

Gog, Magog, Dogheads and other monsters in the Byzantine World

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The obvious sources for information about Gog and Magog in the Byzantine context are three important categories of Byzantine literature: the theological literature, historical literature, and literary compositions such as the Alexander Romance and its antecedents.

As for the theological literature: the Byzantine empire was essentially a theocratic state. This means that its existence and history were, in principal, part of the divine work of salvation. The production of apologetics and works intended to propagate Christian faith by Byzantines was massive and there was no lack of apocalyptic reflexions. However, Gog and Magog do not appear often in this category. In most cases, apocalyptic writing focuses on the prophecies of Daniel about the four world empires and the appearance of the last opponent of Christ, the Antichrist. Gog and Magog seldom play a role in this respect. This can be demonstrated for instance by a work of Cyrill of Jerusalem (4th c.), who wrote a *catechesis* (no. 15) on the Δευτέρᾳ παρουσία (second advent) of Christ. In this long piece of work he devotes many passages to the appearance and activities of the Antichrist, but there is no reference at all to Gog and Magog (see Migne PG 33, 865-916).

In the Bible, Gog and/or Magog are mentioned only a few times. In Gen. 10:2 Magog figures among the sons of Japhet (repeated in 1 Chron. 1:5), in the Revelation of John 20:8 Gog and Magog symbolize the extremities of the earth, from where Satan, "being loosed from his prison" (20:7), "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (20:8). More relevant for their presence in Byzantine apocalyptic literature are the rather elaborate mentions in Ezekiel ch. 38 and 39, where "Gog, the land of Magog" is prophesied "to come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land. It shall be in the latter days..." (38:16), but will be defeated "upon the mountains of Israel" (39:4) and will be buried in the "valley of Hamon-gog" (39:11). There are only five references to commentaries on Ezekiel in the Patrologia Graeca of

Migne, of which only one is truly interesting: that of Theodoretus of Cyrillus (1st half 5th c.)¹. His verse-to-verse commentary on chapters 38 and 39 has many interesting remarks, but for our purpose the relevant ones are first of all those relating to the first two verses of chapter 38, where Gog, Magog, the ruler (of) Ros, Mosoch and Thobel are mentioned. Theodoretus' comment says that Gog and Magog are Scythian tribes; that Mosoch refers to the Cappadocians and Thobel to Iberia, i.e. Georgia.² He does not know what to do with "Ros": on the one hand he refers to the Hebrew word "rosj" as "head", on the other he mentions another commentator, Aquila, who interprets "rosj" as "ἄρχοντα", i.e. "commander"/"ruler", and the expression as "commander/ruler of Mosoch". This gives an impression of the character of Theodoretus' commentary.

The most striking viewpoint in his commentary is that Gog and Magog are not to be associated with the end of the world. This becomes clear from two passages in his commentary: in 38:14-16, where is said "ἐπ' ἑσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἔσται", he remarks that this is not a reference to the day of the Lord, but to the Jewish diaspora.³ His stand is that there is no need for Gog to make Jahweh's name known under all the nations, since it is Jesus Christ whom this role has been given. In his long explanation of chapter 29, Theodoretus restates this point of view, when he writes: "I am not so much surprised about the ignorance of the Jews as well as of those who bear the name of "Christians" but nevertheless give credence to the stories of the Jews and assert that the invasion of Gog and Magog is not past history, but

1 See Migne PG 81, 1200 ff). A detailed survey of his life is to be found in Joseph Fessler, *Institutiones Patrologiae*, Iib 221-240, espec. p. 227, no. 5: *Commentarii in omnes Prophetas majores et minores* (εἰς τοὺς προφήτας). A short biography in *Tusculum Lexikon griechischer und lateinischer Autoren des Altertums und des Mittelalters* (edd. Wolfgang Buchwald, Armin Hohlweg, Otto Prinz, München 3, 1982) s.v. Theodoretos. Pierre Canivet – Alice Leroy-Molinghen, *Théodoret de Cyr, Histoire des moines de Syrie*, Sources Chrétiennes, 234, Paris 1977, Introduction.

2 Καὶ ἐγένετο λόγος Κυρίου πρὸς με λέγων· Ὑιὲ ἀνθρώπου, στήρισον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐπὶ Γῶγ καὶ τὴν γῆν Μαγῶγ, ἄρχοντα Ῥῶς, Μοσόχ καὶ Θοβέλ. - Γῶγ καὶ Μαγῶγ Σκυθικὰ ἔθνη· Μοσόχ δὲ Καππαδόκας εἶναι φασί, καὶ Θοβέλ Ἰβηρρας. το δὲ Ῥῶς ἢ Ἑβραίων φωνῇ κεφαλὴν ἠρμήνευσε, καὶ ὁ Ἀκούλας δὲ κεφαλὴν Μοσόχ τὸ Ῥῶς ἠρμήνευσε. See also the catalogue of peoples in Gen. 10 (here 10:2), and e.g. Isidore of Seville, *Etymol.*, IX, 2, 26 ff, e.g. "Magog, a quo arbitrantur Scythas et Gothos traxisse originem." The Iberi are in Isidore Hispani, of course.

