get mentioned amidst all of Doomsday’s deception, depravity and destruction, and one can only assume that it must have been readily recognizable for its intended audience.

How could I try and trace the source of this fried fish? I took inspiration for my quest from the impressive and fruitful work done by Elisabeth Frenzel in the field of ‘Stoff-, Motiv- und Symbolforschung’ (the study of story matter, motifs and symbols). I also obtained a possible clue from the context itself, as the issue seemed to be linked to the semantic field of ‘giant’. For the rest I hoped for serendipity to come to the rescue.

The search developed over the course of time into identifying, cataloguing and analyzing a number of topoi and ‘motifs’ found in representations of the figure of Dajjal. Sometimes the material gathered was outright intriguing, offering glimpses of an ancient typus resembling a ‘reptilian shapeshifter’. However, my project had to be modest in its goals, given the meagre state of the bibliography. Islamology had so far produced a mere handful of articles on Dajjal, all of them limited in scope. A slightly larger body of publications, by Islamic authors, was available, but lacking the historical-critical method and its first principle of studying artefacts—and therefore any text, whether declared sacred or not—on the basis of and within the human experience, these studies could not be transported into use across the great divide of History versus Revelation.

My approach was to find and select a well composed account of the Last Day, rich in detail and having a particularly representative chapter on the figure of Dajjal. From that basis a first attempt could be made to study in some detail the iconography of this wholly

unsavoury yet fascinating individual. After much sifting and discarding I found the text I had hoped all along would exist. It is a truly captivating story about the End of the World providing a picture of the Dajjal that was ideally suited for the project. This undated and anonymous tractate by the title of *Eşrât-ı sâ'at* (On the Circumstances of the Hour) had one day been included in a *mecmû'a*, a compilation of (subject related) texts.

In the hope of finding something even better I diligently continued perusing the remaining manuscript titles on my wish list. One of these was a book by Ahmed Bijan, a well-known and prolific writer and compiler, whose famous elder brother Mehmed was the much venerated author of the *Muhammediyye*. I was particularly interested in seeing Bijan's cosmography *Dürr-i meknûn* (The Hidden Pearl), as the End of Time is discussed in its penultimate chapter. From the start, the entire story seemed very familiar to me... By sheer coincidence I had discovered the true identity of the *Eşrât-ı sâ'at*, my favourite so far: it was none other than Chapter 17 of the *Dürr-i meknûn* by Ahmed Bijan that somehow had taken on a life of its own!

In the same way that Dajjal had proven to be as un-studied as he is ill-famed, so did Ahmed Bijan turn out to be as famous as he was unknown. Very little research had been done on the subject, and no critical edition was available for any of his oft-cited works. Given the great importance of minute details for the planned analysis it was imperative to ascertain the original phrasing of the text. In an ideal world, a critical edition of the *Dürr-i meknûn* should have served as the starting point for any further study. However, a makeshift collation would have to do. On the basis of selected manuscript copies I planned to clear at least Chapter 17 of obvious textual corruptions and errors.

It was during this provisional collation in which random samples from other chapters were also included that I came to appreciate this work as a whole. This is an *Ovidian* world: set against the background of the ultimate metamorphosis of the shaping and reshaping of the Universe, an endless chain of change and transformation takes place on all levels in all creatures, places and ages. This work proved to be an entertaining bundle of anecdotes in the form of a cosmography, which even included some encyclopædic learning. It promised to be hugely rewarding to someday prepare and publish this critical edition. It should come with a translation, extensive commentary and generous indices for easy access to the rich content. But for the moment, this grand scheme had to be put on hold.

The study on both Ahmed Bijan and Dajjal first appeared in 1997 in the Dutch language, together with a facsimile and translation of Chapter 17 of the Leiden ms. The critical edition of the *Dürr-i meknûn*, in Ottoman-Turkish script with German commentaries and indices, saw the light a decade later, in 2007. Because that volume—which must be considered 'Part II' of the duo—is densely intertwined with the preceding publication, the need was felt to reprint 'Part I', this time in an English translation. Because the verified text of the cosmography is now available in its entirety, this publication is printed without the facsimile.

INTRODUCTION

[ix] The fifteenth-century Turkish writer Ahmed Yazıcıoğlu deserves a special place in Ottoman literature, though little more is known about him than that he belonged to the Bayramiyye order of dervishes. Because of his ascetic lifestyle this dervish and scholar from Gelibolu (Gallipoli) was given the sobriquet 'the Lifeless', ('*bi-cân*'), and it is under this name that Ahmed Bijan is best remembered. For all of his pale and skinny appearance, however, Ahmed Bijan was certainly not lacking in vigour and enterprise. He authored various religious and encyclopædic works that were so successful that they have been copied and reprinted right up to the present day. His most famous work, *Envârü 'l-âşîkîn*, (The Lights of the Lovers of God), had a place in socio-religious life well into the twentieth century and an important modernised Turkish version of it was published as recently as 1973.

Ahmed strongly advocated the use of the Turkish language. He always wrote in Turkish himself and laudably otherwise championed its use by translating prominent Arabic texts available to him. A connoisseur of Arabic tales, and probably also Byzantine tales, he was a true master in the art of compiling light reading matter. His *Dürr-i meknûn*, (The Hidden Pearl), an undated cosmographical work which has been called the first Ottoman encyclopædia, may well have initiated a new tradition of Turkish storytelling. Despite this, very little academic study, much less a monograph, has been devoted to either him or his work.

It is his description in *Dürr-i meknûn* of the End of Time that has captivated readers and researchers the most, and this is often the subject of the scant attention given to Ahmed Bijan. The fact that Ahmed's lifetime was witness to the type of events traditionally linked to apocalypticism no doubt helps to explain this focus. If Bijan died around 1466, one might assume his year of birth to have been, say, 1400. This would leave his cradle crammed between the two great plagues of 1360 and 1430 that ravaged large parts of the Middle East. Ahmed grew up in the world Bayezid 'Yıldırım' and Timur Lenk had left behind, an earth scorched by devastating battles and civil war. He lived in Gelibolu, today a sleepy provincial town, but back then the centre of the oscillating struggle between Byzantium and the Ottomans. It was here, in the year 1453, while he was finishing his '*Acâ'ibü 'l-mablûkât*, that tidings of the Fall of Constantinople reached him. The prophet of Islam had pointed to that momentous event as the sixth and last sign among the peripeties that were to precede the Hour: 'And (the sixth is) the conquering of The City.' I said: "Messenger of Allah, which city?" And he said: 'Constantinople.'"¹

1 A.b.Ĥ. II, 174; v, 27.

In that same period, the year 900 Hijra (1494–1495 A.D.), expected to be the beginning of the last phase in history, was drawing inexorably closer and closer. [x] The Hijra period was only expected to last for another hundred years before the Year 1000 ushered in the End of the World. The first day of that very last year in history coincided with 19 October 1591 of the Christian calendar, a fine Saturday.

It remains to be seen whether Ahmed Bijan was as much preoccupied by the End of Time as were his later observers (with whom we will meet in Chapter 1). It is my opinion that statements concerning this issue have been rather premature. We have little information about the life or work of our author, and to date no survey or analysis has been made available of those fragments in *Dürr-i meknûn* that deal with the Last Day. The reader of *Dürr-i meknûn*, first looking at its *fihris*t, (Table of Contents), and then reading its eighteen chapters, will find very little reason to isolate and highlight one particular aspect, eschatological, apocalyptic, or otherwise, above all others. Of course a treatise on the End of the World will be found in the book, at its very end to be precise, as befits any cosmography treating the natural world and her vicissitudes in an orderly fashion. But apart from its obvious, allotted position, the End of Time is rarely mentioned in the rest of the *Dürr-i meknûn*.

The aim of the present study is to re-examine the use which Ahmed Bijan made of eschatological materials in his work. The book consists of two parts. In Part 1 the five main themes of this research are presented, each under a separate chapter. Before embarking upon the study of Ahmed's eschatology we start in Chapter 1 by first drawing up an inventory of the relevant primary and secondary sources. On the basis of this, and greatly assisted by scraps of information distilled from both the *Envârü 'l-'âşîkîn* and *Dürr-i meknûn*, Chapter 2 offers a preliminary sketch of the life and work of Ahmed Bijan.

It is important to establish the year of writing of the work *Dürr-i meknûn* as before or after 1453 (Fall of Constantinople) when discussing Ahmed's vision of the Last Judgement and his reaction to this event. For this reason, considerable attention is given to this problem in the first half of Chapter 3, 'In Search of a Date'. The second half of Chapter 3, 'Signs of the Times?' is a critical examination of the present-day use of sources from the years 1400–1600, as their interpretation is too often guided by preconceptions about the supposedly apocalyptic mindset of (most of) the Ottoman Empire during the greater part of that period.

Subsequently, in Chapter 4, continuing our discussion on method, we will study various episodes from Bijan's *Dürr-i meknûn*, which is one of those early sources, and study the relationship between these fragments and traditional eschatological imagery in Islam.

Chapter 5 is devoted entirely to Dajjal or 'Anti-Christ', a protagonist in Islamic eschatology who so far has received surprisingly little attention from Orientalists, and

who plays a role of great importance in Bijan's narration of the End of the World. Basing ourselves on the Dajjal account in *Dürr-i meknûn* we will trace the manner in which the various topoi and motifs are related to the classical sources, associations and semantic fields in Islam.

At the end of this study, in the 'Epilogue' we will return to the question of the extent to which Ahmed Bijan's era is reflected in the eschatological part of his work, [xi] and what conclusions can be drawn about the depth of his *Naherwartung*.

Part II consists of five appendices: an impression of extant manuscripts of *Dürr-i meknûn*; the titles of its eighteen chapters; the integral translation of Chapter 17, 'On the Signs of the Hour', accompanied by a brief commentary. (—For the full Commentary on both Chapter 17 and all other chapters, the reader is of course now referred to my 2007 edition). For purposes of comparison, this is followed by a translation of a passage dealing with the Last Judgement from *Envârü 'l-'âşîkîn*. The final appendix consists of an impression of what Ahmed Bijan's library might have looked like, taking into account his own translation work, direct references in his two main works, and finally, more indirect indications of possible works he had on hand.

CHAPTER 1

THE STATE OF THE RESEARCH*

[1] Regarding the life and work of Ahmed 'Bî-cân' Yazıcıoğlu, a Turkish author of popular religious and edifying works, hardly anything is known. We do not know where or when he was born or what sort of education he received. Apart from a handful of anecdotes, nothing has come down to us about his life, and the possible year of his death is an educated guess at best. Although his œuvre is far from unknown and on occasion has even been the subject of much praise, it has received very little modern attention. An inventory of the scant material we do have at our disposal will be set forth in the present summary.

