

ARABIC APOCALYPSE OF DANIEL¹

These quires descended in a booklet form after the placing of the numbers.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, to whom glory, amen.
We begin with [asking] the aid of God and His good will upon this interpretation of the vision of Daniel the Prophet who told it to Ezra, his disciple, concerning the knowledge of the sons of Ishmael son of Hagar the Copt, in the peace of the Lord, amen, amen, amen.

Daniel the Prophet said to Ezra, his disciple: Hear my vision, O my son, and be amazed at the righteous works of God and His justice, the superiority of His affairs, the stability of His Word with regard to all creation² and peoples.

Know that I saw an angel descending from the heavens praising and glorifying [God]. His clothing was white and his face was like bright lightening. His hands, his forearms and his arms were like brass, and his eyes were like rays of the sun. In his right hand there was a scroll filled with writing, and he said to me: ‘God has heard your prayers, and sent me to you in order to tell you what will happen at the end of time. This scroll is for you, so open it and read what is in it.’

So I took the scroll from his hand with dread and trembling, and I unrolled it, and read from it. In it there were different tribulations and far-reaching and terrifying trials, and I praised God who raises those whom He wishes and humiliates those He wishes. He has the Kingdom and the power! I said: ‘O Lord, save your people from the harmful snake, whose mouth is filled with poison, and there is no salvation from it other than you, O God, mighty and dominating!’

Then I looked in the scroll, and there was a snake,³ which had on its head twelve horns,⁴ and on its tail nine spikes⁵ coming from the wilderness. And I saw it confront all peoples and communities, and its rule was harsh upon all humanity, which was terrified and drank its poison, and sprinkled it on those beside it as well.

Then I saw an angel descending from the heavens, who killed it and cut off its spikes. I saw the twelve horns rise higher, one by one in their rule and duration, then I saw the twelve horns become emaciated, and be annihilated and perish for a time. Not one of the kings of the world could stand in front of them, and I saw one of the horns hold fast over the world, and I said: ‘O Lord, possessor of power and might, why has that horn alone survived and did not go into perdition with its fellows?’ Then I heard a voice saying: ‘Call this among the people: “O people, be patience for the trials are little, and then there is eternal life for the one who perseveres”.’

¹ Text taken from Frederic Macler (ed. and trans.), “L’Apocalypse Arabe de Daniel,” *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions* 25 (1904), pp. 265-305, with comparison to Paris Librairie Nationale, *ms arabe* 150.

² Reading *khuluq* in place of *khuluf*.

³ Presumably the Muslims.

⁴ Presumably representing the Umayyad dynasty.

⁵ Presumably representing the `Abbasid dynasty (dating the apocalypse from the middle of the ninth century).

Then it said to me: ‘Look at that surviving horn of all the twelve, and know that it has duration and rule, and that it holds the world fast by its government over the tribes and animals of the earth—the mountains with tall trees and all of the hills, but he will have a opaqueness in his (?) eyes because it will be white. His name is *ha alif shin mim*.’⁶

Then the Lord said to me: ‘Call to civilization, and hear its answer to you.’ So I called to it, and it said to me: ‘O man, leave me silent, for my sufferings are many and difficult, because I was wealthy and then became poor, I was arrogant and then became humiliated, and I was handsome but have become ugly.’ Then He said to me: ‘Call to the desert.’ So I called to it, and it said: ‘I was poor but have become wealthy, I was despised but have become lofty, and at the end of my rule the lion will die, the great horn from the Byzantines (*al-Rum*) and two-thirds of the land of Rome [= Italy] for eighteen weeks⁷ and a half a week. This will be for a total of 130 years,⁸ and at the end of these years the man who has the white mark in his eye will die. [During his life] he will build cities and villages, and cause streams and rivers to flow from the earth, build up the desert, gather gold and silver—more than the caliphs and the twelve horns that were after them—and will cause the desert to be inhabited, plant trees and gardens, eat from its produce and die on his bed.

