Visions of the Christian Apocalypse in the time of Muslim Expansion

In the seventh century, the Muslim Arabs poured out of the Arabian Peninsula and overtook the lands of the Middle East and North Africa. These areas, previously held by the Eastern Roman Empire, were occupied by a majority Christian population. This occupation of Christian lands, including the cities of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, introduced Eastern Christendom to a new enemy. Throughout the following centuries, Western Christendom would also be introduced to this new religious enemy, exemplified by the western conflicts between Christians and Muslims during the Crusades and through the Umayyad expansion in Spain. In the medieval period, the Muslims continued to hold onto Spain, while also making expansions into Anatolia. With the weakening of the Byzantine Empire and the loss of Christian lands, numerous Christian Apocalyptic writings were produced. A number of these writings were produced during the times of Christian defeat and Muslim expansion. With the dire events taking place, Christians turned to their faith and attempted to explain the unfortunate circumstances in the context of religious scholarship. Many of the sources came to the same conclusions; the events unfolding were signs of the end times. The loss of Christian lands and the decline of the Byzantine presence in the former united Roman Empire led scholars to look at the Muslims as fitting in with the biblical texts and early Christian scholarship on the Apocalypse. For these Christians, Islam’s rise could only be explained by the approach of the inevitable end. The Eastern and Western apocalyptic sources being analyzed have more similarities than being written in fear of continued Islam conquest. In these sources, the common themes of the Last World Emperor and the Antichrists appear in repetition. Analysis of the sources from both
Byzantine and Western Christian traditions sheds light on what would become a common, shared theme of medieval apocalyptic writing.

Before getting into the sources, it is important to explain two common themes present in the writings of this time: the Antichrist and the last kingdom. The notion of the Antichrist in Christianity derives from biblical passages. According to the Synoptic Gospels, the terms “false messiah” and “false prophets” are used to describe the individual who “looks like Christ, who seems like Christ, who works miracles like Christ, but who proves to be an impostor.”1 The term “Antichrist” can be found in the letters of John, in which the author warns Christians of the figure who will come before the end of time and imitate Jesus.2 The Epistle of the Thessalonians prophesizes the coming of “The Lawless One.”3 Rusconi, in his article “Antichrist and Antichrists,” states that the Antichrist in the Biblical sense “was not linked to any predetermined institution; his existence was justified only in an eschatological perspective.”4 Antichrist in the biblical sense was characterized as a false Messiah; one who would perform false miracles to seduce entire peoples away from the truth. Rusconi argues that this is the transition from the biblical Antichrist to the legend of Antichrists, which occurred throughout the early Middle Ages.5 With little substance and evidence in the Bible retaining to the Antichrist, early Christian theologians and writers turned to non-Christian antiquity. These sources included traditions of Sibylline Oracles, Greek literature, and Eastern sources.6 Rusconi explains that this technique allowed the Antichrist to grow in legend. He states, “In this richer perspective, the figure of

2. 1 John 2:18, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 1:7
3. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12
5. Rusconi, 291
6. Rusconi, 291
Antichrist could be seen as an individual, as well as a corporate reality.”\(^7\) This idea of an individual allowed later Christians to identify the Antichrist as historical and contemporary people and groups. The legend of the Antichrist developed into an individual who would reside in Jerusalem, rebuild the Jewish temple, and establish a tyrannical rule. This claim was developed and produced amongst the writers of the fifth century. As Sulpicius Severus, a Christian author from the fifth century, wrote in his book *Dialogues*, “Antichrist will first seize the Eastern Empire and will have Jerusalem as the seat and capital of his kingdom. He will rebuild the city and the Temple. His persecution will be to compel denial that Christ is God, rather than setting himself up as the anointed one.”\(^8\) According to Severus, the Antichrist had already come and was preparing to take over the Eastern Empire. Although these claims were false, his description of the Antichrist’s actions regarding Jerusalem and the Temple became widespread in the legend of the Antichrist.\(^9\) Christians would be persecuted and tested until the prophets Elijah and Enoch\(^10\) “would preach for three and a half years before being martyred.”\(^11\) The Antichrist would eventually be defeated on the Mount of Olives and descend into hell.