The earliest information about Ahmed Bijan are clues he left in his own work. He informs his readers that he has an elder brother by the name of *sheikh* Mehmed, whose religious and scientific contributions he mentions with lavish praise. He records their shared interest in religious affairs and their cooperation when writing and translating books.¹ He also mentions Gelibolu (Gallipoli) as being the city where he lives and works.² When he mentions his spiritual guide Hacı Bayram Veli, the founder of the Bayramiyye order to which both brothers belonged, he dwells extensively on the merits of being a dervish. Finally, one of his 'wish formulae' seems to indicate that Ahmed had children.³

For any further information we are wholly dependent on other sources, the earliest being the writings of his brother Mehmed.⁴ He provides us with the name of their father, Yazıcı Salih(ü 'l-Dîn),⁵ and from his own *künye*, Mehmed bin Salih bin Süleyman, it follows that their grandfather was called Süleyman.⁶

* This 'Forschungsstand' has been continued and substantially enlarged in *DM*. As is true for all sections of this book, the present chapter should always be consulted together with the 2007 edition.

1 'Preface' and 'Epilogue' to *Envârık*.

2 *Envârık*, 668–673, 813.

3 *Envârık*, 'Preface', 'Epilogue'.

4 On Mehmed, his works and translated samples see below, Chapter 2; Muştafa 'Âli, *Künhü 'l-ahbâr* v, 236–237; Kâtib Çelebi, *Kaşf az-zunûn* v, 645–646, nr. 12462; *GOD* I, 127–134; Flügel I, 618–619; Gibb, *Ottoman Poems*, 8–10; 169–170 and *HOP* I, 389–410; 'OM I, 194–196; Çelebioğlu and Eraslan, 'Yazıcıoğlu'. [For the edition of the *Muhammediyye* by Âmil Çelebioğlu, a highly important text which could not be consulted for the Dutch version of this book, now see extensively *DM*, 28f, and *passim*.]

5 On Salih Yazıcı and his works see *GOD* I, 73–89; Çelebioğlu and Eraslan, 'Yazıcıoğlu'; Çelebioğlu, 'Yazıcı Sâlih ve Şemsiyye'si'.

6 Cf. Çelebioğlu and Eraslan, 'Yazıcıoğlu', 364A.

In 1521 Lâmi'î († 1532), in his survey of the great sheikhs of 'Rûm', mentions 'Ahmed Çelebi and Mehmed Çelebi, the sons of Yazıcı', adding that Ahmed is the writer of *Envârü 'l-âşîkîn* and is also known as 'Bijan'. He expresses his admiration for the brothers: "They are both persons who have lived a righteous life, always following the (True) Path. They lie buried in Gelibolu, and their miracles and deeds are well-known from their writings."⁷

[2] The next source of data is formed by compilers of *tezkire* and historians from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who in their literary bibliographies and works on history will always include at least a title or two by Ahmed.⁸ Especially Mustafa Ali († 1600) should be named in this respect, the famous late sixteenth-century historian and high ranking civil servant, and like Bijan, an illustrious citizen of Gelibolu himself. There are various instances in his *Künhü 'l-ahbâr*, a multi-volume world history, where he dwells on Ahmed Bijan and other family members.⁹ He also quotes Ahmed's *Dürr-i meknûn* in his list of consulted works—although the relation between his citing and actual reading of a book is not always clear—and in all probability he may have used Ahmed's abridged translation of al-Kazwîni's *Ajâ'ib al-mahlûkât*.¹⁰ Half a century later, several of Bijan's works were mentioned in the voluminous *Kaşf al-zunûn* by Kâtib Çelebi, one of the best known bibliographies in the Islamic world.¹¹

The Turkish world traveller Evliyâ Çelebi († ca. 1685) spoke of Ahmed Bijan as a famous religious historical figure in his *Seyâhatnâme* (Book of Travels).¹² Since there seems to be no similarity in style or content in his comments on Ahmed's work, it may be assumed the information was given for the benefit of the reader rather than to indicate he had studied it himself.¹³

By the end of the sixteenth century, Ahmed's work had already become the object of widespread emulation and adaptation.¹⁴ A tract by the title of *Eşrât-ı sâ'at*¹⁵ (The

7 Thus Lâmi'î in the 'Epilogue' to his Turkish adaptation of 'Abdurrahmân Câmî's Persian *Nafahât al-uns min hadarât al-kuds*, a work completed by Lâmi'î in 1521 after ten years of work, under the title *Fütühü 'l-mücâhidîn li-tervihi 'l-kulûbi 'l-müşâhidîn*.

8 For example: Taşköprüzâde († 1561), *Eş-Şekâ'ik*, 110–111; 'Âşik Çelebi († 1572), *Meşâ'irü 'ş-şu'arâ*, fol. 20^v; Laţîfî († 1582), *Tezkire-i Laţîfî*, 54; Sa'deddîn († 1599), *Tâcü 't-tevârih* II, 460.

9 Muştafâ 'Âli, *Künhü 'l-ahbâr* v, 236–237.

10 Flemming, 'Gâmi'ü 'l-meknûnât', 82; Schmidt, *Pure Water*, 27, 29; 37–39.

11 *Kaşf az-zunûn* I, 482, nr. 1411; III, 191, nr. 4873; IV, 187f, nr. 8070; v, 645–646, nr. 12462. On its author see Gökyay.

12 *Seyâhatnâme* III, 401, 416f; v, 318, 320.

13 Eren, *Evliya Çelebi*, 17, 32 and cf. 129.

14 Blochet has remarked upon this first, in the instance of ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. turc 214, *Traité de cosmologie merveilleuse*: 'il n'est qu'une recension du traité intitulé Dourr-i meknoun, par Yazidji Oghlou Ahmed Bidjan, avec une préface différente, une autre narration, et quinze chapitres au lieu de dix-huit.' Cat.: Blochet I, 265. ('It is nothing else than a reworking of a treatise by Ahmed Bijan called *Dürr-i meknûn*, but with a different preface, a variant narration and fifteen chapters instead of eighteen.')

15 ms Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Petermann II, 7, vol. 11. Cat.: Pertsch, *Verzeichnis*, 3, nr. 1, vol. 11.

Circumstances of the Hour) for example, is nothing other than *Dürr-i meknûn*'s Chapter Seventeen on eschatology that has taken on a life of its own, as I have been able to establish during this research. This is a recurring phenomenon, [3] with an obvious preference for one or more of the last three of the book's eighteen chapters.¹⁶

From 1730 onwards Westerners begin to show interest in *Dürr-i meknûn*.^{*} Several French 'jeunes de langues', in training in Constantinople to become translators and interpreters, deliver (partial) translations of individual chapters¹⁷—among them Chapter Seventeen¹⁸—and extracts of the book.¹⁹ The quality of the translation exercise by Joseph Brüe of Chapter 17, the treatise on eschatology that mostly interests us here, leaves much to be desired. Brüe is not only in the habit of paraphrasing and exaggerating the text in his own words, but also of getting the meaning quite wrong. To make things worse, the Turkish version on which he based himself was an abridged version of the original.²⁰ As Pétis de la Croix reports on November 5th, 1736, writing on the last sheet of this pupil's manuscript:

At the request of Monseigneur le Comte de Maurepas I have read the translation of this treatise on Judgement Day which, although far from being exact, still largely conveys an adequate sense of the broad fables this treatise contains.²¹

¹⁶ See below, 141ff.

^{*} On the French 'jeunes' and their Italian predecessor Donado 1688 (and Toderini) now see extensively *DM*.

¹⁷ ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. turc 897 (Fonds des traductions, nr. 61) dated 1735: *Traité sur différents sujets traduit par le s^r Brüe, jeune de langue de France, à Constantinople, 1735*, representing (parts of) the Chapters 13, 14 en 15. Cat.: Blochet II, 90, nr. 897.

¹⁸ ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. turc 896 (Fonds des traductions, nr. 60) dated 1735: *Traité du jugement et des signes qui doivent le précéder, traduit par le sieur Joseph Brüe, jeune de langues, à Constantinople, 1735*, a translation in French of Chapter 17, accompanied by the text in Ottoman Turkish. Cat.: Blochet II, 90, nr. 896.

¹⁹ ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. turc 900 (Fonds des traductions, nr. 64) dated 1733: *Traité des cieus et de la terre en général, de l'ordre qui règne sur la terre, et de la géométrie, traduit du turc par le sieur Roboly, jeune de langues, [à Constantinople], 1733*.

No mention is made of either the original title or its author, but the accompanying Turkish text is divided into four separate chapters and is an excerpt of *Dürr-i meknûn*. Cat.: Blochet II, 91f, nr. 900. Another example of such an excerpt is ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. turc 898 (Fonds des traductions, nr. 62) dated 1734: *Perles arrangées, ou effets merveilleux de la providence de Dieu, dans l'ordre qu'il a mis dans ce monde visible, traduit du turc par le sieur A.P. Deval, jeune de langues à Constantinople, 1734*. The Turkish part of the text is titled 'Dürr-i meknûn'. The translation consists of eight chapters, 'sous une forme qui est une partie du Dourr-i meknoun de Yazidji Oghlou Ahmed Bidjan'. Cat.: Blochet II, 90f, nr. 898.

²⁰ See e.g. below, 69, and *DM*, 36–40, 237, 291, and §§ 14.78, 14.81, 14.132, 14.146, 16.31, 17.13, 17.18, 17.82f.

²¹ 'J'ai lu par ordre de Monseigneur le Comte de Maurepas la Traduction de ce traité du Jugement dernier qui'quay que peu exacte, rend cependant plus que suffisamment le sens de fables aussi grossières que celles qui sont contenues dans ce Traité.' Note on endpaper of ms Paris, Suppl. turc 896. [By Alexandre-Louis-Marie Pétis de la Croix, and not François, as erroneously stated in my Dutch edition; for details and literature, see *DM*, 40 and fn 64.]

have earned him, and his brother Mehmed, a living. These enumerations basically bear out that one should not associate with the rich and mighty, emphasise the glory to be found in poverty and hunger, as well as stressing the importance of studying hard. This last occupation can certainly be ascribed to Ahmed and Mehmed: a first impression of the works with which the brothers were (most probably) familiar by far exceeds the range of books which featured on the curriculum of the early Ottoman [18] *medrese* (Muslim theological school).⁴⁴ Their learning was common knowledge, and the (Arabic) commentary by Mehmed to Ibn al-‘Arabî’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* has been in use as a text-book in the *medreses*.⁴⁵ Consequently one might have expected that the brothers perhaps earned their livelihood by teaching, but information given by Laṭîfî seems to suggest that they did not admit nor train disciples.⁴⁶ It would rather appear that Ahmed ‘took no thought for the morrow’, entrusting God instead with taking care of (the larger part of) his workaday worries. In particular the dervish will guard against acting like those people among Muhammad’s community who want God to deliver tomorrow’s goods now, whereas God would never ask today for their good deeds of tomorrow.⁴⁷ Mehmed couldn’t agree more. According to a pious anecdote, related by Mustafa Ali,⁴⁸ one day a beggar called at Mehmed’s house, just as his wife and children were off to the public bath. Notwithstanding the fact that he and his family had hardly anything to eat, he slipped the man the last morsels of food that remained in the kitchen. Upon arriving home a furious Mrs. Yazıcıoğlu heaped one reproach after the other on the poor head of her ascetic consort until interrupted by a knock on the door. A messenger from the municipal magistrate had come to deliver ten delicious dishes in the name of a royal envoy who was staying in town. Mustafa Ali points out to his readers the Koranic moral of this story: ‘Whoso brings a good deed shall have ten the like of it’.⁴⁹

It is Ahmed’s conviction that in the Hereafter rewards in abundance await all believers who have led such ascetic lives. These people will be spared the agonising parting of body and soul—and better than that: their souls will leave their corpses as supple ‘as a hair pulled out of a layer of fat’.⁵⁰ They will not be handed over to the Angel of Death, but God Himself will receive their souls and admit them to paradise. There they shall enjoy—without being subjected to any interrogation first—all sorts of delights. Besides, during Resurrection, a *Heldenschau* will take place, when God will have the occasion to introduce these exemplary servants to all and praise their virtues. They will be called forward and welcomed with the words: ‘Greetings to you for whom the world has been a dungeon.’ After that, they will line up behind the yellow banner of ‘Îsâ,

44 For this (provisional) survey, see below, 27–28, and 234–246.

45 See below, 30–31, and 245.

46 *Tezkire-i Laṭîfî*, 54. Cf. below, 28, fn 109.