3 Καὶ καλεῖ τὸ ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν οὐ τὴν συντέλειαν, ἀλλὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐν ᾧ γέγονεν αὐτῶν ἡ διασπορά. "Καὶ ἀνάξω σε ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν μου, ἵνα γνῶ με πάντα ἔθνη ἐν τῷ ἀγιασθῆναι με ἐν σοὶ ἐνόπιον αὐτῶν, ὧ Γῶγ". Τα ἔθνη νῦν οὐ χρήζει τοῦ Γῶγ εἰς διδασκαλίαν τοῦ τῶν ὅλων Θεοῦ· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ Δεσπότης Χριστοῦ τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν ταύτην ἐδέξατο. A.R. Anderson (Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations, Cambridge 1932, p. 8) speaking about the identification of Gog and Magog with Scythians, Goths or others refers, indeed, also to this passage in Ezekiel and his unique interpretation, without any comment, however. The Byzantine author Zonaras I, 5, commenting on the peoples' catalogue in Genesis ch. 10 and the identifications, identifies the "Magogs" with the Scythians, does not mention, however, anywhere the combination Gog and Magog or any relation with the day of the Lord.

something which will take place in the future."⁴ Afterwards Theodoretus follows with a detailed reasoning to underpin his argument.

John Droungarios (2nd half 7th c.) has written so-called *Catenes* (short commentaries), among others on Ezekiel. He is said to have used works of "heretic" authors like Theodoretus, Polychronios, and Origenes. None of these *Catenes*, however, have been edited.⁵

A totally different note is struck in the apocalyptic passage of the famous *Vita Andreae Sali*, the "Life of Andreas, Fool for Christ's Sake", written by Nicephorus, presbyter of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (1st half 10th c.). From chapter 25 on (= Migne PG 111, 852) Nicephorus speculates on the coming era of the Antichrist. The break-out of the unclean nations appears in §225 (col. 868): "For in that year the Lord will force open the gate in India (?), which was closed by Alexander (king) of the Macedons, and the 72 realms with their soldiery will march out, the so-called unclean nations, the very abominable ones because of their filth and stench, and they will spread out over all the nations under the sky, eating flesh of still living people⁶ and drinking their blood, but also dispatching with relish dogs, mice and frogs, and whatever in this world is filthy", etc.⁷ The nations are not mentioned by name, neither Gog nor Magog, but the source can easily be identified. The passage goes back to the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius, to which I shall return later. I will only remark here that the influence of Pseudo-Methodius is recognizable in a considerable number of passages in Nicephorus' work.⁸ Striking is the number 72, where 22 is 'canonical'.⁹

4 1217A: 'Εγὼ δὲ θαυμάζω <οὐ> μόνον Ἰουδαίων τὴν ἀ<γ>νοίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τινὼν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ὄνομα περικειμένων, τοῖς δὲ μύθοις προσεχόντων· καὶ τοῦ Γὼγ καὶ Μαγὼγ τὴν ἐπανάστασιν οὐ γεγενῆσθαι λεγόντων, ἀλλ' ἔσσεσθαι προσδοκόντων. I have corrected ἀνοίαν > ἄγνοίαν and added οὐ, which is lacking in Migne.

5 See H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, München 1959, p. 470.

6 Thus with metathesis, ζώσας with ἀνθρώπων; Rydén interprets "raw flesh of people", see L. Rydén, *The Andreas Salos Apocalypse, Greek Text, Translation, and Commentary*, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 197-261, p. 258.

7 (§) 225. Τὸ γὰρ ἔτος ἐκεῖνον ἀποφράξει Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τὰς πύλας τὰς ἐν * Ἰνδία, ἃς ἐκλείσεν Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ τῶν Μακεδόνων, καὶ ἐξελεύσονται βασιλεῖαι ἐβδομήκοντα δύο ἅμα τῷ λαῷ αὐτῶν, τὰ λεγόμενα ρῦπαρὰ ἔθνη, τὰ βδελυρότατα πάσης ** σιγκασίας καὶ δυσωδίας, καὶ διασκορπισθήσονται ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ ὑπ' οὐρανόν, σαρκὰς ἀνθρώπων ζώσας ἐσθιόντες, καὶ τὸ αἷμα πίνοντες, κύνας καὶ μῦσας καὶ βατράχους δαπανῶντες, καὶ πᾶσαν ρύπαριαν τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἡδονῇ.

* In the mss. Ἰνδαλία. ** Thus in Migne; Rydén: σιγκασίας. For σιγκασία, see Sophocles, *Lexicon* s.v.