In his place there will be a drunkard, and he will be the first of the nine spikes. His head will be like that of a bear crouching, and his name will make *wa dal ya alif ha*.⁹ He is a tyrant, a large man, and he will kill with deceit from among the tyrants of the sons of Ishmael. After him there will arise [a man] fighting him, who will be the eagle, and his name [will be] *lam ka ya dal ya* and his rule will be a half a week.¹⁰ At that time I saw the entire earth had become confused.

Then there will be four chiefs and they will fight terribly with each other, which will last three months.¹¹ I saw a snake coming from the east,¹² and a viper putting out poison came out of the tail of the great snake, and it sprinkled its poison upon many of the people. It killed and destroyed fortresses, and on its shoulder there was a sign, and between its eyes there were three horns—by means of them it would cut and kill. This was an old man, with cunning, who would fight his enemies by himself just as a pole is blown by the wind striking in every direction. No one will be able to direct him, and I saw him advance and enter the great city, and shed much human blood. The birds of the heavens and the beasts of the wild came and ate of the flesh of the sons of man before my eyes.¹³

Then I saw the viper advance towards Byzantium (*Bizantiya*) the city, and it had with it all of the spoils that it had taken from the great city, and it surrounded it [the city], and fought it for a known

⁶ The name of the `Abbasid dynasty, the Hashemites.

⁷ Reading *shalu`* as *sabu`*.

⁸ If this date starts from the Muslim conquests in Syria, then the approximate date intended would be between 764-70.

⁹ If the ‘nine spikes’ are the `Abbasids, then this would be Abu al-`Abbas al-Saffah (749-54), but he was not known as a drunkard.

¹⁰ Perhaps Abu Ja`far al-Mansur (754-75)?

¹¹ Could this be the `Abbasid civil war (809-15)?

¹² Perhaps al-Ma`mun (813-33)?

¹³ Revelation 19:17-18.

number of days.¹⁴ God handed the city over to its hands because of the rebelliousness of its inhabitants, and I saw the viper blow its poison from its mouth into the wall of their city, and made an agreement with them that it did not keep.

Then I saw the equal of the twelve gather an army from the great city, and they fought the viper who is the chief. Then I saw a pole set up underneath the viper, a palace (?)¹⁵ upon it, and thousands, a great multitude, in that place lifted [it up]. Then I saw the viper snake smile, laughing with joy, and it crossed the Great River, and I saw one wing come out from among the wings in the land of the masters of wrath and power, and it fought the viper.

Then I saw another wing come out from among the wings in the land of the masters, and with it was a pole that came out from among the poles from the east of the land, and it was mighty and powerful, advancing towards the viper with numerous horse.

I saw the viper snake after it had smiled, its joy was snuffed out, and it was in difficult straights, and things were difficult for it, so it returned to Syria fighting the wing. Many multitudes fought in the place of the slaughter (or battle), and it sprinkled its poison upon the fortresses of the cities. I saw the pole coming from the eastern part of the earth, seeking the viper, and it cut the viper towards the pole, and forced it between two rivers. There was bloodshed at that place—much human blood—and the army with the chief struggled with some of them and killed others. Then the viper was thrown down from its pole, and fled burning those who were before it.

Then I asked the angel who was telling me of these things: ‘What will become of the head of the viper?’ The angel of God said to me: ‘There will be many veils of darkness and fog, and from the darkness and fog will come, towards the eastern part of the earth, ravens without number, and they will spread out over the face of the earth going towards the viper. The latter fled from them with a small number of people towards the western part of Syria and Egypt, and it was in straightened circumstances there, and its star was snuffed out, it became small and it was humbled greatly and perished.’ And I saw sons of the viper went towards the west and the north.¹⁶

I saw a beast from the second group (?)¹⁷ held the earth in its grasp, and continued to do so for periods of time (*addanayn*). The beast fled silently and then it perished. The beast’s name was *‘ayn ka fa ‘ayn ha lam lam*.¹⁸

I saw a great bull come across the face of the earth, hurrying and roused, who destroyed and held the earth in his grasp, and I saw between the eyes of the bull a long horn, and his tail dragged the earth. Around his neck were chains covered in jewels and pearls gathered together, with *bakhit* and purple (*birfir*).¹⁹

¹⁴ Conceivably this could be either Harun al-Rashid (786-809) or al-Mu`tasim (833-47), although neither one of them tried to conquer Constantinople. Other options could be the two Umayyad invasions of the Byzantine Empire—neither one of which succeeded in conquering the city of Constantinople, however—in 676-80 and 717-18.