47 *Envârk*, 428.

48 *Künhü ’l-ahbâr* v, 236–237. English paraphrase in *HOP* 1, 394–395.

49 From Sura 6:160. [Also cited in *Envârk*, 421, and *DM*, §§ 12.5–6.]

50 *Envârk*, 443.

and with him in front they will cross the bridge *Şirât*.⁵¹ And God shall ask: 'Where are the chosen ones from among my [19] creatures?', and the angels inquire: 'But which people could possibly be meant by this?', whereupon God replies: 'I mean the dervishes of course, they who acquiesced in My ordinance and were satisfied with whatever I procured. Now, let them enter heaven.' The dervishes enter and while they are tucking into all the heavenly food and drinks the crammed crowd of common folk are still outside, afoot, on the square of assembly, awaiting the Reckoning.⁵²

For a believer in general, and a dervish in particular, the city of Gelibolu, thanks to its location, offered great opportunities to earn such heavenly rewards. The Gelibolu of the fourteenth and fifteenth century was a city of *gâzis*, fighters for the faith. Hence it was dubbed *Dârü'l-mujâhidîn*, the Land of Warriors of the Holy War, and many of its citizens were men under arms.⁵³ Here, one could engage in a spiritual war with the flesh, like the dervishes, but also be bodily meritorious by taking up the sword, or even combine the two activities. From passages in Mehmed's *Muhammedîyye* it is clear that the brothers Yazıcıoğlu fought both their own sinful propensities and the enemy in the field.⁵⁴

Whether this detail is historically accurate or no, fighting dervishes who fell in battle and whose graves are often located in and around Gelibolu, are a regular feature in stories of the Ottomans' early conquests and subsequent expansion into Europe.⁵⁵ Ahmed also encouragingly writes, if perhaps only from the side-line: 'Praise be to God, for how many times have we been engaged in battle and Holy War against the unbelievers, here in Gelibolu. At times the infidels attack us, and at other times we fall upon the infidels.⁵⁶ More than anyone else it is the Gallipolitanese who is able to profit to the full from the position of his coastal hometown. Did the prophet not say: 'Let those

51 *Envârık*, 862–863.

52 *Envârık*, 836.

53 İnalçık, 'Gelibolu', 985B.

54 Cf. Çelebioğlu, 'Ahmed Bican', 50A; Muştafâ 'Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr* V, 236.

55 Bar a few exceptions the dervishes in such histories of holy men and martyrs could not possibly have belonged to the orders named, as these did not exist yet at the time or in Ottoman territory: these are instances of 'verheiligte Krieger' (sanctified warriors), see Kissling's study 'Heiligenwesen auf dem Balkan'; cf. Chabbi, 'Ribât', 518B. Majer, 'Sozialgeschichtliche Probleme um Ulema und Derwische', has pointed out that with a view to the prestige that 'membership' of such venerated heroes would lend to an order, no doubt a deliberate blending of historical fact, hagiography and shrewd 'recruitment' has taken place. On dervishes fighting along (in *gâzi* literature) cf. Mélikoff, *La Geste* I, 50–51; AFG II, 18–19; [Wittek, 'Urkunden II', 246, 'denn gar mancher dieser Gottesmänner war auch selbst ein streitbarer Gasi. Solche Eroberungs-Scheiche hat es nicht nur in Rumeli, sondern hatte es schon ein halbes Jahrhundert vorher in Anatolien gegeben (...)' (for several of these men of God were themselves fighting *gâzis*. Such conquering sheikhs were not only around in Rumelia, they had already been present in Anatolia for at least half a century.)]

56 *Envârık*, 673. [Cf. *Muhammedîyye*, (ed. Çelebioğlu), verse 6033, *ilâhi biz kulun dahi Gelibolu'da olurduk | deniz katında beklerdik firekten kal'a ve âfâk.*]

unable to wage Holy War with me now, go and fight on the seas?'⁵⁷ Whosoever puts to sea to join the war effort will receive from God a reward for good deeds (*ṣevâb*) equalling the merit of seventy pilgrimages. The prophet has also assured that a person who keeps watch at the coast for a day and a night during the fasting month of *Ramadan* earns himself as much *ṣevâb* as if he had liberated six hundred prisoners of war and prayed sixty thousand times. A prayer performed at the sea-coast counts for as much as [20] four hundred prayers.⁵⁸ A person killed in naval battle will see more forgiveness by God than someone who dies ashore. Some even maintain that the latter's soul will be taken by the Angel of Death whereas the soul of a fallen marine is carried away by the holy arm of God.⁵⁹ A warrior thus fallen is also entitled to the privileges that belong by right to all martyrs in the good fight for God.⁶⁰

For Gelibolu, a town where the welfare and future of its inhabitants, as has been seen, were so directly dependent on the outcome of the battle by sea, Ahmed Bijan dwells extensively on this aspect. He quotes a *ḥadīṭ* according to which the prophet has said that he who dies in naval combat should consider himself fortunate because he will be taken to the Throne, and, without any further interrogation, welcomed directly into paradise.⁶¹ The famous transmitter of *ḥadīṭs*, Abū Hurayra, remembers how Muhammad once said, 'How very fortunate are those who belong to my community and also happen to live on the coast! On the Day of Resurrection they will rise from their graves and go unto the Throne.' Then, God shall give them permission to enter heaven unquestioned. There they will enjoy the delicacies of the Garden and associate with the heavenly maidens. 'Praise be to God!' bursts from Ahmed's lips while he envisages this delightful scene, 'that He should have created dervish Ahmed Bijan at the sea-coast, in Gelibolu, city of the *ḡāzīs*', and he expresses the ardent wish that he may, by the grace (*faḏl*) of God, also enter this precise heaven, unquestioned.⁶² The maidens of paradise (*ḥūr*), it is true, are entirely composed of light, but this need not stand in the way of pleasure: Ahmed recalls an authoritative work on exegesis entitled *Tefsīr-i kebīr*, in which the readers are told that God has modelled these ladies from lovely *buxom* light.⁶³

The expectation of resurrection and election on the basis of one's home, such as Gelibolu in Ahmed's case, has a long tradition in Islam. In the literature on 'Places of

57 *Envârk*, 668.

58 *Envârk*, 669.

59 *Envârk*, 670. Cf. Castillo, *Kitâb Şāyarat*, 63–64. [However, see also *DM*, §§ 14.101ff on the sometimes problematic nature of a watery grave.]

60 The concept 'martyr' comprises, among others, the following categories of persons: those who: died in the lands of the infidels or on their way thither; died in childbirth; succumbed to the plague; were buried in the rubble of their collapsed houses; died while defending their loved ones; died in foreign parts, *ḡurbetde*; died at sea or in pagan regions. Some martyrs' spirits succour soldiers on the battlefield, others dwell near the Throne. *Envârk*, 670–671.

61 *Envârk*, 669.

62 *Envârk*, 813.

63 *Envârk*, 897; cf. *DM*, § 1.168. See also el-Saleh, *La vie future*, 39.

CHAPTER 3

WHEN AND WHY? THE WRITING OF *DÜRR-İ MEKNÛN*

3.1 IN SEARCH OF A DATE.

[39] In *Dürr-i meknûn*, an undated, [and, technically speaking, anonymous!],* cosmography, Ahmed Bijan takes the reader on a journey through both the sublunary and the super mundane. And to satisfy public demand for the fantastic he shows his readers exotic places and beings, interspersed with amusing anecdotes.¹ The period under consideration encompasses the whole term of life of this existence, from the era preceding the act of creation to the new heaven and the new earth which will be in place once the present world has been annihilated. Besides the entertainment value of the book a clearly edifying element can be discerned: in the wonders of creation the might and majesty of God are revealed, and in the course of history God's designs for mankind are revealed.

Dürr-i meknûn is a work of general appeal and timeless character. Its story matter represents a varied selection from classic tales, some better known than others, which can also be encountered (in some variant) in countless works written before, and after, Ahmed. The timeless nature of *Dürr-i meknûn* could not be better illustrated than by the fact that to date it has proven simply impossible to come up with a year of writing for the work. This observation should serve as a major objection against the tendency to regard (parts of) the work as apocalyptic. Since the book was certainly written between 1400² and 1466, one might have expected to at least find—in such a supposedly apocalyptic text—unequivocal proof for a date before, or after, 1453, the year of the Fall of Constantinople, a city which plays such a prominent role in Islamic eschatology.³ If only on exegetical grounds one would have expected Ahmed to feel obliged to explain in his compilation of the Signs of the Hour why The City should have fallen with

* See *DM*, 45–47, 'Die Autorenfrage'.