8 §209 (col. 854, ±C) = PsM 13, 17-18; §210 (col. 856A) = PsM 13,11 ff; §212 (col. 856D) = ±PsM. 14,10; §216 (col. 860C) = PsM 14, 21-23; etc.

9 For the 'canonical' number of 22 enclosed nations, see the ample discussion in Anderson, o.c., p. 33 ff. Anderson did not know the apocalyptic passage in Nicephorus. About the genesis of the number 22, see G. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius (Übersetzung)*, *Scriptores Syri*, tom. 221 (CSCO 541), Louvain 1993, p. 24, note 4 on VIII, 10). About the varying numbers in the Arabic tradition, see Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, Diss. Leyde 2003, 3.6.2, p. 146.

There is also an *Exposition about the Vision of Ezekiel* by Nikolaos Cabasilas Chamaëtos, a highly esteemed theologian from the 14th century (±1320-1391).¹⁰ This text has not been edited as far as I know. From a concise description (Migne, PG 150, p. 359) one may conclude that its contents are specifically concerned with the four creatures before the throne¹¹ and with the dead bones which regenerate flesh.¹² If Gog and Magog are mentioned, then it is not prominently.

As for Gog and Magog in Byzantine historiography we can subdivide this literature into four manifestations: 1. historiography in imitation of the famous classical historiographers (Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, a.o.); 2. the world chronicle (Malálas, the Easter Chronicle, Theophanes, George the Monk, a.o.); 3. in biographical form (Psellos, Anna Comnene, John VI Cantacuzenus, Sphrantzes); 4. historiography in verse (Pisides on Heraclius, Constantine Manasses, Chronicle of Morea, etc.).¹³ The world chronicle, based on the works of Eusebius and other church historiographers, clearly shows the features of church history. All the Byzantine authors of world histories cherish what can be called a "holistic" idea of history: God created the world and will also bring it to an end. In the meantime His guidance is clearly present in the course of events. One would expect to find Ezekiel's prophecies regularly in these chronicles. However, this is not the case. Within the framework of world history it is the prophecies of Daniel on the four world empires and passages in the Old Testament about Alexander the Great which play an important role. The character of these chronicles is thoroughly analysed by Heribert Gleixner in his *Das Alexanderbild der Byzantiner*, pp. 32-56.¹⁴ As to the role of Alexander the Great, Gleixner summarizes the motifs used by the chroniclers: a) the chronology is based on Eusebius; b) the main (historical) source is the Alexander Romance; c) the idea of Alexander being cosmocrator reflects the Barbarus Scaligeri; d) the encounter with the Brahmins and the apophthegms run according to George the Monk; e) Alexander

10 On Nikolaos Cabasilas Chamaëtos, a nephew of Nilus Cabasilas, see *Tusculum* Lex. Gr. Lat. Autoren, s.v., and H.-G.Beck, *Kirche u. Theol. Lit. d. Byz.*, p. 780 ff.

11 Ezekiel, ch. 1.

12 Ezekiel, ch. 37.

13 See Willem J. Aerts, Panorama der byzantinischen Literatur, in *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft IV, Spätantike*, edd. H. Hofmann-L.J. Engels, p. 664-677 and 685-687.

14 Gleixner mentions Eusebius, the Barbarus Scaligeri (= Frick, *Chronica Minora I*), John Malálas, John of Antioch, the *Chronicon Paschale*, George Syncellus, George the Monk, Theodosius Melitenus, George Cedrenus, Const. Manasses, John Zonaras, Michael Glykas, Joël, George Scholarius (Gennadius) and Dorotheus (17th c.).

is typified according to Flavius Josephus. Much attention is given to Alexander's homage towards Jaddus, the highpriest of Jerusalem. Gog and Magog are nowhere mentioned.¹⁵

Surprisingly, connections are offered by the 'classical-oriented' historiographers. The oldest mention of a gate constructed by Alexander the Great is to be found in a passing remark of Flavius Josephus in his *Bellum Judaicum* 7,7,4).¹⁶ To realize their plans to organize a raid into Iran and further the Alans depend on the king of the Hyrcanes who controls the only passage which was blocked in the past by Alexander the Great by means of an iron gate. The Byzantine historiographer Procopius in his *Persian Wars* (1,10,1 ff) provides an ample description of the landscape around the Caspian Gate and its narrow passage. It was Alexander who discerned the character of the terrain and constructed the iron gate there (1,10,9).¹⁷ The same description is verbatim repeated by Photius in his *Bibliotheca*, containing a compilation of the first book of Procopius' *Persian Wars*.¹⁸ Gog and Magog do not appear. They wait only for the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius and his handling of the Alexander episode which becomes the source of the later Byzantine versions of the Alexander Romance (ε, γ etc.).