¹⁵ Perhaps the word *faltut* could be derived from *palatium*, usually *balat* in Arabic.

¹⁶ Perhaps this means the Umayyad family that went to Spain.

¹⁷ Reading *min al-khalq al-thani* in place of *al-khilf al-tani*.

¹⁸ Perhaps Abu Muslim al-Khurasani (killed 754).

¹⁹ The first word is unclear; while the second is apparently derived from a Greek word.

The bull called towards the ravens,²⁰ and they answered him from all the earth and [its] languages, and they collected for him an army and provisions. He became lofty, and lead with gold and silver, and collected treasures, and gathered knowledge and wisdom more than any of the caliphs who were before him. He continued in anger and tightened his grip in a manner none will be able to follow after him. His name was `ayn ka ba `ayn ha lam lam alif.²¹ I saw during his time signs of the future that would be terrifying in the heavens and the earth. He collected treasures, and loved wealth, proverbs, unusual things²² and the knowledge of the learned. He will drive the people to fight the ‘chief’ harshly, and with severe tribulation, and there will be exile during his days and fleeing from place to place, from city to city because of the terror of the tribulation. He will make a sign on the hands of the people and between their eyes so that they will desire death and ask for it.

He will drive away the righteous servants of God from under each prayer house and school, and his wisdom, knowledge and cunning will increase so that he will know all of the days of his rule. At the end of his rule God will incite him against the people because of their criminality and their forgetting [righteous] actions. He will place evil governors and tyrannical chiefs (*arakina*)²³ who will harm the people, and steal from the orphans and the widows. They will press upon their spirits and many people will deny the Messiah because of the terrible tribulations and harm, and because of the sin that has overcome them.²⁴

Then I went aside to supplicate and weep for many days, and I wailed because of my sins and because of the sins of the common people, and I said: ‘O God! God of power and majesty, I praise You and give thanks to Your name because You have made all creation, and revealed wonders, and allowed us to see Your joy and true hope from the beginnings of time until the present, despite our breaking of Your will and the rebellion of our father Adam until death takes hold of us and we are swallowed up. Then You returned and saved us through Your compassion, and freed us from the levels of Hell by Your right hand because you are, O Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful (*al-ra`uf al-rahim*), who is not made happy by humanity’s perdition, but their return to You makes You happy, so that You can demonstrate affection towards them, because You are the Affectionate, the Forgiving. Your creation will not become corrupt until the end (?), and now, O Lord, do not turn Your face away from us ever. Do not give us over in to the hands of the tribes²⁵—You have shown to us our enemies, who do not deserve this power—save, free Your people from the harmful snake who is coming from the desert at the end of time and the end of the period.’

While I was crying, wailing and supplicating because of my sins and the sins of the common people, the angel came to me and began to speak to me, and said: ‘Rise, Daniel, and take comfort, for you have purchased joy—joy eternal until the end of the period.’

While he was speaking to me, this noise came out, and the bull with many ships [came] to Jerusalem (*Bayt al-maqdis*) in order to pray to God in it. The angel said to him: ‘Do not be enraged,

²⁰ Perhaps the ravens are Ethiopians or black Africans.

²¹ Perhaps Abu Ja`far al-Mansur (754-75).

²² Reading *awabid* for *awa`id*.

²³ From the Greek *archonos*.

²⁴ This sentence is clearly garbled.

²⁵ Presumably the Arabs.

Daniel, because when the people see that there is no salvation, and no one to lift them up, God will send an angel from the heavens, and will press his spirit, and his people will take it from him, so that his power will be broken, he will perish and be absorbed into the earth.

I saw the son of the bull coming complaining (?), grasping tightly [to his enemy?], and annihilate him, and his name is *dal mim ha mim*²⁶ and he will increase in filthiness, and will be short in days. Then the lion's whelp²⁷ will turn upon him and place him in a difficult place between the mountain and the coastal plain, and the lion's whelp will cause him to perish.