- 1 For example, see the history of Musa; in his era of extreme longevity, he had to patiently wait another 20 years before he could marry a girl of 180 springs who was still considered a minor, *DM*, § 11.8; the adventures of the princess kidnapped by the bird *Simürğ*, and the prince who comes to her rescue, *DM*, § 15.23ff.
- 2 More precisely, at least after al-Bisṭāmī's *Ğafr*, which, since it is cited by Ahmed, would provide a *terminus a quo* if only that book itself could be dated; see below, 236.
- 3 A.b.H. II, 174; v, 27. Undoubtedly Byzantine expectations surrounding the loss of the capital as a sign of the imminent End influenced Islamic tradition. The Byzantine world of the ninth century, for example, was pregnant with apocalyptic treatises about the 'impending' down-fall of the imperial city. See Yerasimos, *La fondation*, 183ff. For *aḥādīṭ* concerning the capture of Constantinople, see Canard, 'Les expéditions', 105–112.

none of the presaged signs either preceding or following this key event. If the city was indeed conquered before Ahmed finished the work, we can only conclude that this earth-shattering [40] event was not big enough to leave even a broad hint in the book's eschatological passages. Indeed, other Turkish authors who were to write about the End of Time in the years following 1453 address this problem without fail. For example, these writers specify that this historical event should not be equated to the prophesied fall of The City because the reduction of its formidable walls is indissolubly linked to the emergence of Dajjal, and therefore cannot as yet have taken place. The events of 1453 are rather to be interpreted as the fulfilment of the announcement to the infidels in Sura 2:114: 'for them is degradation in the present world, and in the world to come a mighty chastisement.'⁴ The loss of Constantinople is to be seen as one of the humiliations Allah will mete out to the Christians. Other authors point out that, unlike the prophecy in the Tradition which says that the *Banû Ishâk*, the Arabs, will conquer the City by calling thrice the *şahâda* ('There is no God but God, Muhammad is the apostle of God') and the *takbîr* ('Allâhu akbar', God is most great),⁵ the Turks have taken it by force of the sword.⁶ Hence in the Old-Ottoman Chronicles the victory by force of arms of 1453 is interpreted to be a first taking of Constantinople which, apparently, must precede the true capture which still lies in the future. That feat will be realised with the *takbîr* and by the Arabs of the *Banû Ishâk*, or rather *Abû İshâk*, as they are now being called in the texts. It is generally assumed⁷ that this must be a reference to the *İshâkîyye* dervishes of Abû İshâk Kâzerûnî († 426/1034–35), a militant order from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century with strong representation in Bursa, which claimed that its seventy thousand followers had been instrumental in the capture of Constantinople.⁸ [Mehmed, in his *Muhammedîyye*, also mentions their role in this respect.]*

4 For example in MS *Mecmû'a*, fol. 263'; cf. Sura 41:16 ('humiliation in this present life').

5 K. Teply has already remarked on the Jericho typology of this scene (ref. in Flemming, 'Şâhib-kırân', 47). In Jewry the repetition thrice of the *tetragrammaton* was an effective weapon; in the derived Islamic tradition the same holds true for three times the formula 'Allâhu akbar'—Fodor, 'The Rod of Moses', 12. Cf. the capture of Homs, as described in MS *Fazâ'ilü'ş-Şâm*, foll. 27^r–27^v: 'After the taking of Damaskus the infidels fled to the city of Homs and reinforced its walls. They [the Muslims] went in pursuit and engaged. (...) And while they (that is, the unbelievers) were in the fortress the *ğâzis* cried the *takbîr*, whereupon several houses collapsed. Again they called the *takbîr*, and three sides of the fortress crumbled down.' Same history in al-Ṭabarî I, 2391–92.

6 Muslim, *fitan*, 79, and see Attema, *Voorteekenen*, 92–93. During a previous siege of Constantinople the Turks had actually tried to bring down its walls by employing the *takbîr*, *GOR* I, 443ff; Flemming, 'Şâhib-kırân', 47.

7 Flemming, 'Şâhib-kırân', 46–47 has examples; Yerasimos, *La fondation*, 193–194. This temporary shift from their traditional forbear Japhet, to Sem (> Isaac > Esau), inevitably caused the Ottomans inconsistencies in lineage, see Flemming, 'Political Genealogies in the Sixteenth Century', 134ff, and Yerasimos, *La fondation*, 197–199.

8 Massignon, 'Textes prémonitoires', 12.

* [Verse 4796, *ki yetmiş bin Benî İshâk bile ol şehre erişe | ki Kostantiniye derler pes onu edeler mecrâr*, followed by verses on the cry *Allâhu akbar*, etcetera.]

Any such digression is absent from *Dürr-i meknûn*. The only concrete remarks by Ahmed Bijan with regard to the city of Constantinople are concerned with her relative position to his own town, Gelibolu,⁹ and a brief description of [41] five extraordinary objects and buildings in the inner city, and a reference to ruins lying in the vicinity of the Hagia Sophia.¹⁰ Yerasimos feels that instances such as the ones just mentioned lend colour to the belief that Ahmed wrote his *Dürr-i meknûn* after the Ottomans' conquest of Constantinople: without proper knowledge of the city's interior he could not have made such observations.¹¹ On the other hand, it can be argued that Islamic embassies, merchants and tourists had been regular visitors to the capital over centuries, and there was even Arabic literature available on the city. A famous example of such a description is the one given by Hârûn bin Yaḥyâ, a prisoner-of-war in the ninth century, containing, among other things, useful information on *al-kanîsa al-'uzmâ*, that is, Ἡ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία. Besides which, the Turks in Thrace had already become well familiar with stories and legends that circulated among the local Christians.¹²

In the passage mentioned above in which Ahmed makes mention of several ruins in the surroundings of the Hagia Sophia,¹³ we read that in the time when *Buht al-Naṣîr*, Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem,¹⁴ God caused 'the Dome' at Constantinople to fall in, leaving sixty thousand people buried under the debris. Everything lay waste for seven years until a ruler arrived who rebuilt the city: 'The buildings *islâm üzerine* in the area of the Âyâ Sofya are (—or, were) his work.'¹⁵

It is most unfortunate for us that the two words so crucial to an attempt at dating the work after 1453, '*islâm üzerine*', should be missing from several MSS or show substantial variants. *DürrG* and *W*, for example, have substituted the words with *şimdi*, thus rendering: 'the (old) buildings which *today* still stand in the area...' This last instance is of course inconclusive for a possible date, and could have been written by Ahmed Bijan in any given year preceding 1453—as is convincingly demonstrated by a passage from Ahmed's own *Envârü 'l-âşîkîn*, a book of which we know for sure that it was written several years before the Fall of Constantinople:¹⁶ 'From the emergence of the *Rûm* till the taking of Istanbul seven years will pass. (...) Ibn Kaṭîr said: "In times of old, when [42] Nebuchadnezzar was ruler, he destroyed Jerusalem. Istanbul, witnessing that

9 *DM*, § 6.19, 'The water from the Black Sea flows through the Bosphorus to form an inner sea off Constantinople, which in turn flows into the West Sea, also named the Mediterranean.'

10 *DM*, §§ 7.104–110 und 8.49.

11 Yerasimos, *La fondation*, 61, 96 and footnote 121; 105–106.

12 Mordtmann, 'al-Ḳuṣṭantîniyya'; Yerasimos, *La fondation*, 99–111; Süsseim –[Taeschner], 'Aya Sofya'; Canard, 'Les expéditions'; Bashear, 'Muslim-Byzantine Wars'. [See also Möhring's important contribution—completely overlooked by me in 1997 but consulted for *DM*.] [Hârûn might be the POW whose report is referred to in *DM*, § 14.131.]

13 *DM*, §§ 8.45–49.

14 Cf. the Biblical tale, 2 Kings 25.

15 *DM*, § 8.49, with detailed discussion.

16 See above, 26f.

all his troops, has drowned in the Red Sea, this multitude of suddenly widowed women breaks adrift. These women, who will become known as ‘gypsies’ (< E-gyptians), begin swarming off all over the world and will henceforth make a living by whoring.⁶² This ætiologic passage is of special interest to us because it probably contains a reference by Ahmed to his own time and place. The specific tax-levy on income generated by prostitution, the *kesim* (at a rate of 100 *ağçe* per month), as laid down in the ‘*Law Book of the Gypsies of Rumelia*’ from 1530, no doubt represents the official regulation by the Ottoman authorities of their long-standing policy of tolerance of this trade which was effectively the gypsies’ specialty, not just in Rumelia, but also elsewhere.⁶³

It remains to be noted that the phrase in *DM*, § 17.13, ‘*avratlarda hayâ kalmaya ‘avrat ‘avrata er ere düşe*, which I have translated as ‘there will be no sense of shame left in women. Women will prefer women and men will prefer (to lie with) men’, is understood by Yerasimos to mean quite something else. Thinking of the prophesy that with the Coming of the Hour relatives, parents, children, neighbours and acquaintances [69] will be at constant variance with one another, he takes the verb -(y)*E düşmek* to stand for ‘to fall out’ rather than ‘to fall for’, and consequently translates ‘Ce sera femme contre femme et homme contre homme’ (it will be woman against woman and man against man).⁶⁴ However, given the passage’s place in a context filled with adultery, pæderasty and the part homosexuality plays in Islamic eschatology, I am convinced we are dealing here with the homo-topos. Brüe has also understood the text’s spirit in that same sense, as is witnessed by his paraphrase where he—excited by Bijan’s prediction—pictures the sink of debauchery that awaits us:

Women will no longer have any restraint, nor any sense of shame, decency, reserve or modesty, and will allow themselves to slide to all sorts of vices and abandon themselves to all sorts of shameful, and infamous, acts. The world will be upside down and changed (beyond recognition). Acts will be taking place between men, as well as among women, that are so infamous that the mere mention of them would be improper. Adultery will be very common indeed.⁶⁵

If Ahmed’s reference to the plague as punishment for a wave of immorality is authentic, it would be so in the sense of the writer’s still being much impressed with the

62 *DM*, § 14.106. [Note that Pharaoh did not *drown*, cf. Exodus 15:12. On the important theological implications of this detail, see *DM*, §§ 14.101ff.]

63 Imber, ‘*Zinâ* in Ottoman Law’, 73f. [Cf. Mas‘ûdî, *Prairies d’Or* I, 296, on tax on prostitutes’ earnings in China.]

64 Yerasimos, *La fondation*, 195, and personal correspondence.

65 Brüe, *Traité du jugement*, 11f. (Les femmes n’auront plus de frein, elles n’auront plus ni honte, ni pudeur, ni retenüe, ni modestie, elles se laisseront aller a tous les vices, elles se livreront a toutes sortes de crimes honteux, et infames. Le monde sera boul[e]versé, et sera tout autre. Il se commitera parmi les hommes, et les femmes des actions si infames qu’il serait honteux seulement de les nommer, et les adultères seront très communs.) Cf. *DM*, § 17.13.

historical pestilence of 1430 and its aftermath.⁶⁶ The causal link, however, was suggested to him by the Tradition, just as was his whole discourse on demoralization, because, as a matter of fact, not the slightest suggestion can be discovered in contemporary Ottoman codes of law—section ‘offences against morality’—that might be indicative of disproportionate lewdness.⁶⁷ And yet with this code of morality a very wide net indeed was thrown to catch just about every conceivable act considered immoral that an Ottoman subject enticed by sexual appetite might lustily feel like perpetrating. There is, among other categories, men copulating with other men, sex with minors, bestiality, anal intercourse with one’s spouse, fornication and or the procurement thereof, *etcetera*. At the same time the framers of said law discuss these cases in a relaxed voice, in the majority of cases imposing only (small) monetary penalties which, ‘since the scales of fines did not alter between the late 15th century and the 17th century, despite inflation, (...) in fact became increasingly mild’.⁶⁸ And notwithstanding the great care bestowed on detail, our eschatological principal parts, the lesbians, are conspicuous by their absence. Their mention in *Dürr-i meknûn* is not related to their overwhelming presence in the real world that surrounded Ahmed, but should be interpreted as the reprise of a classic topos the use of which has always been widespread, both in Islam and outside of it. [70] Jan Boendale, for example, an alderman of the city of Antwerp, wrote in the fourteenth century:

Manne en wive mede
 Selen hen ter oncuuschhede
 So zere setten te samen
 Dat si hem niet en selen scamen
 Ja, hets scande dat ict scrive
 Manne met manne wive met wive.⁶⁹

66 Even some of the leadership of the Ottoman Empire, men such as Hâci ‘İvâz Paşa, succumbed to this plague, see İnalçık, ‘Murad II’, 612B. For an impression of the devastation catastrophes like these wrought in Anatolia, Syria and Egypt, see descriptions in Wiet, ‘La grande peste noire’, on the 1347–49 plague which raged on, with interruptions, for another fifteen years. Cf. Daniel Panzac, *La Peste dans l’Empire Ottoman 1700–1850*. Louvain 1985, with abundant literature on the subject.