With the Legend of the Antichrist prevalent in Christian Apocalyptic literature, it was easy to attribute the personified version of the figure to those who were believed to be threats to the Christian faith. Furthermore, as Akbari explains in her article, “the notion of Antichrist could be used as a rhetorical weapon, to demonize one's enemies, whether religious, political, or military.”\(^12\) Religious and political leaders, for centuries to come, would use the fear of the Antichrist’s inevitable rule as a propaganda method, to centralize authority and attention. In the

7. Rusconi, 292
9. McGinn, 53
10. Revelations 11:11-14
11. Rusconi, 290
12. Akbari, 298
terms of the seventh century, it is easy to understand how Islam is seen in the context of the Christian Apocalypse. Islam was not only a military threat but also a religious one. The Muslims, who poured out of the Arabian Peninsula in 622 CE, overtook the lands held by the Eastern Roman Empire and the previous United Roman Empire. The conquest areas, which included Egypt, North Africa, Spain, and the Middle East, were in Christian hands and control for hundreds of years. The Muslims in these regions presented an immediate threat to the remaining and fractured Christian kingdoms. Islam also presented a religious threat. Islam was a monotheistic religion that claimed descent from Abraham, identified Mohammed as a prophet, and Jesus as nothing more than a prophet as well. For these reasons, Christian apocalyptic texts written in reference and fear of Islam and Muhammed were common in the Middle Ages. With medieval apocalyptic texts repeatably referring to Islamic leaders and Muhammed as the Antichrist, it is important to understand that these texts, for the most part, do not explicitly refer to these characters as the singular Antichrist. As Akbari explains, “Islam is seen as a sign of the last days, and its leaders as types or predecessors of Antichrist, rather than as the final manifestation to be seen at the end of time. Antichrist is ultimately seen as the embodiment of an internal threat, a danger of corruption within the Christian church rather than an invasive presence located outside the community of believers.”

Muhammed could not be identified as the Antichrist because the Antichrist would be a man living in the final days, while Muhammed had already lived and died in the past. This, however, did not prevent him from being identified as an Antichrist, and the religion of Islam as an evil entity that signals for the coming of the end.

13. John V Tolan. Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages (University of Florida, 2008), 16
14. Akbari, 299
The Byzantine Apocalypse

The second theme prevalent in the writings of the Christian Apocalypse in response to Islam is the prophecy of the Last Emperor. During the Muslim invasion into Syria, the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius was written. The *Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius*, written in Syriac between 660 and 680 CE, “is the earliest surviving witness to the Last World Emperor.”  

As McGinn states, “It may well be that the anonymous Syrian author was himself responsible for drawing together strands of imperial myths.”  

It is important to note that the writer of this text is not the Bishop Methodius of Olympias, who died in 312 CE. The author claims to be this figure to suggest to the reader that the events occurring in Syria have been predicted and foretold by an earlier martyr. Instead, this text was written in Syria in the seventh century.  

During the time of the Muslim invasion, Byzantium had become the new Rome and the greatest of all Christian kingdoms. With Islam’s conquest depriving the new Rome of its birth land and many of its historically important areas, Methodius provides hope to the Christian nations. The author tends to the problem at hand by justifying how the great empire of the Romans and Greeks could experience such a defeat to unbelievers as they just did. Methodius explains that the Christians brought this upon themselves, stating “And so the Lord God will give them (The Muslims) the power to conquer the lands of the Christians, not because he loves them, but because of the sin and iniquity committed by the Christians.”  

Because the Christians had been unfaithful, God had punished the Byzantines. Methodius backs up his claims regarding biblical texts. Methodius argues that in Genesis 16:12, the account of “the wild ass in the desert” is in biblical reference to

15. McGinn, 70  
16. McGinn, 71  
18. Palmer, 223  
Furthermore, the “man of lawlessness” and “the son of destruction” cited in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 are explained to be the Ishmaelites and their ruler. In another example, Methodius connects Daniel’s visions of “The arm of the South” in Daniel 11 as the armies of the Ishmaelites. Methodius continues to draw upon biblical scripture to back his claims for the foretelling of the rise of the Ishmaelites. After justifying why God would allow the defeat of his followers at the hands of the Muslims, he writes, “The king of the Greeks, the Romans, will come out against them (the Muslims) in great danger.” He justifies this belief through the biblical verse of Psalm 68, where it states, “Kush will surrender to God (Psalm 68:31). The author identifies Kush as the Byzantine Emperor, which will be the last kingdom left on earth. He continues, “the sons of the king will come down with the sword and cut them off from the earth.” Methodius envisions a coming emperor who will defeat the Muslims and restore Roman glory to the lands recently subjected by the Ishmaelites. Methodius continues in his letter, revealing his visions of the Roman Emperor on the throne in Jerusalem, helping to prepare the earth for the Second coming of Jesus and the end of times. Only after the victory of this individual will peace come to the earth. Methodius explains, “The land which has been devastated of its inhabitants shall be at peace, and the remnant left over shall return…”. The triumph and fury of the King of the Greeks will be against those who deny Christ, the Muslims. Methodius’s prophecy of the Last World Emperor not only aims to spark hope into the Eastern Christians but will be an influential factor throughout the medieval period involving apocalyptic writing. Throughout many different writers, the idea of the Last Emperor becomes less of a