15 Where Magog is mentioned, as in Chron. Pasch. 1,46,12, its context is the catalogue of peoples in Genesis 10:2.

16 Το δὲ τῶν Ἀλανῶν ἔθνος, ὅτι μὲν εἰσι Σκύθαι περὶ τὸν Τάναϊν καὶ τὴν Μαιῶτιν Λίμνην κατοικοῦντες, πρότερον δῆπου δεδηλώκαμεν. Κατὰ τούτους δὲ τοὺς χρόνους διανοηθέντες εἰς τὴν Μηδείαν καὶ προσωτέρω ταύτης ἔτι καθ' ἁρπαγὴν ἐμβάλειν, τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν Ὑρκανῶν διαλέγονται. Τῆς παρόδου γοῦν οὗτος δεσπότης ἐστὶν ἦν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος πύλαις σιδηραῖς κλειστὴν ἐποίησε. [Somewhere earlier we have explained that the people of the Alans are Scythians who live around the (river) Don and the Maeotis Lake. In these times, however, they planned a raid into the territory of the Medes and even further and started negotiations with the King of the Hyrcanes. For he was master of that corridor which king Alexander had blocked with an iron gate].

17 Proc., Pers. 1,10,4 διοδος γὰρ οὐδεμία τὸ λοιπὸν φαίνεται, πλὴν γε δὴ ὅτι ὥσπερ τινὰ χειροποίητον πολίδα ἐνταῦθα ἡ φύσις ἐξεῦρεν, ἣ Κασπία ἐκ παλαιοῦ ἐκλήθη. [...] 6 οὐ δὴ τὰ Οὐννων ἔθνη σχεδὸν τι ἅπαντα ἰδρύται ἄχρι ἐς τὴν Μαιῶτιν δῆκοντα λίμνην. οὗτοι ἦν μὲν διὰ τῆς πολίδος, ἥς ἄρτι ἐμνήσθην, ἴωσιν ἐς τὰ Περσῶν τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων ἤθη, ἀκραίφνεσί τε τοῖς ἵπποις ἴασι καὶ περιόδῳ τινὶ σὺδαμῇ χρώμενοι οὐδὲ κρημνώδεσιν ἐντυγχόντες χωρίοις, ὅτι μὴ τοῖς πεντήκοντα σταδίοις ἐκείνοις, ὥσπερ εἰς τοὺς Ἰβηρίους ὄρους, ὥσπερ ἐρρήθη, δῆκουσιν. ἐπ' ἄλλας δὲ τινας ἐξόδους ἰόντες πόνῳ τε πολλῷ παραγίνονται καὶ ἵπποις οὐκέτι χρῆσθαι τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἔχοντες, περιόδους τε γὰρ αὐτοὺς περιμένει πολλάς ἐπάναγκες καὶ ταύτας κρημνώδεις. ὅπερ ἐπειδὴ ὁ Φιλίππου Ἀλέξανδρος κατενόησε, πύλας τε ἐν χώρῳ ἐτεκτήνατο τῷ εἰρημένῳ καὶ φυλακτήριον κατεστήσατο. [For there is further no passage, as it seems, except where nature has created a gate as it were made by human hand, which was from early days named the Caspian. [...] 6. Nearly all the tribes of the Huns are settled there as far as the Maeotic Lake. When they like to go through this gate, where I spoke about, to the habitats of the Persians and the Romans (=Byzantines), they go there without any damage for their horses and along the shortest way, not having to deal with rocky terrain, except for the distance of fifty stades which they have, as said already, to traverse up to the Iberian (=Georgian) border. If they take other exit routes they have to surmount many difficulties, being obliged to change horses, because they must make great detours and, moreover, through rocky grounds. When Philips' son Alexander discerned this, he had a gate built on the spot mentioned, and a guarded post arranged.]

18 Photius, Bibl. 22b (Migne PG 103).

The more literary compositions of the Byzantines show they had a strong belief that the Roman, or its successor the Byzantine, Empire was the fourth and last empire in the prophecies of Daniel, and that its last emperor was destined to hand over his crown, i.e. his power into the hands of Christ shortly before the Day of the Lord. This period would be preceded by the invasions of "Gog from the land Magog", or "Gog and Magog" into the Holy Land, according to the prophecies of Ezekiel and by the reign of the Antichrist. But the appearance, in the 7th century, of a new world power, the empire of the Arabs, who had adopted the new doctrine of Islam, created a problem for the Byzantines. Could the prophecies of Daniel still be trustworthy after the birth of a fifth world empire? One of the first reactions to the tempestuous expansion of Islam is the so-called *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius, an anonymous document, $\pm$ 692 written by a Syrian theologian in Singar, near Nisibis.¹⁹ Drawing parallels between the history of the Jewish people in the Old Testament and of the Roman (=Byzantine) Empire he attempts to show that this fifth world empire is doomed to perish, if only the Byzantine emperor awakes from his lethargy. Pseudo-Methodius uses Ezekiel prolifically, and in addition to Christian Byzantium's last emperor he constructs, by means of a wonderful genealogy,²⁰ a proto-Christian world emperor, who is 'of course' Alexander the Great. From this point on, the supposed construction of a wall (or gate) against the tribes from the North, whether this barricade is placed in the Caucasus (the town Derbend)²¹, or in Hyrcania, south-east of the Caspian Sea, is

19 See G.J. Reinink, *Die syrische Apocalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (Übersetzung, CSCO, vol. 541, Louvain 1993) p. XIV, note 43; pp. XXVII-XXIX.