67 Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, 95–103. For instructions on morality issued to supervising neighbourhood committees in the sixteenth century, see Jacob, ‘Türkische Sittenpolizei’, and Levonian, ‘Old Islam in Old Turkey’, both articles borrowing from the works by Ahmed Refik, *Hicri on birinci asırda İstanbul hayatı*. Istanbul 1931, and *Hicri on üçüncü asırda İstanbul hayatı*. Istanbul 1932.

68 Imber, ‘Zinâ in Ottoman Law’, 68.

69 *Het boec vander wraken*, in F.-A. Snellaert, *Nederlandsche gedichten uit de veertiende eeuw*, etc. Brussels 1869, 378f. H. Haerinck, unpleasantly struck by the contents of this book dating from 1351, judged that it ‘contains evident and incontestable hints of mental derangement’ (blijkbare, en ontegensprekelijke sporen van geestesverval bevat)—Jan Boendale, ook geheeten Jan de Clerc. *Zijn leven, zijne werken en zijn tijd*. Ghent, 1888, 51. On eschatology in van Boendale’s work, see additionally P.C. van der Eerden, ‘Eschatology in the Boec van der Wraken’, in Verbeke (ed.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology*, 424–440, who also discusses van Boendale’s disputed authorship.

It would therefore appear that this element in our text is not in need of a study in depth, so we will merely touch on some of its more salient topoi. The pictured demolition of Mecca by the Abyssinians is borrowed from the well-known *aḥādīṭ* about the personage *Dū 'l-Suwaykatayn*, 'the man with the short legs'.⁹³ It is most likely that this Islamic portrayal of the role of the Abyssinians has its roots in the original Byzantine-Christian hope which took form after the rise and expansion of Islam. In all their impotence against this expansion, people could do no more than cherish the cold comfort that at least one Christian power would yet be able to literally erase the 'Ismailites' before the coming of Judgement Day.⁹⁴

The story that Damascus will survive the rest of the world by another forty years—traditionally traced back to Ḳatāda—is part and parcel of the *Faḍā'il al-Ṣā'm* literature in which Ḳatāda is a much quoted authority, and in which Syria and the End of Time are related in such a manner as to warrant the search for the roots of Islamic eschatology in that direction.⁹⁵ The ornithomorphic depiction of the world by Ḳatāda in our fragment can also be found in this genre.⁹⁶

[76] An interesting clause is the one featuring Konya, the only Anatolian city to have been included by Ahmed in his list: 'Konya will be destroyed by Eflâtûn's Spring'. The name of *Eflâtûn*, Plato, was linked to a well in the city itself and also to a water source some 75 km west of Konya, a site dominated by ancient ruins—the remains of a Hittite water sanctuary.⁹⁷ *Yâkût* had already reported on 'the grave of the holy Eflâtûn' in the local citadel⁹⁸ and therefore it can be safely concluded—assuming that his work dates back to 1224—that this tradition antedates the arrival of the *Mevlânâ* order at Konya, the religious movement so important in the neoplatonic revival. *Kâtib Çelebi* speaks of 'Eflâtûn's river' and the native Iconians maintained that the plain had once been a

events Dajjal will emerge.) See also al-Rabgûzî (ed. Boeschoten *et al.*) II, 778, for a similar passage. *Etcetera.*

93 Muslim, *fitan*, 57–59. A.b.H. II, 220, 291. Attema, *Voorteekenen*, 133.

94 Adolph Grohmann, 'Die im Äthiopischen, Arabischen und Koptischen erhaltenen Visionen Apa Shenute's von Atripe', *ZDMG* 67 (1913) 187–267, *viz.* 261–263. Cf. the passage in Sawirus ibn al-Muḳaffa' (transl. and notes 'Azîz S. 'Aṭiyya), *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church Known as the History of the Holy Church. Vol. II, part III. Christodoulos – Michael (A.D. 1046–1102)*. Cairo 1959, 351. (I am indebted to J. den Heijer for this kind reference.)

95 See also below, 125f (under point 36) and 127ff (under point 40). Gruber, *Verdienst*, *passim*; al-Rabā'î, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣā'm*, 38 #66; Bashear, 'Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars', 191f. The line 'Damascus is this world's paradise', *DM*, § 7.48, is undoubtedly derived from the same source.

96 Al-Rabā'î, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣā'm*, 4, 'Syria is the head, Egypt the tail, and Irak the wings (of the world, thus Ḳatāda)'. Cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar* IV, 2, 881: at the End of Time Israel will no longer be the tail of this world but instead become its head. In *Envâr*, 122, Ahmed Bijan cites Ḳatāda's comparison of Nûh's Ark with a bird.

97 Details according to Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam* I, 283, and II, 363–369 ('Plato in the Folk-lore of the Konia Plain'), previously published in *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 18 (1911–12) 265–269. See for further, recent, literature *DM*, § 17.157.

98 (ed.) Wüstenfeld IV, 204.

sea, reclaimed by Effâtûn.⁹⁹ A legend circulated in pre-Hellenic Iconium that one day a flood would drown the plain's entire population, a tale probably produced by the fitful and elusive behaviour of the local waters. In his time Hasluck could record still another variant: Plato had plugged the mouth of a subterranean stream using cotton, tar and stones as the river threatened to swamp the city of Konya and its plain.¹⁰⁰

It is not hard to imagine how towns and regions that were notorious for diseases and or natural disasters eventually came to be permanently associated with their endemic troubles in texts like ours. Especially those variations on the theme which introduce specifics could very well be indicative of an actual historical event, which makes it worthwhile to conduct further research into possible sources behind such *malhama* scenes. The starting-point of any such investigation should be the making of the traditional 'pattern chart' and include the influence of the Koranic *Strafgeschichten*. For example, Ahmed Bijan characterises the wind and fire sent by God against Fir'awn as a 'Doomsday sign'.¹⁰¹ The detailed treatment that certain towns and regions receive in the *faḍâ'il* literature regarding their nice and not so very nice aspects should also be studied.¹⁰² It is only natural that if a certain town had a bad reputation for its unhealthy climate, with its very air saturated with malaria, writers should have portrayed it as stricken by precisely that disease at the End of Time.

99 Matth. Norberg (ed.), *Gihan numa, geographia Orientalis*. 2 vols. London, etc. 1818, II, 386, 529.

100 Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam* I, 283 fn 10, and II, 366f. Cf. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 379, on another Greek-Arabic personage in legend, *Balinâs*, Apollonios, who knew how to prevent such deluges with the help of telesms.

101 *DM*, § 14.88.

102 For example starting with the material gathered by Gruber, *Verdienst*.

say, the Tree Zaḳḳûm that is rooted in the bottom of Hell... No, Dajjal's followers are sitting in the shadow of (the ears of) his donkey.¹¹⁷

[106] Shade, especially in the setting of the End of Time, is a favour granted by God with which he rewards, or, punishes people (by denying it). In this context one could think for example of the waiting during the Day of Judgement, when the sun will stand just above the earth with people up to their chins in their own sweat—with the exception of those to whom God will provide some sort of shelter.¹¹⁸ At the beginning of *Dürr-i meknûn*'s Chapter 17, the prophet points out that God has placed his sustenance in the shadow of His mercy, which goes to underline his privileged position.¹¹⁹ The description in eschatological texts of large numbers of people who manage to get hold of a place in the shade of Dajjal's donkey, is not so much an allusion to the enormous size of the animal as a case of persiflage of one of the most desirable circumstances a believer could think of: to have the privilege of forming part of the Mahdî's suite and sharing in his shade and protection. This characterises one's election. We might compare this to Rab Joseph's († 333) heaving a sigh when he thinks of the return of the Jewish Messiah: 'O that he may come, and that I may be allowed to sit in the shadow of his donkey's saddle.' Other texts have the rabbi say that as far as he is concerned the shade of that donkey's dung will also suffice.¹²⁰

(23) *The Deceiver*

However much of an ascetic one may be, those devilish veins will involuntarily start to react and one will surrender. For those who do not yield there will be God's grace, but ultimately the ordeal of this evil cannot but leave a trace in every man's soul.

At the heart of the trial by Dajjal are false appearance, deception and almost irresistible temptation. Dajjal will not, in other words, force people by exercising coercion and oppression, nor will he torment this world, perpetrate massacres or indulge in cruelties like the peoples of Yadjudj and Madjudj. The sheer refinement of his fake performances shall suffice to make the crowds change religious sides. This idea is in complete agreement with the Christian notion of Antichrist, in which his deceptive nature is the key factor. His reign will be based on false doctrine and apostasy, not on persecution. The composition of the later Antichrist-myth is comprised of four main elements borrowed from the tradition of Hellenistic Jewry. They are the *Chaoskampf*-traditions, the Satan-myth, the End-of-Time-Tyrant-traditions and the False Prophet. More than

117 On the Tree Zaḳḳûm, see below, under (48); on the donkey, see below, under (30).

118 According to the Tradition the prophet said in connection with Sura 8: 36 that each and every one would be up to halfway his ears in his own perspiration; Muslim, ḡannat, 60. [Cf. *DM*, § 18.7 and *AḥvâlB*, fol. 33^v.]

119 *DM*, § 17.4.

120 Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar* IV, 2, 986.

anything else the latter tradition, with its attendant theme of deception and false works, has become the defining factor in the New Testament's depictions of oppression at the End of Time,¹²¹ [107] e.g. 2 Thess. 2: 9–11: 'But the coming of the wicked One will be marked by Satan being at work in all kinds of counterfeit miracles and signs and wonders, and every wicked deception aimed at those who are on the way to destruction (...).'¹²² It is this Christian reworking of an element originally taken from the Jewish tradition that in its turn has been borrowed by Islam.