After the destruction of the horn,²⁸ those who followed it will continue to live and be submissive under its enemies, the lion, and he will give them agreements and treaties so that they will be at peace. There will be great joy for both of the sides, then they will break the peace at the end of his days—which will be a half a week—and he will partake of destruction, denying (?) God, and annihilation of the souls of the believers.

God will annihilate the soul of the evil pig²⁹ from the earth completely—its existence and its enmity towards God, and against the souls of the believers, and at its annihilation for the common people there will be great joy.

Then I saw a small horn grasping the earth, and its name was *ya sin waw ha waw*³⁰ and I saw the lion's cub awaken from his sleep, and gather the nobles of his group and the chiefs and the pure ones of his people. I heard a voice from the heavens saying: 'Truth has triumphed and right has been proclaimed, and God most high has made salvation openly over the face of the earth.'

Then I heard another voice saying to the armies of the heavens: 'Descend to aid the lion's cub, and divide the horns of the evil snake because it has reached its end and neared its appointed time since it has completed 173 years,³¹ there will be salvation and great joy.' I saw at the completion of seventy years, I saw an angel descend from the heavens and spill the blood of many humans between the hills and the rivers, and destroy beautiful buildings—and that was during the second month.

Then I saw also an army of the people, wearing black clothing that had entered into the rest of the earth, and had spread out over its face. From their faces a central horn proceeded and many troops, and they entered into Phoenicia (*Funiqiyya*) the city at the completion of (1)72 years. They spilled much blood and destroyed beautiful buildings until the end of the middle of the east.³² This will not harm the appearance of the Messiah at all because the sign of the Messiah is placed between

²⁶ Unclear.

²⁷ The Last Roman Emperor.

²⁸ The Muslims?

²⁹ The symbol of the pig does not appear elsewhere in the apocalypse nor in related apocalypses. I am assuming that it is a pejorative term for Muslims.

³⁰ Unclear. Michael Decker has suggested that this could be the attack of Nicephorus I (802-10) in 805.

³¹ What significance the number 173 has is unclear, although perhaps it is related to the 1173 years below. If the date of 173 years is related to the Muslim conquests, then it would be in the 810s.

³² The only place in the classical texts I have ever seen the phrase *al-mashriq al-awsat* (today, *al-sharq al-awsat*, the Middle East).

their eyes, and I saw many of those who asked help from them were saved because of the sign of the Messiah.

Then I went into my house, and continued to be amazed because of the vision for many days, while I was fasting and praying. Then I saw a raven surrounded by other ravens coming from the east to Syria (*Sham*), and in its mouth was a double-edged sword [...] ³³ like the lion, and it roamed the earth and made corruption and destroyed. Then I saw a large eagle coming from the north with a double-edged sword in its mouth, and it stood upon the raven then flew and went high up in the air, and then it was shaken, and descended. Many eagles, without number, followed it, and it stood where the raven [had stood], but the raven was broken and was trampled because of its corruption and terrible destruction. The eagle carried the raven, then smote the earth with it, and broke its bones and rent its body.

Then I saw two wings coming from under the great wing, and they struggled with regard to the dominion, and they spilled much blood of the Sons of Ishmael, but this did not continue, but their star was snuffed out—the snuffing out of a star! Then I saw a little chick, wary, grasp the earth, and it continued for a week and a half, ³⁴ and I saw during its days many signs in the heavens and on the earth, together with famine and terrible death among the Sons of Ishmael. ³⁵

Then I saw at the completion of 1173 years ³⁶ that the lion's whelp from the Byzantines had appeared, and a great army, beyond numbers, came across the face of the earth following him until he entered Syria (*Sham*), and he grasped it without weapons or fighting. ³⁷ No one could stand before him—neither strong nor weak, because the Sons of Ishmael had been dispersed because of their sins and iniquities. They humiliated the nobles in favor of the contemptible, doubted ³⁸ the appearance of the Messiah, [...] ³⁹ liars, and they destroyed the cities of the people of wealth. Their blasphemy rose to the heavens, and so the Highest Dominating One reached from the heavens to the earth, and to the time during which God has decreed and predestined by His foreknowledge, and saw that the world was close to annihilation and destruction.