20 The genealogical construction of Pseudo-Methodius states that all the Christian rulers of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Aethiopia are related through the founder of the potential Christian empire of Alexander the Great. In chapter 8 Pseudo-Methodius makes his reasoning clear: the four storm winds seen by Daniel refer to a relationship between the Aethiopians and the Macedonians, between the Romans and the Greeks, for Alexander is the son of Philip of Macedon and an Aethiopian princess, Chouseth, who after the death of the childless Alexander, returns to Aethiopia. Then she enters into a second marriage with Byzas, the King of Byzantium. Their daughter Byzantia is married to Romulus, King of Rome. From this marriage three sons are born: Armelaos, Urbanus and Claudius, who are the later kings of Rome, Byzantium and Alexandria respectively. By this construction is Alexander founder of the empire that will also be the last empire.

21 See e.g. David Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity* (Oxford 1994), p. 270, and note 9. See also Anderson, o.c., Introductory Note (p. VII and VIII) and Chapt. I, p. 1-15. The medieval travellers to the Far East locate the wall or gate or defences, built by Alexander (the "Iron Gate") against the tribes from the North, always West of the Caspian Sea. So e.g. William of Rubrouck: "Next day we arrived at the Iron Gate, which was built by Alexander of Macedon. The most eastern part of this town (i.e. Derbend) touches the shore of the sea." Somewhat further on he writes: "The next day we traversed a valley, where foundations of walls were to be seen running from one mountain to another, and no way went over the crest of the mountain. These were the bolts of Alexander, which should keep off the savage tribes, namely the nomads of the steppe, lest they could set on the cultivated lands and the settlements. For the rest, there are also other bastions, in which live Jews. But I was not able to get more information about them. There

combined with the dangerous unclean nations of Ezekiel. The influence of this combination is evident in the later versions of the Alexander Romance.

Several versions exist of this Alexander Romance, as is well-known. The oldest version (α) is dated 3rd c. A.D., the oldest reworking (β) is dated 5th/6th. c. A.D. In these versions the enclosing of the unclean nations is absent. In some late manuscripts of the β -version this episode occurs, but there one has to do with interpolations.²² The Gog episode occurs for the first time in the versions ε and γ of the Alexander Romance. The ε -version differs in many respects from the prototypes α and β . The γ -type mostly shows resemblance to the β -version, but there are a considerable number of episodes, in which γ follows the ε -version. The Gog and Magog episode is among these. As to ε and γ , there is also a dating problem. In the introduction to his edition of the ε -version, Jürgen Trumpf put the time of origin late 7th, early 8th c. A.D. This supposition was based on dating the first version of Pseudo-Methodius ± 640 A.D.²³ In our editions of the Syrian original text and the first Greek and Latin translations, Reinink, Kortekaas, and I have made clear that the original text must have been written ± 692 A.D. The Greek translation was made about 10 years later. The Latin one about 10 years later from the Greek version.²⁴ Moreover, if one takes into account that the catalogue of nations in ε considerably deviates from the one in Pseudo-Methodius and the chain of events in the Alexander passage in ε is contrary to the one in Pseudo-Methodius²⁵, it is obvious that the origin of the ε -version is to be dated much later than Trumpf in his edition did. In a recent article, however, in the *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (Bd 155, 2006, p. 85 ff. "Pap. Berl. 21266 Ein Beleg für die historische Quelle des griechischen

were, however, many Jews in all the cities of Persia." See Dr. H.C.A. Muller, *Voorlopers en navolgers van Marco Polo* (= Predecessors and followers of Marco Polo), Leiden 1944, p.193-194.

22 See L. Bergson, *Der griechische Alexanderroman, Rezension β* , Stockholm 1965. Bergson quotes this interpolation from the mss. B and M in Appendix B.

23 Trumpf based his supposition on the reference to the Bersile tribe, mentioned in ch. 39,1 of ε , a tribe which is indicated as Caucasian also in Theophanes Homologetes and in the *Short History* of Nicephorus.

24 The new dating came above all forth from the investigations of Sebastian Brock, see Reinink, o.c., p. XII ff. For the dates of the Greek and Latin translations, see W.J.Aerts-G.A.A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius; die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, CSCO, Subsidia 97,98, Louvain 1998, espec. 97, p. 3, 4.