20. Palmer, 224  
21. Palmer, 224  
22. Palmer, 230  
23. McGinn, 75  
24. Palmer, 223-224  
25. McGinn, 75  
26. McGinn, 76  
27. Palmer, 238
prophecy and more of a legend. Like the idea of the Antichrist, medieval apocalyptic texts will continue to feed off this narrative in the wake of Muslim and Christian conflict.

A secondary Christian text that appears in the wake of Muslim expansion is *The Edessene Apocalyptic Fragment*. Like the *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*, the text is vaticinium ex eventu, or written after the events occurred. Also, like Pseudo-Methodius, the Edessene Fragment looks for hope in the foreseen rise of the Last Roman Emperor. Because of their similarities, early scholars confused the Edessen Fragment as being part of the Apocalypse of Pseudo Methodius. The author begins his texts by outlining the tragedies that the Christian people must go through during the reign of Islam, including theft, murder, and broken families.  

Along with this, the earth will suffer. Along with famine and distress, “rains will be withheld, spring water will fail, the fruits of the trees and the bounty of the land will be scarce at that time…” Only under this great oppression and suffering will the King of the Greeks come forth and “take the kingdom of the whole earth from the children of Hagar.” The author envisions that the Muslims will be pushed back to their holy city of Mecca, where they will Kingdom will come to an end and peace will return to the entire earth. Then, the King of the Greeks, now the world Emperor and the leader of the Romans, “will hand over the kingdom to God.” The author of the Edessen Fragment believes that all the evil in the world comes from the “Children of Hagar.” Once they are defeated, then “Bounty shall return to the earth, the fruits of the tress, the rains, the water shall be plentiful, and so will the fish in the seas and the rivers. There will be well-being and peace in the whole of creation and among all nations and peoples.” With the coming of the Greek King, the Muslims will be defeated, and world peace will be brought upon

28. Palmer, 244  
29. Palmer, 244  
30. Palmer, 245  
31. Palmer, 245  
32. Palmer, 245  
33. Palmer, 245
the world. The author continues to say that the Kingdom of the Greeks will endure for 208 years before the coming of the Antichrist.\textsuperscript{34} However, unlike many other apocalyptic texts written in this time, the author does not link the Antichrist to Muhammad or any other Muslim. Still, the author uses very vivid language to portray the Muslims as the root of all evil and a virus on the Earth. Only with the emergence of the Last World Emperor can the “Sons of Hagar” be driven out of the lands of Syria and be defeated.\textsuperscript{35}

**The High Middle Ages**

In early Christian sources, the Antichrist’s rise to power would be largely accomplished with immense wealth and the ability to trick people. For some, this perspective allowed them to look at kings, noblemen, and even the church as the possibility of the coming of the Antichrist. For William Langland, a fourteenth-century English author, the idea of wealth and deception accurately described Muhammad. In his allegory *Piers Plowman*, Langland recounts his visions in a poem. Langland identifies Muhammad’s material wealth as a reason for his ascension to power. He continues by attributing Muhammad’s accounted miracles through deception and fakery. Langland explains how Muhammad trained a white dove to come to him so that when the dove came, the bird was explained to be a message from God.\textsuperscript{36} Here, Langland is building Muhammad’s actions to his final point; that Muhammad claimed to be the Messiah. The prophet of Islam is a pretender and an imitator of Christ, and therefore, is an Antichrist. He is careful to explain that Muhammad was not the Antichrist depicted to come into the Bible. Instead, he was an imitator of Jesus and a false messenger. *Piers Plowman*, although slightly different from other

\textsuperscript{34} Palmer, 246  
\textsuperscript{35} Palmer, 247  
sourcess from the west depicting the end of times and the description of Muhammad, continues to contribute to the existing themes of wealth and deception of Muhammad and further solidifies European depiction and hostility of Islam.