It should be observed, however, that just as is the case in subsequent Christian developments, there are also instances of portraits of Dajjal in which that essential element of the Reign of Evil—misleading appearances and deception—has faded away in the background. Now the danger of Dajjal's coming is understood primarily in terms of the unspeakable atrocities he will commit. Considering the nature of the misdeeds described in such treatises the Dajjal-figure has been the object of a 'Hunnification'. An example of this style we find in the eschatological treatise added as an appendix to a manuscript dated around 1560 of *Ḳiṣṣas-i Rabgūzi* († ca. 1310):

While the Mahdī is mustering his army, the cursed Antichrist will hear news of it and he will drink wine. Pregnant women will be brought before him where he is seated. The people will look on while the women's bellies are cut open and their sons are extracted and have their heads pierced with spears. The baby boys will cry out. Witnessing this, all the people will wish they were dead.¹²³

In continuation there is no word of a deceiving and tempting Dajjal in the entire text. However, texts that represent Dajjal as a common Yadjudj-vandal (as if through the prism of *Analogiebildung*) provide their readers with an overly one-sided picture of Judgement Day. After all, Dajjal possesses unique personal qualities that enable him to perform in his own special way the part cast for him. In the depiction of the ferocious Yadjudj and Madjudj-peoples on the other hand, an entirely different tradition is the object, featuring e.g. the Greek reports on the Skyths, or the impression the invading Huns made on Christianity, thus providing for example Ephraim Syrus († 373)¹²⁴ with the model for his representation of Gog and Magog and, in Islam, the memory of skirmishes with Turco-Mongolian races. The Mongols' image comes to shape the portrayal of the eschatological Yadjudj and Madjudj in Islamic texts in the aftermath of the Mongolian era. A great illustration of this process, and of the quintessential

121 Wensinck, *Handbook*, 86; Jenks, *Origins*, 12, 60–64, 173–174, 341, 363; cf. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Antecedents*, 340–341.

122 Cf. Matthew 24: 4–5, 11, 23–24 and Mark 13: 22. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Antecedents*, 63–89.

123 *al-Rabgūzi* (ed. Boeschoten *et al.*) I, xxiv: 'A somewhat confused eschatological account of the end of the world'; cf. I, xxvii. Transcription in I, 606–621, translation in II, 774–792, this passage p. 781.

124 Cf. Abel, 'Changements politiques', 25; 'Un ḥadīṭ', 1.

difference between Dajjal and those hordes, is a fragment in the work of Ibn al-Aṭīr († 1233) who lived to see the Mongol invasion and recorded in his *Chronicles*:

[108] I believe that humanity will not witness a disaster such as the present one ever again; not until the world comes to an end and all shall perish with the exception of Yadjudj and Madjudj. Dajjal at least will spare those who follow him and only kill his adversaries, but these spare no one: they kill women, men, and children, they even slit open pregnant bellies and kill the foetus.¹²⁶

(24) See above, under (4).

(25) *The worker of false miracles*

In that time, the world will see scarcity whereas he will bestow on those who follow him many goods as there lie buried treasures everywhere—only visible to him. Then he will say: ‘O my friends, if you so wish I shall resurrect your parents.’ He then proceeds to the graves while ordering the *ṣeyṭāns* to present themselves in the shape of the parents and as such urge the people: ‘You really should join him!’ And these incorrigible ignoramuses will believe in (him).

There are various *ahādīts* in the Tradition that express the notion that Dajjal will be capable of performing great miracles. He can make cattle and goods disappear and reappear, and to his followers he will demonstrate that he can raise the dead.¹²⁷ The religious commentators in their majority accept that Dajjal will indeed perform such lifelike if false miracles. God will permit this in order to put the believers’ steadfastness to the test and so separate the wheat from the chaff.¹²⁸ The *terminus technicus* for this class of test miracles is *istidrāğ*.¹²⁹ However, a human being performing God-like miracles need not necessarily be an impostor, so all this can lead to great confusion since God on occasion also endows good and faithful servants, such as prophets, with extraordinary superpowers, *karâmât*. With God’s permission the prophet ‘Īsâ breathed the breath of

126 Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Kitâb al-kamil fi t-tawârîḥ* XII, 234 (ed. Tornberg). This translation, here given with adapted personal names, is based on the Dutch quotation in De Goeje, ‘De Muur van Gog en Magog’, 117.

127 A.b.Ĥ. III, 367; VI, 453, 455; Ibn Mâğā, 36:33, trad. 7.

128 Morabia, ‘L’Antéchrist’, deals with Ibn Taymiyya’s view on the possibility of an Evil Force allowed by God to act as a miracle worker, viz. Dajjal; Muḥyî al-Dîn ibn al-‘Arabî in his *al-Futūḥât al-Makkiyya* groups Musaylima, Ibn Ṣayyâd and Dajjal under the same header, on the understanding that of this notorious trio Dajjal is by far the most evil, and also the one endowed with the most power, enough even to resurrect the dead (from Saritoprak, *Deccal*, 113); Attema, *Voortekenen*, 157–159.

129 See von Bülow, *Wunder*, 15–20, 150–151 for an overview of types of wonders, e.g. *âyât*, *mu’ğiza* and *istidrâğ*.

EPILOGUE*

[135] Throughout the centuries Ahmed Bijan has enjoyed certain fame as an ascetic and, above all, as the author of *Envârü 'l-âşîkîn* (The Lights of the Lovers of God), which is his best known work out of an œuvre comprising seven titles. Though less well-known, his *Dürr-i meknûn* (The Hidden Pearl) appears to be the writer's more original work. This cosmography is the source of imagery such as that later found in the 'Old Ottoman Chronicles' and forms an integral part of the common Turkish cultural heritage. The present study has shown both titles to contain numerous details which are helpful in elucidating aspects of Ottoman history in general and Bijan's life and work in particular. Further research into the works of Ahmed Bijan, as well as those of his father Salih and elder brother Mehmed, will substantially enrich our knowledge of many aspects of the early Ottoman period. To be sure, the prerequisites for any such endeavour must be critical editions of these texts, with commentaries and indices.**

Despite the blank spots covering our map of the *Dürr-i meknûn*, a picture slowly emerges of a respectable record of the copying, elaborating, imitating and (partial) translation of it. Particular notice has been given to two of its chapters; one dealing with the occult science of *djafir*, and the other with eschatology. The French scholar Yerasimos, who in many respects has conferred upon *Dürr-i meknûn* the eminence von Hammer-Purgstall already intended for the work long ago, has gone furthest in that regard. He understands *Dürr-i meknûn's* eschatological story matter to be Ahmed Bijan's response to his own time and characterises him as an apocalyptic.

However, a thorough reconsideration of the relevant passages in Ahmed's work makes it clear that there are fundamental objections to be raised against the 'apocalypticisation' of Bijan and his works. As Chapter 3 shows, the current approach in Ottoman studies, and Islamology in general, is to link (as if by default) chiliasm, heresy and social unrest with apocalypticism. This represents a view long since abandoned or significantly adjusted in the leading fields of theology and medieval studies. This is not to suggest that this change should have been adopted off-hand, but one would have expected Orientalism to at least familiarise itself with this question of method which elsewhere brought about such a radical revision. Barring a few noticeable exceptions, this appears not to be the case.

* The Epilogue has been slightly enlarged by including some passages from the extensive 'Summary' in English to the 1997 Dutch edition.

** With my 2007 *DM* edition I have meanwhile followed up on my statement in the 1997 Dutch edition's English 'Summary' (p. 277), that 'the first and foremost task now to be undertaken is the realization of critical editions of Ahmed's works, a task which I have already taken upon myself with respect to *Dürr-i meknûn*'.

Ahmed's personal vision of salvation is completely at odds with an apocalyptic mindset, as speaks clearly from the material in Chapter 2. One must work good deeds only out of love for God, not because one hears the countdown clock tick faster. To love God is to serve Him, and His goodness extends to those believers who do so disinterestedly, not to that part of the community, *umma*, who try to escape what punishment they deserve by some calculated death-bed conversion. Here Ahmed sets honest motives and sincerity against hypocrisy, *riyâ*, the most serious and unforgivable sin after polytheism, *şirk*, [136] calling it *küçük şirk*, 'the second worst idolatry'.¹

It would also appear that Ahmed Bijan was not particularly impressed by the Fall of Constantinople, and we have learned about his aversion to End Time speculations. The central theme in his works is the problem of man's position towards God, both in acts and in faith. On the one hand, there is the individual battle against sin and spiritual laxity, and on the other, the inexorable march of time towards a final Reckoning for all mankind. Ahmed is forever conscious of this Judgement, and he is tortured by the thought that in their daily lives most people seem to be wholly unaware of their personal accountability on that Last Day. They merely do the works of this world and thus forfeit the World to Come. It is of vital importance to liberate oneself from the deadly embrace of this transient existence. A knowledge of God's ordinances is crucial. Knowledge saves man because one acts according to the knowledge one possesses, and good works bring salvation. Many generations of pious believers and great scholars have studied this question, and in their writings they allow their readers to share their insights and experiences. This knowledge from the past for the benefit of salvation in the future is formulated by Ahmed Bijan in Turkish, the language of his own people, because he wanted to instruct them in a life dedicated to Islam, the Religion of the Middle Way, *dîn al-waşat*, the indispensable link between this world, *al-dunyâ*, and the life in the Hereafter, *al-âhira*. In the words of Jane Smith, 'there is a real sense in which eschatology is *now*—not so much the realized eschatology of the kingdom of God actualized as the idea of the *now*-ness of human ethical responsibility'.²

From the very nature of Bijan's motives and sources it is self-evident that the imagery he employs simply cannot be time-bound. The analysis of the relevant story matter in chapters 3 and 4 amply illustrates that the eschatological materials in *Dürr-i meknûn* are so general, timeless and interchangeable that there is no basis for the view that an anxious Bijan wrote this text in response to a supposed decaying society in the first half of the 15th century. He made no attempt to relate traditional images to events occurring around him. The eschatological materials have not been re-interpreted in a contemporary, topical sense. In other words, Ahmed Bijan did not employ his images as one might expect an apocalyptic to do.

1 Hypocrisy, *riyâ*, is a stealthy manifestation of *şirk* rendering void man's endeavours, in particular prayer performed with false pretences, *Envârık*, 613.