25 The chain of events in PsM is as follows: establishment of the abominable behaviour of the unclean nations; Alexander's invocation of God's help to bring the two mountains closer to one another; building the gate, followed by the reference to Ezekiel and the catalogue of the enclosed nations. In ε the dislodging of the unclean nations to the North comes first, followed by Alexander's prayer to God in a very Christian way for putting the mountains together; then their enclosure and the catalogue, and at last the description of their abominable behaviour.

Alexanderromans”) Trumpf gives a new date for ε: 8th/9th c., a date which is more in conformity to the facts. The (late) 9th century or even early 10th c. is perhaps a more probable option. The γ-version will have been realized considerably later.

The catalogue of the unclean nations in the versions that follow is an unholy mess. Most striking is the spelling Γώθ and Μαγώθ in ε. In the lists of the unclean nations prepared by A. Lolos, in his edition of the first and second recensions of PsM, this spelling only occurs in the manuscripts B,Q and E.²⁶ The identification of Gog and Magog with the Goths is of regular occurrence. So, in Isidore of Seville, *Etym.* IX, 2, 26-27: *Filii igitur Iaphet septem nominantur: Gomer, ex quo Galatae, id est Galli. Magog, a quo arbitrantur Scythas et Gothos traxisse originem.* And again, *Etym.* IX, 2, 89: *Gothi a Magog filio Iaphet nominati putantur, de similitudine ultimae syllabae, quos veteres magis Getas quam Gothos vocaverunt.*²⁷

In the (later) Alexander Romances we find two types of the enclosed nations episode: as a story told in the third person, and in the form of a letter (sent to his mother Olympias) in the first person. In the first type Alexander directs his prayer to "τὸ θεῖον"²⁸, in the second, it is "ἡ ἄνω πρόνοια" ("the providence from above")²⁹ to whom he sends up his prayer. The first context mentions 22 names, the second only

26 Though it is to be noticed that B and Q write Μεγώθ, E Μηγώθ. Moreover, the names Ἀγείς, Ἐξενάχ, Νεῦνιοι, Ναζάρται, Θεανοί, Φισολονικάσιοι, Ἀλκινάσιοι and Σαλπάριοι do not have any equivalent in the lists of Lolos. With one or more of the mss. B,Q and E agree further only the names Ἀνούγ, Διφάρ (or Δηφάρ), Φωτιναῖοι, Φαριζαῖοι, Ζαρματιανοί, Ἀνθρωποφάγοι (often with the nomen sacrum abbreviation Ἀνουφάγοι), Κυνοκέφαλοι, Ἄλανες. Instead of Χαχόνιοι B,Q, E reads Χανώνιοι. In a small number of cases, names in ε agree with another of the 19 mss. registered by Lolos. e.g. Δεκλήμοι in five other mss. (D,N,R,L,J) or Θαρβαῖοι (only J; others mostly Θάρβιοι). The number of 22 nations originated from the Syrian sources, such as Pseudo-Ephrem, the *Cavern of Treasures* and the *Syrian Alexander Legend*. Some of the names seem to be derived from the peoples lists of Genesis 10:2. Most of the Syrian names are recognisable in the Greek transcriptions, see Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse* (Übersetzung, CSCO 541) p. 24-26 and notes, and Aerts-Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des PsM, ältesten Gr. u. Lat. Übers.* (CSCO 569) p. 116-118 and app. crit.

27 See also *Alessandreida in Rima* (Joachim Storost, *Studien zur Alexandersage in der älteren italienischen Literatur*), Canto XI (p. 203): "in der Tartarei ziehen Alexander so zahlreiche Feinde entgegen, daß er keine Schlacht wagen kann; deswegen läßt er die Gebirgspässe zumauern. Die Völker heißen Gothi oder Gotti Magothi und stammen von Magothi ab, einem der drei Söhne des Rubeo, des jüngsten Sohnes von Sephe. Sie fressen rohes Fleisch wie die Hunde, "in ogni cosa sono disordinati". See also Anderson, o.c., p. 11, 12.

28 Ms Q reads "τὸν θεόν", ms. K and the γ- tradition have "τὸ θεῖον", see ed. Trumpf, app. crit. PsM 8, 6 also reads "τὸν θεόν", but there the text is clearly Christian, whereas in the Alexander Romance the term is 'translated back' to a pagan situation. The first type figures in ε §39,4-§40 (ed. Trumpf), the second in AlexR III 29 (ed. Muller) and Bergson (ed. AlexR β), Anhang B. The Byz. Alex. Poem also uses the form of a letter.