The Fall of Constantinople

In a turn of events for the Christian nations, the last stronghold of the mighty Roman Empire fell. On May 29, 1453, the great Christian city of Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks and their leader Mehmed II. The state of the European Church community and leaders was one of panic. For centuries, the Eastern Romans defended Europe from the further spread of the Muslims. With the Byzantine Empire destroyed, there was no longer a defensive boundary between Western Christendom and Islam. The event of 1453 sparked a revival of apocalyptic texts and called for the reevaluation of pasts ones.\textsuperscript{37} The return of apocalyptic language and writings on the Antichrist and the Last World Emperor once again came at a time when Christianity was threatened by an outside force. This time, it was another Muhammad; the Turkish leader Mehmet II.\textsuperscript{38} In Wolfgang Aytinger’s \textit{Commentary of Methodius}, the Augsburg cleric reevaluates the \textit{Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius}. According to Aytinger, the success of the Turks and the fall of Constantinople led to the conclusion that the end was at hand. The apocalypse began with the destruction of Constantinople and would end with the victory of the Last World Emperor over the Turks.\textsuperscript{39} He starts his book reinforcing the magnitude of the event: “The greatest tribulation in Christianity took place when the Turks conquered the eastern Empire and Constantinople.” Throughout his letter, Aytinger re-explains Methodius’ letter in the context of the new events. Methodius wrote his visions attributing the last world emperor coming from

\textsuperscript{37} Rusconi, 309
\textsuperscript{38} Rusconi, 309
\textsuperscript{39} McGinn, 271
the throne of the Romans. With the Byzantine Empire gone, Aytinger explains that Methodius didn’t specifically state that the Last World Emperor would come from Byzantium and that he was referring to the west in his writings. He continues explaining that the last World Emperor will come from one of three kingdoms, the German Holy Roman Empire, the French Empire, or the Empire of Hungary.  

Aytinger also attacks the Turks by the means of The Revelation of John. He quotes the biblical book of Revelations and makes claims of how the current events could be explained through religious texts and make a prophecy of his own. His conclusions come from chapter 17 of the biblical apocalypse.

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters. 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.” 3 Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and was glittering with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. 5 The name written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the Great. The Mother of Prostitutes. And the Abomination of the Earth. 6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God’s holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. 7 Then the angel said to me: “Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come. 9 “This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10 They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while. 11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.”

He claims that the heredity of the Turks is described in Revelations by the seven branches and how the most powerful branch, the eighth branch, will be cut off by the Roman Emperor.

40. McGinn, 275-276
41. Revelations 17:1-11
Aytinger backs this up by quoting Revelation 17:9; “This is the meaning which gives understanding: the seven heads are the seven mountains.” Explaining the mountains as seven kingdoms, he continues, “it signifies seven Turkish emperors who succeeded each other in rule. The first is called Ottoman…The sixth emperor, called Muhammed, obtained the eastern empire and the rule of Constantinople.” The Christian author identifies Muhammad’s heir as the eighth ruler and the one who will be defeated by the King of the Romans. Here, Aytinger is justifying the fall of Constantinople and the progress of the Turks in the context of The Revelations of John, while also condemning Muslims as part of great tribulation and evil of the world that would finally be conquered. Aytinger continues his attack on Islam and the Turks by stating that the destruction of the great Whore of Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17:1-6 was alluding to the destruction of Turkey. He argues that when John writes, “come and I will show you the damnation of the great Whore,” he is referring to Turkey, further developing hostility to the Muslim nation. The author furthers his analysis by alluding to the rise of the Last World Emperor, which he states will come from the West and defeat the Antichrist like Turks and restore order to the Christian World. Aytinger’s words describe the thoughts of western European Christians regarding the Turks and their faith in Islam. In Aytinger’s eyes, Islam is an antitype of Christianity and an Antichrist.

Wolfgang Aytinger was not the only Christian who dreaded the Ottoman expansion into Europe after the fall of the Greek Empire and Constantinople. The shock ways sent across Europe inspired further texts to be produced by other Christian theologians and even inspired the Pope to undertake actions. On August 15, 1453, Pope Nicholas V received word of the second Rome falling. For example, Isidore of Kiev wrote a letter from the island of Crete that identified

42. McGinn, 274-275
44. Smith, Leslie S., “Pope Pius II’s Use of Turkish Atrocities,” The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 46:4 (March 1966), 410
Mehmet II as the next Antichrist. Mehmet II, who he identifies as another Muhammad, was an enemy of the cross and the opposite of Christ. He writes, “Let it be known to all, my lords and most faithful Christians, that the precursor of the Antichrist is no near, the Prince and Lord of the Turks whose name is Muhammad, he who is truly said to be the heir of that first and chief heresy, or rather impiety.” In another writing, Cardinal Bessarion at Bologna recorded eight atrocities committed by the Turks during the siege of Constantinople. These atrocities were:

1. The city had been sacked, including the treasures of the churches.
2. The relics of the saints had been taken from the churches and the shrines had been profaned.
3. Sacred objects had been looted and taken to Turkish camps
4. The men of the city had been unjustly slaughtered
5. Women had been raped and children had been forced into prostitution
6. Families had been broken up
7. The survivors had been sold into slavery
8. Several young Christian boys had been converted to Islam.