2 Smith, 'Reflections', 89. See also Taylor, 'Some Aspects', 72ff.

My refusal to categorise Bijan's work as apocalypticism, compressed here in one severe sentence, is certainly not the only outcome of our present study into Bijan's use of eschatological *motifs* and *topoi*. We have also discovered more about Ahmed's technique as a storyteller. We can well imagine the pleasure experienced by readers of his book throughout the ages. In the light of the nature of Ahmed's *œuvre*, however, it would not do to overrate his editorial originality; we may assume that he made extensive use of passages from existing Arabic text books or from compilations of such passages. Nonetheless, the portions he selected from this material and the manner in which he adapted them are evidence of an original, intelligent and witty mind. This is illustrated by his account of the Dajjal which, [137] however compact, is complete and well-rounded. Ahmed made the story so concise by winding its narrative thread around just one slender time line. Each event follows immediately upon the preceding one, and there is no broad time band in which parallel actions take place. He also avoided the temptation to include a great many anecdotes, which would have diluted the well-wrought and concentrated nature of his treatise. He used only those stories which serve to illustrate the essence of what he is trying to say, and he had the gift of being able to distinguish between main issues and side issues. The indirect references to Dajjal as a giant or a talking baby, and his role as a deceiver are worth mentioning here.

In chapter 5 the story of Dajjal is first divided into 48 parts in order to trace the manner in which the various *topoi* and *motifs* are related to the classical sources, associations and semantic fields in Islam. It appears that the appearance, deeds and vicissitudes of Dajjal are strongly influenced by Judeo-Christian and possibly ancient Iranian traditions. I am referring here not only to a superficial exchange, but particularly to the phenomenon whereby the basic ideas represented in the underlying images influence and motivate the behaviour of Dajjal. This is in fact the explanation for his physiognomy, his gigantic size, the fact that in some stories his description includes elements of another giant (Udj ibn Anak), and the manner in which he meets his end. Also examined is the role of his mount: the donkey. In view of the role of the donkey as an accomplice of God's adversaries, there is more here than a simple reference to the Messiah. As has been seen, there is evidence to support my theory that there are suggestions of the figure of Dahak, the eschatological Iranian 'snake tyrant'. There is also an initial attempt to analyse the complicated story of the witness-martyr who is ultimately murdered by Dajjal.

The insights gained by this analysis show that there are tangible results to be had from studying in depth the minute details in eschatological images such as the story of Dajjal, Yadjudj and Madjudj or the Beast from the Earth. It is an approach that promises to be more rewarding in this under-researched field than the wholesale mobilisation of such images for a methodologically challenged reconstruction of the *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the age), and gauging of the depth of some writer's *Naherwartung* (perceived imminence of the End of Time).

Those readers who remain unconvinced, may feel that we are throwing away an important source of information on actual unrest, decay and popular complaints in the early Ottoman Empire by my definition of the eschatological materials found in Ahmed's work as standard classics and thus a-historical. Rather than reading the entire text of Ahmed's Chapter Seventeen anew, this group of readers may enjoy the quotation below, taken from the poem 'Is it any wonder that the world is suffering?' (Middle Dutch: 'Eest wonder, al wert de werelt geplaecht?'), a poem written by the counter-reformation Catholic female writer Anna Bijns in the southern part of The Netherlands around 1560.³

The inferior will not yield to the superior.
And Princes are led astray by false counsel.
Since one and all are after personal gains,
One watches common decency collapse.
Justice is corrupted by cunning practice,

People exert themselves to cash in;
The court is open on all sides to the rich,
Yet the dispossessed may not attend.
Justice is on their side but who will see it done?
The people cheat one another and do not mind,

How they get the goods so long as they get them.

To petty thieves they meet out sharp sentence,
While stooping and kotowing to the mighty.

[138]

Who wants to be popular should listen and not
speak,

To tell the truth is a hanging matter.
Is it any wonder that the world is suffering?

Those of Sodom whose sins were a big stink,
Sunk like lead into Hell with sulphur and pitch.
Thus God's justice will avenge all evil.

The people of today are so wanton:
Women parade showing off their bodies,

De minste en wilt den meesten niet wijcken.
De Princen werden verleit door loose raet quaet.
Omdat een iegelijc naer eygen baet staet,
Sietmen gemeynen oorboor heel beswijcken.
Trecht wert gecorrumpeert door loose
practijcken,

Om den penninck doet elck diligentie;
Thof is alomme open voor den rijcken,
Maer die niet en heeft en mach daer niet kijcken.
Al heeft hij recht, wie geeft hem audientie?

Tvolc bedriecht malcanderen, men maect geen
mentie,

Hoemen aen tgoet coemt, canment slechts
geerijgen.

Cleyn diefkens krijgen een scherpe sententie,
Voor de groote sietmen stuypen en nijgen.

Wie wel gesien wilt zijn, moet hooren en swijgen,

Die de waerheyt wou seggen, wert gecraecht.
Eest wonder, al wert de werelt geplaecht?

Die Sodomijten, wiens sonden groot stoncken,
Met solffer en pec ter hellen als loot soncken.
Gods rechtveerdicheyt moet alle boosheyt
wreken.

En tvolc is heensdaechs wel soe broodroncken:
De vroukens metten lichaem bloot proncken,

3 Anna Bijns (1493–1575), *Referijnen van Anna Bijns*. (Edited W.L. van Helten.) Rotterdam 1875, 407–412, from 'refereyn' 55.

Kindling sinful desire in men;
 The men themselves are also very fashionable
 Trying to attract women to their amours.
 There has never been more adultery than now;
 We have deviated, all of us,
 (...)

 Even the maidens go immodestly made up
 Dressed above their station like worldly
 goddesses,
 Being pert and frivolous in their manners;
 It is not surprising that there is much violation,
 One can hardly tell a whore from a virgin.
 Is it any wonder that the world is suffering?
 (...)

 Under the show of faith all virtues are forgotten.
 Towns are ruled by raw youths ('milk mouths');
 (...)

 Godless people are in charge of the country;
 (...)

 All are building nice homes whilst churches and
 cloisters
 Stand unfinished since nobody can be bothered.
 (...)

 Each allows his bad desires to have the upper
 hand
 Like heathen and Turks, who know of no God.

Die de mans tot quader begeerten ontsteken;
 De mans hen selven ooc fraey opqueken
 Om de vrouwen te trecken tot haerder minnen.
 Noyt en heeft meer overspeels dan nu gebleken;
 Wij sijn altesamen afgheweken,
 (...)

 De maechden gaen ooc oneerlijck verciert
 Boven haren staet als eertsche Goddinnen,
 Sijnde stout, lichtveerdich ghemaniert;
 Ten is niet vreemt al werter veel gheschoffiert,
 Men kent schier nauwe een hoer voor een maecht.
 Eest wonder, al wert de werelt geplaecht?
 (...)

 Int schijn van geloove wert alle deucht ontleert.
 Steden werden geregeert van jonghe melc muylen;
 (...)

 Van Godloosen menschen wordet lant beheert;
 (...)

 Elc timmert schoon woonsteen, en kercken en
 cluysen
 Blijven onvolmaect, als daermen niet na en
 vraecht.
 (...)

 Elc laet hem van zijn quaey begeerten verwinnen
 Als Heydenen, Turcken, die Godt niet en kinnen.

Reading this poem, one would almost feel the excitement of the world's only and oldest known instance of an impeccable verbatim contemporary translation from Old Ottoman Turkish into Middle Dutch. It is really only thanks to the last distich that we realise, just in time, that this poem cannot possibly go back to a Turkish dervish of the Bayramiyye order.

AN IMPRESSION OF

DÜRR-İ MEKNÛN MANUSCRIPTS

[141] This survey aims at providing the reader with an overall impression of the number and distribution of manuscripts of Ahmed Bijan Yazıcıoğlu's *Dürr-i meknûn*. [Evidently, with advancing years this overview will increase. For some recent additions, see *DM*, 23–25 ('Handschriften'). The sigla for the manuscripts used in the present study are listed below, 151.] When known, the copy's year of writing is given, to which must be added that the manuscripts briefly indicated in Götz's survey lack descriptions. So though listed here as 'updated', it is possible that their colophons yield the sought-after *istinsâh târihi*. The French translations by *jeunes de langues* such as Joseph Brüe are accompanied by their copies of the corresponding Ottoman Turkish sections of *Dürr-i meknûn*. For these bilingual manuscripts, see separately, above, 3. [For the role of MS W in this process, now see my analysis in *DM*, 36–40.]

- (1598) Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, H. 427.¹
Cat.: Karatay, *Yazmalar I*, 440, nr. 1322.
- (1598) Cairo, Dâr al-Kutub.
Cat.: *Fihris II*, 22, nr. 1562.
- (1601) Cairo, Dâr al-Kutub.
Cat.: *Fihris II*, 22, nr. 1563.
- (1602) Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Cod. Or. 1301.
Cat.: cco IV, 303, nr. MMCXIX; Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish Manuscripts I*, 596–599.

Other manuscripts include:

- (ca. 1572–1622?) Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Or. fol. 3332, part 8.
Cat.: Götz, *VOHD XIII*, 4, 321, nr. 335.

1 This is the oldest known copy to date. Cf. Sakaoğlu, 'Dürr-ü meknun'da evren', 37. [Note the enormous gap that exists between the year of this copy and the supposed date of writing of *Dürr-i meknûn*, around 1450–55! For examples of demonstrable later mutations and additions in various MSS, see e.g. above, 44f fn 36, and *DM*, 31f, 46 fn 12.]

2 Being chapters 16 and 17 of *Dürr-i meknûn*.

(125) Its head reaches to the clouds; in its right hand it holds the Rod of Musa, and on its left hand it wears the Seal-Ring of Süleyman. Those he touches with the Rod of Musa he creates 'heaveners', the infidels however he (stamps) with the Seal-Ring of Süleyman saying: 'You are for Hell!' On the believers' foreheads shall be written 'believer', on the foreheads of the unbelievers shall be written 'unbeliever', (126) just as God the Exalted has spoken: 'When the Decree falls upon them, We shall bring up a beast from the earth who will speak to them.'⁴² (127) Its tongue [193] is Arabic and its words shall be: 'God's curse upon the wicked.'⁴³

(128) Thereafter infertility will spread over the world. No one shall have children any longer and those born afterwards will have a foot grown together with their head.

(§17.129) Chapter on the Rising of the Sun in the West.

Some say that this will take place in the time of 'Îsâ—peace be upon him. However, the truth of the matter is as follows: after 'Îsâ,—peace be upon him—one evening the sun will set, approach one of the Throne's legs, kneel, and ask God for leave. (130) God will consent and for three days and three nights the sun will not rise. It will then come to pass that the truly religious people as is their custom will be immersed in worship. They pray so intensely (not noticing anything else) that when they go outside and looking up find that the stars are still in the sky—as morning has not broken yet—they suppose: 'We have arisen from bed too early,' and resume worship. (131) After having gone out several more times, only to find the stars still in their usual position, it begins to dawn upon them and they inform one another. Even those who are unmindful will finally wake up.⁴⁴ Lamenting, wailing and repentant, the people will assemble in the places of worship. (132) When three nights have gone by, all eyes are turned towards the [195] West.⁴⁵ As the people finally watch the sky over the West colouring (with the) red (glow of dawn), there will be an outburst of lamentations. The sun shall rise and climb to its midday position. The moon will also rise and both will converge, their light being of one kind. On the first day the sun will be red, on the second day it will rise yellow, and then gradually become as usual.