29 The Byzantine Alexander Poem (5754) combines both ideas: "τὴν ἄνω θεῖαν πρόνοιαν".

12, and only Magog, not Gog. The tribe which is always mentioned is the Alans.³⁰

Another standard element in the lists are the Dogheads. In general, these are not typified as maneaters, as they are here in PsM and the AlexR. The Dogheads have a long history. They are mentioned in Herodotus, who seems to see them as baboons rather than men.³¹ Ctesias, who wrote about Persian history, makes them a people of 120,000 souls.³² The tragedian Aeschylus (frg. 603) localizes them in Aethiopia. Other ancient writers such as Hesiod, Eratosthenes and Megasthenes mention people with eyes in their chest, "semidogs", "bigheads", etc. Strabo in his *Geography* criticizes this nonsense.³³ The mocker Lucian 'creates' in his *True Histories*

30 The Alans are already mentioned in Flavius Josephus, e.g. in the passage on the building of the gate by *Alexander*, *Bell. Jud.* 7,7,4. Their presence is maintained also after Gog and Magog being the central figures in the enclosure scene.

31 See Hdt. IV, 191, in his description of Lybia. There are also the "headless ones (ἄκεφαλοι) with eyes in the chest", "as the Lybians typify them". Besides, there are also "savage men and women". Seen the context, most commentaries on Herodotus agree that the "Dogheads" are baboons or apes. Descriptions such as these, but also of India or Persia, stimulated the imagination of other writers about unknown regions, but also evoked severe criticisms as Plutarch criticizing Herodotus or mocker as Lucian demonstrates in his *True Histories*, see note 35. In the context of the Pentecost miracle not seldom Dogheads are depicted as missionaries at the periphery of the world, evangelizing other peripherians. Thus e.g. in the Queen Keran-Gospel Book fol. 349, see B. Narkiss, *Armenische Kunst*, Stuttgart/Zürich 1980, p. 67. Saint Christophorus also often appears as a Doghead.

32 Ctesias, ch. 20. They live near the Indus, bark like dogs, but understand each other very well. They are black, very honest and associate with Indians. In ch. 22 their way of life is analysed: they dwell in caves, they are hunters, they done the meat in the sun and pay a yearly tribute of 1000 talents electron to the king of India, etc. See also Plinius, *Nat. Hist.*, 7,23. Aelian, *Hist. Anim.* 4, 46. Plinius, *Nat. Hist.* 7, 31 talks about dogheady animals, who produce milk. In the §§ 23 and 31 Plinius presents another choice of fabulous beings.

33 Strabo I, 2, 35, p. 43, 5-20 (ed. S. Radt) τὰ μὲν γὰρ Ὀμήρου τὰ περὶ τὸν Πόντον καὶ τὴν Αἴγυπτον παρατίθησιν ἄγνοιαν αἰτιώμενος, ὥς λέγειν μὲν τὰ ὄντα βουλομένου, μὴ λέγοντος δὲ τὰ ὄντα, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα κατ' ἄγνοιαν. Ἡσιόδου δ' οὐκ ἂν τις αἰτιάσαιτο ἄγνοιαν, ἡμῖκουνας λέγοντος καὶ μακροκεφάλους καὶ πυγμαίους· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτοῦ Ὀμήρου τοιαῦτα μυθεύοντος, ὧν εἰσι καὶ οὗτοι οἱ πυγμαῖοι, οὐδ' Ἀλκμᾶνος στεγανόποδας ἱστοροῦντος, οὐδ' Αἰσχύλου κυνοκεφάλους καὶ στερνοφθάλμους καὶ μονομμάτους, ὅπου γε οὐδὲ τοῖς περὶ συγγράφουσιν ἐν ἱστορίαις σχήματι προσέχονεν περὶ πολλῶν, κἄν μὴ ἐξομολογῶνται τὴν μυθογραφίαν. φαίνεται γὰρ εὐθὺς ὅτι μύθος παραπλέκουσιν ἐκόντες οὐκ ἄγνοια τῶν ὄντων, ἀλλὰ πλάσει τῶν ἀδυνάτων τερατείας καὶ τέρψεως χάριν. δοκοῦσι δὲ κατ' ἄγνοιαν, ὅτι μάλιστα καὶ πιθανῶς τὰ τοιαῦτα μυθεύουσι περὶ τῶν ἀδύλων καὶ τῶν ἀγνοουμένων. Θεόπομπος δὲ ἐξομολογεῖται φήσας ὅτι καὶ μύθους ἐν ταῖς ἱστορίαις ἔρεϊ, κρεῖττον ἢ ὡς Ἡρόδοτος καὶ Κτησίας καὶ Ἑλλάνικος καὶ οἱ τὰ Ἰνδικὰ συγγράμναντες.