I saw at that time the lion's whelp had come to Syria (*Suriya*), and arrived at the great city of God ⁴⁰ and killed every Jew and *hanifi* (Muslim?) in it, and cleansed it from all impurity. Then he built beautiful buildings in it, and donated many beautiful charities. I saw that chick had grasped the earth that was the kingdom of Persia, and his name was *nun waw ra alif ha*, ⁴¹ and I saw them sitting in peace, one with another, all the days of his rule, and there was peace between them and love until the end of his period.

³³ An unreadable word.

³⁴ Could this be Sayf al-Dawla of Aleppo?

³⁵ The editor corrects from Banu Isra'il.

³⁶ If this is to be taken literally, then according to the Selucid calendar the date would be 861-2; but the previous citation of the number 173 makes it likely that the addition of the word *alf* (thousand) previous to 173 is a mistake.

³⁷ Could this be either the invasions of Nicephorus II Phocas (963-69) or John I Tzimisce (969-76)?

³⁸ I am reading *nafiya*.

³⁹ An unclear word; probably meaning something like "believed" or "venerated" from the context.

⁴⁰ Probably Jerusalem.

⁴¹ Unclear.

I saw a Byzantine (*Rumiyyan*) abandon a Syrian woman to raise her sons in joy and peace without litigiousness or conflict.⁴² At that time in the east there will appear earthquakes in places, and tribulations among the people, and there will be evil events between groups.

A chief will arise from the west,⁴³ and will incite war and tribulations, and will throw off obedience to the Byzantines, break the peace for three months, and be harsh upon the people. The people, and the people of Persia, will meet trials and terrible hardship during this time, and much blood will be spilled in the land of Babylon. This will continue to enclosures of the kings and he will destroy the buildings built with great effort to their foundations. There will be destruction and perdition for the souls, together with terrible war until the people seek refuge and a place in which to flee, but they will not find it. Many of the believers will give themselves up to the unrighteous rulers (*al-tughyan*) fearing their weapons and a great multitude will deny the Messiah because of the terrible tribulation. But the Lord is loyal and will not find faith upon the earth except with those who are constant during the tribulation and the hurt. Many will seek comfort and turn with their passions to the evil and clearly wicked ways, but those who are constant in the ordinances of God and His laws, and do not counterfeit them, but guard the glory of God and the Right-hand [Jesus] [...]⁴⁴

Then I saw at that time a north wind blowing and rising, and I said: ‘O Lord, what is this dream?’ He said to me: ‘Look to the east of the earth and to the north.’ So I did this, and I saw from both of these directions—coming from the north there were people without number, with weapons and provisions, and from the east there were also [forces] like that, and they met on the banks of the great Euphrates River, and there was shedding of much blood there in fighting the Byzantines.

Then the wind died down, and the people calmed down, and they were safe from the terrible tribulation. And then I woke from my sleep, and praised God who has the dominion, the rule and the power in the heavens and the earth. He lifts those who He wishes and humbles those who He wishes.⁴⁵ His power and will are complete and reach His servants in truth and righteousness. The criminal people will suffer tribulation because of their crimes, and the people of wickedness and hypocrisy will [suffer] because of their inconstant beliefs, while the people of merit and righteousness will rise and be honored until the end of time.

Then I saw the Byzantines had overcome Syria, and ruled over it for fifty years in great peace, health and security until the times and seasons had come to an end, and the world was nearing its annihilation, and nearing the end of its period. The people will also go towards annihilation because of their sins and offenses, and at that time [someone] will lead the world, and guide things and matters towards a decrease. Love will disappear from people, and they will not soothe one another, but sins and offenses will increase among the common people, and the remembrance of God will be lifted from the hearts of humanity. They will become un-Christian without thinking, and God will give them into the unsteady world, and hand them over into their enemies. Wars, death and iniquity will increase among them, just as it was foretold by the tongue of their prophet [Moses]:

⁴² This interpolation, other than having some symbolic significance, does not seem to make sense.