(§17.133) Chapter on the Gate of Repentance.

Henceforth the Gate of Repentance shall be closed. Repentance is no longer accepted if from those born into the faith. (134) The venerable Prophet of God—may Allah honour him and grant him peace—has said: "The Gate of Repentance is situated somewhere in the West. From post to post it measures (a) forty years' (walk). This Gate, which has been open ever since the Creation of the World, shall be shut around

42 From Sura 27:82.

43 From Sura 11:18; cf. Sura 7:44.

44 it begins to dawn (...) will finally wake up : om G

45 West : East W

that time, from which moment the race of believers shall dwindle.’ (135) According to Tradition (the people asked the Prophet): ‘How much time will remain till the Last Day once the sun has risen from the West?’ He said: ‘Fifty years.’ In another version (handed down) there is mention of two greying men asking one another: ‘When were you born?’, whereupon the other one answers: ‘I was born when the sun rose from the West.’ And that man will be grey already. This version has found acceptance.⁴⁶ After this the Beast [197] from the Earth shall appear for a second time and it will speak as I have described above.

(§17.136) Chapter on the Taking of the Koran up to the Heavens.

According to the Tradition after this the glorious Koran will be taken off the Pages. One Friday the people congregate in the mosque, where there is Koran recitation and the rites are performed,⁴⁷ while the preacher climbs the pulpit and the people are called to prayer. (137) At the (very) moment the call to prayer ends and following a command by God Eternal, Djibrail—peace be upon him—shall take away the Koran, and it shall vanish from mens’ hearts as well. However much he exerts himself the preacher fails to even pronounce ‘Praise be to God’. (138) Considering it about time, the callers to prayer will say: ‘Come on then!’, but when the preacher asks: ‘What is the opening of (Sura) ‘al-Fâtiḥa’ again?’, they can’t remember it themselves either. They proceed to the *miḥrâb* (i.e. niche of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca) and⁴⁸ open the Pages, only to find blank paper. The people will wail and cry. (139) The Holy Koran (hovers) between heaven and earth, issuing a sound like the humming of bees. God the Sublime, the Exalted says: ‘O My Word, why would you act so strangely?’ The Glorious Koran says: ‘O Lord, no one reads me anymore and those who do read me do not act accordingly. I originated from You but now desire to return to You and hide under the Throne.’ (140) Hereafter [199] the Beast from the Earth will emerge for a third time and then the Smoke shall rise.

(§17.141) Chapter on the Rising of the Smoke.

The Smoke is (a kind of smoking) fume. According to some the Smoke will descend from the skies, others hold that it will come up from the earth. It will emerge and cover the entire face of the Earth and men will be unable to perceive one another. For forty days and forty nights darkness will lie over the Earth. Believers who come into contact with it will catch cold and be ill, unbelievers who come into contact with it get drunk and are no longer aware of what they do. (142) All that is, men, spirits, the beasts of the wild

46 of two greying men (...) acceptance BGLW : that this will be twenty years E; (with G adding that it takes indeed some fifty years for a man to grey, which goes to show that this version must be correct).

47 the rites are performed (*sünnet kılına*) : prayer is said (*du‘â kılına*) G

48 proceed to the *miḥrâb* and : om G

introduced, traditionally they are supposed to number 7, 8 or 9 persons (and see remarks above, p. 120). Perhaps the total of 313 was borrowed from the number of envoys of God. *Mecmû'a*, fol. 239^v–240^r, states that there are 124,000 prophets, *enbiyâ'*, and 313 envoys, *mürsel*. In *Envârık*, 495, Bijan writes that 313 people—*peygamberler şayısınca*, 'after the number of the prophets'—stood with the prophet in the Battle of Badr, all of them recruited from 'the Helpers', *anşâr*, and the *muhâğirin* (those who joined Muhammad on his emigration from Mecca to Medina). We could also think of a possible numerical cipher, e.g. 3+1+3=7. See additional material in *DM*, § 8.93.

§ 17.74 *The year mîm of raḥîm*

Here a chronogram is given by means of the technique known as *abğad*. The letter *râ'* has value 200, *ḥâ'* 8, *yâ'* is 10, and the numerical value of *mîm* is 40. But which date is to be computed on this basis?

§ 17.76 *Raḥimdür merhûmdür*

Tentative translation with 'compassionate' and 'has seen compassion'. See also my remark in *DM*, § 17.76.

§ 17.77 *'Ulemânuñ muḳallidi*

Interpreted to mean: 'ulemâ' of the school of slavish imitation of (outmoded) teachings', with a view to a passage in Ibn al-'Arabî, with 'ulemâ' initially reluctant to follow the Mahdi; Madelung, 'Al-Mahdî', 1226.

§§ 17.79–109 *The story of Dajjal*

For a detailed commentary see above, Chapter 5, and *DM*.

§§ 17.102ff *The story of Hızır*

Something went seriously wrong with this passage in B and E. The copyist of E begins with: "The venerable 'Îsâ—peace be upon him—will come and say: "O Dajjal, you are a liar!" Dajjal [———].". Here the scribe interrupts the phrase as he suddenly realises that his text is headed for unacceptable consequences, namely the slaying of 'Îsâ. To play for safety he skips an entire line leaving open a blank space and continues the story from the moment when the Mahdi confronts Dajjal.

In MS B the misunderstanding gets [223] even worse when the prophet Muhammad himself receives the part of witness Hızır (possibly misread as *ḥazret*, first element of the set expression *ḥazreti peygamber*, 'most venerable prophet'), thus walking straight to martyrdom: 'When he makes for Bâbil, the venerable prophet—peace be upon him—will come and say: "O Dajjal, you are a liar! Dajjal [———].' Although the copyist of B, confused by the unthinkable scenario ahead, also aborts his line here, he resumes the story

too early and still ends up with the unorthodox outcome he tried to avoid: ‘The venerable prophet gets up and speaks: “O Cursed One, the Creator (...)”, etc., thus implying that the prophet had indeed been slain. D contains only the introductory words to the confrontation, ‘O Dajjal, you are a liar’, without the sequel.

§ 17.107 *In a loud voice (büleñd âvâzla)*

The copyist of B, after having misread *belinde* for *büleñd*, adds the sword, no doubt on the analogy of the preceding description of the armour. D combines the two elements.

§ 17.108 *Dajjal’s soul goes to hell*

The expression ‘cân cehenneme ıřmarlamađ’ in Old Ottoman Turkish means: to kill, to send to hell, literally: recommend to hell; AFG II, 18f; Özdemir, *Die altosmanischen Chroniken*, 61. Since our sentence lacks the direct object I have translated ‘soul’ as the subject. See further DM, § 7.123.

§ 17.112 *Short stature of Yadžudj and Madjudj*

See remark by Viré, ‘Kird’. On stories involving drooping ears, and the tale often found in eschatological texts that Yadžudj and Madjudj use one ear as their matress and the other ear for a blanket, cf. Wittkower, ‘Marvels’. The Gilim Gûř people have the same bed manners, cf. DM, § 6.42.

§ 17.113 *They will disperse (...) and breach the Wall*

The emendatio in G, ‘they will breach the Wall (first!) then disperse all over the world’ is of course a correction suggested by logic. For an account of an Umayyad expedition to the Wall, see de Goeje, ‘De Muur van Gog en Magog’. R. Anderson, *Alexander’s Gate, Gog and Magog*, etc. Cambridge 1932. Wensinck, ‘Yadžüdj wa-Mâdjüdj’. For the Wall in DM, see §§ 3.154–162 and 7.11. (For the study by Faustina Aerts, briefly referred to in § 3.159, see below, Bibliography.)

§ 17.114 *Thrice drinking of water*

In the so-called South-Arabian version of the Alexander Romance the ruler dreams that he will first drink all of the world’s fresh water, then its salty water and finally all brackish water (—or drain any remaining liquid from the moist clay). Worried about this vision he consults his doctors. [224] They reassure him and explain that the dream foretells his universal rule. Nagel, *Alexander der Große*, 10. Yadžudj and Madjudj’s original drinking version in the Tradition, e.g. in Muslim (transl. Şiddîķi), nrs. 6956–60, 7015, 7017–20. MS D remains closest to the version given by Muslim. A remarkable variant of this story, featuring different classes of vegetation, is found in the Edinburgh ms *ĶıyâmetE*, foll. 47^v–48^r.

AHMED BIJAN'S 'LIBRARY'

[234] The aim of this overview is to give an impression of various works mentioned by Ahmed Bijan in both his *Envârü 'l-âştîkîn* and *Dürr-i meknûn*.^{*} [See also the analysis of Bijan's use of language, style and possible sources in *DM*, 44–66, viz. 55–66.]

'Abd al-Raḥmân al-Biṣṭâmî, see al-Biṣṭâmî.

Abû Ḥanîfa al-Nu'mân († 767).

*Envâr*k, 35; *DM*, § 9.13. Jurist and theologian, the Ḥanafite School of Law is named after him. He did not write himself. His teachings and works on religious law were compiled by pupils under the title *Fikḥ akbar*. Bijan addresses him with the honorific title of 'Îmâm-ı a'zam'. J. Schacht, 'Abû Ḥanîfa al-Nu'mân', *ET*².

Abû 'l-Layṭ al-Samarḳandî († between 983 and 1003), *Tafsîr*.

*Envâr*L, foll. 11^r, 26^r; *Envâr*k, 109, 492, 815, passim. Ḥanafite theologian, surnamed 'Imâm al-Hudâ'. Successful author of works read in the entire Muslim world. The Turkish translation by İbn 'Arabşâh († 1450–51) of his Koran commentary is among the oldest dated Ottoman manuscripts. J. Schacht, 'Abû 'l-Layṭ al-Samarḳandî', *ET*².

The eschatological treatise *Kitâb al-ḥakâ'ik* is ascribed to al-Samarḳandî. This work—an example of an eschatology without the Signs and Portents of the Hour—is the basis for MacDonald's series 'Islamic Eschatology' I–V (viz. I, Introduction, and V, 132). Both *Kitâb al-ḥakâ'ik* and MacDonald's study are discussed in Pauliny, 'Glossen'. See also above, 58.

——, *Tanbîh al-ġâfilîn*.

*Envâr*k, 218. Widely reprinted book on ethics and piety. J. Schacht, 'Abû 'l-Layṭ al-Samarḳandî', *ET*².

* [This survey is a slightly enlarged version of the 1997 one with added titles or authors given in [] square brackets. However, no effort has been made to compile an exhaustive list, the obvious means to that being *critical* editions of all of Bijan's works. To date no such publications are available but my own *critical* edition of *Dürr-i meknûn*.]

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