[He (= Apollodorus) brings to the fore what is said by Homer about the Pontus and Egypt, accusing him of ignorance, as having the intention to tell the real situation, without, however, describing the real situation, by presenting the unreal as real by ignorance. And nobody can accuse Hesiod of ignorance, when he speaks about semidogs, longheads and pygmies, not any more than Homer himself where he speaks about what these Pygmies have to deal with, or than Alcman who makes mention of people who cover themselves by one foot, or than Aeschylus who records Dogheads, 'Eyes-in-the-chest-ers' and One-eyed people, whereas we do not pay any more attention to the prose writers on many occasions, even if they do not confess to mythography. For it is immediately clear that they love it to tell stories, not because of ignorance of the facts, but by fabricating impossibilities for amazement's or amusement's sake. They give the impression of ignorance, because they write so convincingly about these obscure and unknown things. But Theopompus confesses that he will also tell myths in his histories, even more than is done by Herodotus, Ctesias, Hellanicus and the authors on India.]

even more absurd beings such as "horsevultures", "garlicfighters"³⁴, etc. The Byzantine 'multipoet' John Tzetzes (±1110-1180/85) presents in his *Historiae* VII, 621-760 a survey of all the fabulous animals he knows about³⁵, and in some versions of the AlexR (III,17), in the Letters of Alexander to Aristotle, and to his mother Olympias there are battles with the most fantastic beings and monsters.

The Byzantine Alexanderpoem, probably written late 13th - early 14th century, but handed down in only one manuscript dated 1388, also contains an ample description of the enclosure of the unclean nations. One of the extended γ-versions, such as the one in the illuminated Venetian manuscript, executed in Trebizond, has served as a model. The passage extends over more than one hundred verses (5710-5813 ed. Reichmann). As to Gog and Magog, verse 5737 announces that 22 nations are closed in, but in verses 5787-5790 no more than 13 or 14 are mentioned. Gog, strangely enough, is corrupted into Og. Among the enclosed kings, whose names show a very corrupted transmission, we find a "Doghead" and a Ἰμαντοδάπης ("Beltman"/"Spindleman" (?))³⁶. As to the form Og instead of Gog, this looks like a transmission fault. But we find this form also in another writing, namely in the *Refutatio Mohammedis* ("Refutation of Mohammed" 7, 76 = PG 105 767B) of Nicetas Byzantius (late 9 th c.), a contemporary of Patriarch Photius. He refers to Dhū 'l Qarnain in the Qur'ān, who has seen the place "where the sun sets into the warm sea" and went to the North, where he enclosed the peoples Og and Magog. The idea that Alexander cherished the monotheist doctrine in accordance with Abraham, is dismissed by Nicetas as being pure nonsense. A connection between the Og of Nicetas and the Og of the Alexander Poem is not very probable, but it cannot be entirely ruled out.

34 See e.g. W.J. Aerts, "Alexander the Great and Ancient Travel Stories" in: Zweder von Martels (ed.), *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction* (Leyde 1994), p. 30-38, espec. 35 ff.

35 Tzetzes, Hist. (ed. P.A.M. Leone, Naples 1968) VII, 621-760 mentions the Σκιάποδες ("Shadowfeet") and ὤτολικνοι ("People with ears as large as a winnowing-fan") (632, cp. 712-13), the Μονόφθαλμοι ("One-eyed people") and the Ἐνοτίκτοντες ("One-child-bearers"(?)) (630), περὶ δρακόντων Λιβυκῶν ("on Libyan dragons/serpents") (645), the "one-eyed Issidones" (678-683), "semidogs" and "dogheads" (685), again "semidogs" (695,700) and "dogheads" (707, quoting Ctesias about India), Ἀκέφαλοι ("Acephalous people"), Δεκακέφαλοι ("Tenheads"), Τετραχειρόποδες ("Four-handed-and-footed men") (714-715, quoting Strabo I, 13, VII 298, VIII etc.). Further Ἡμίκυνες, Μακρόκρανοι, Πυγμαῖοι, Στεγανόποδες, Στερνόφθαλμοι, Κυνοκέφαλοι, Μονόμματοι, Ἰμαντόποδες (cp. Ps.-Call. III,17, Strabo II, 70), Μονοτοκῆται, Ἄρρινες, Ἄστομοι, Ὀπισθοδάκτυλοι, Ἀγλαστοῦντες (755-760, quoting Apollodorus).

36 This form of the name probably is a metrical adaptation of the Ἰμαντόπους ("Mr spindle-shanked"), mentioned in Strabo and Tzetzes, see note 35, with the help of the ending -(δ)απός or -(δ)απῆ (cp. AlexR II, 21.4), e.g. ἀλλοδαπός "from elsewhere". In an earlier passage (5588-5594 = PsC III, 28) Alexander and his army meet with "dogheads", "eyes-in-the-chesters", people with six arms, with bullheads, with lion's snouts, with goat's bodies, etc.

My conclusion is: the "great career" of Gog and Magog in the Byzantine world begins with Pseudo-Methodius and has a clear Syrian background. The integration of the Pseudo-Methodius material into the later versions of the Alexander Romance (starting with the versions ϵ and γ) determined their further application. The fabulous animals and monsters, however, have a very long tradition going back to folk tales from times immemorial.

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