⁴³ Perhaps either Sicily or Bulgaria.

⁴⁴ This sentence seems to be unfinished.

⁴⁵ A common Islamic saying, cf. Wensinck, *Concordance*, s.v. *rafa`*, *wada`*.

If you return [to your sins] and do not listen to me, I will redouble my punishment for each one of your sins seven times. I will make the heavens iron for you and make the earth copper. Your strength will be sealed in annihilation and the ground will not yield its produce, nor the trees their fruit [Leviticus 26:18-20] *because of your sins*. And I will cause war to be imposed upon you in order to take vengeance from you, and you will flee into your villages and you will be given into the hands of your enemies [26:25]. You will eat the flesh of your sons *and sell* the flesh of your daughters [26:29]. I will destroy your dwelling places and corrupt your land so that your enemies who dwell nearby will be amazed, and I will scatter you among the nations [26:32-33] *because of the crookedness of their path and their abandonment of what I covenanted with them*. But if they confess their sins, then I will remember the covenant of Jacob, and my law (*shari`a*) with Isaac [26:42], *and they admit their offenses in that they refused my ordinances*.⁴⁶

Then the four winds will blow—the south, west, east (*yamin*) and north, and the earth will be shaken. The fighters will gather and wars will be intensified among the people, and there will be tribulations, fear, trials and great harm such as there never was previously. This will continue seven years, and this will be the house (?) of God for the corruption that will pass [over them].

At the end of the anger from the west there will appear a great king who will grasp the east and the west for a week and half of a week, and he will divide the treasures of the kings that had grown through the ages so that the poor man will be wealthy. No one will have need of anyone else, and wars and hurts of people will be ended during the days of his rule. There will be signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth: earthquakes in places and stars will fall, so that there will be a terrible fear.

Then the king of the Byzantines will appear and his rule will be for a total of three weeks, and he will fight (*yujahid*) the kings and the nations. At the end of his time there will be a famine in the world, and the waters and springs will return to their sources. There will be terrible signs in the sun, the moon and the stars.

When the Antichrist (*al-Dajjal*) appears the king of the Byzantines will go to the city of the Messiah, Jerusalem (*Urshalayim*), the holy city, and sit upon the throne of dominion. He will place the crown of dominion upon his head, and carry the outward sign (?) and the crown. The False Messiah will come from the tribe of Dan, from the land of Judea on the holy Mt. Sapir with an army of demons and many people in a great fleet. He will stand between the mountain and the coastal plain, and rise above every god. He will say about himself that he is the True Messiah, and perform great signs and wonders to show to the people in order to lead them astray and to expel the holy ones, the chosen of God and to be harsh upon the righteous ones. A great number will flee towards the mountains and the caves from the abundant wrath of the accursed one. Many of the righteous ones will be killed, and people will be lead astray.

Then he will go to Jerusalem (*al-Bayt al-maqdis*) and he will ascend Golgotha, and sit there saying that he is the True Messiah. Many people will follow him, and the Jews will have great joy because they will be saying that he is the Messiah whom they are expecting. Most of the common people will gather together and follow him, other than the chosen ones, those who are constant in fighting

⁴⁶ Material in italics is additional to the Biblical text. There are several elisions as well that are not noted.

(*jihad*). Then Elijah and Enoch⁴⁷ will come and weep in confrontation [with him?], fighting [him?], and the spilling⁴⁸ of their blood will be at his hands.

Then the Lord will descend from the heavens with His angels, the cherubim, and destroy the contemptible one. Those who are in their graves will hear the great horn, and stand up, bowing down to God when they see the holy sign they had denied. They will be amazed because of it, and the righteous ones will feel great joy, but the criminals will drag behind. The righteous ones will stand before their God in the clouds (*ghamam*) to the Kingdom, while the evil ones will go into the gloom (*ghumm*) and the terrible torment.

When I had seen this vision, I Daniel wrote this book, and left it as a reminder for others. Praise to God forever, ever, perpetually. Amen, amen.

⁴⁷ Cf. Revelation 11:1-6.

⁴⁸ Reading *iraqat* in place of *izaqat*.