From these listed atrocities, numerous poems and political propaganda were used by the western church to promote unity amongst the Christian kingdoms in response to the Turks. The tone of these texts is apocalyptic and in support of a crusade. Pope Pius II, the head of a united western Christendom, furthermore, used the list to call for a crusade against the Turks. In the end, this crusade would never happen. The main reason was the divisions among Christian nations. The clashing interests of the European states disabled all efforts to gather the resources needed to recover Constantinople, and in Pius’s hopes, recover all lands lost to the Muslims in the past centuries. The vision of Islam’s atrocities is vividly played out in poems and letters used to stir up a desire for a crusade. For example, this poem, printed by Cugnoni but attributed to Pope Pius II, hits nearly all Bessarion’s points.

“They slay the king with a sword and the oppress both young and old with servitude and send them across the shores of Asia…Infants are snatched from their mothers’ breasts.”

45. Rusconi, 309
46. Smith, 409
47. Moudarres, Andrea, “Crusade and Conversion: Islam as Schism in Pius II and Nicholas of Cusa,” *MLN* 128 (January 2013): 40
married woman embracing her groaning husband is carried off by the sword. The holy priests are slaughtered at the alters. It hurt to be born of noble blood…The churches collapse and fall; alters are broken everywhere; no wall stand marked with the image of Christ, and they allow no pictures, no paintings, of the saints to remain. In what famous church does not this nation hostile to the Cross stable its horses? What sacred place does it not defile with hideous lust? Alas, pigs devour the bones of the dead that have been dug up; they give the venerable bodies of the Saints to the dogs. The sacred Host defiles by mud are trampled on by profane feet.”

This poem represents the propaganda for Pope Pius II’s crusade. The poem emphasises the brutality that the Turks are taking out on Constantinople’s population, as well as highlighting the atrocities against the holy sites and relics of the city. It is writings like this that stirred apocalyptic language and the call for crusade together. It is also this reason that although every Pope from Nicholas V to Leo X called for a crusade, Pope Pius II was the one that almost got started.

The tie of apocalyptic language to the proposal of the crusade was enough for European rulers to show interest in three imperial diets in 1454. These meetings were conducted by the Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich and showed participation by many foreign kings and the church. In the meeting, outlines of what happened in Constantinople and the threat upon the entire Christian religion were outlined. Aspects like the profanization of holy icons and churches, the cultural loss that Constantinople posed to Europe, and the brutality shown by the Turks in their invasion. All these points lead to the main discussion topic; a crusade needs to be conducted to enact revenge. The diet discussed other things than the evil of the Turks, such as the strategic position of Constantinople and the belief ambitions of Mehmed to conquer Europe, along with the military superiority of the Christians and their allies. The emperor concluded, “So, if you do nothing, Christianity will be left defenseless, nobody will protect it. You have assembled here to provide for the Christian Commonwealth. If you leave without having done so, the boar out of

48. Smith, 411
the wood will lay it waste: and a singular wild beast will devour it. All eyes are on you now, and the Christian people are looking to you for leadership. If you show resolve, they will be encouraged. If you show apathy, our religion is done for, and we shall have to bear the rule of the Turks and obey the laws of Muhammad.”

Pope Pius II delivered multiple letters and speeches at the diet of Frankfurt to inspire the Christians of the Holy Roman Empire to go to war against the Turks and save Constantinople. The letters are enough to inspire any man to go to war and be disgusted with the actions of the Turks, making his words terrific propaganda. Pius II presents apocalyptic imagery of the Antichrist and the last world emperor in his letters, although not explicitly stating it. Throughout his letters, Pius II illustrated the atrocities of the Turks against Constantinople, the value of the holy city, the fact that Europe is in danger, and that an army needs to be assembled to combat the threat. During his speech, Pius II paints the image of the Turks and Mehmed in apocalyptic reference. He refers to the prophet Muhammed as “Muhammed the Seducer” and curses Mehmed and his atrocities conducted against the holy city. Pius II gives warnings of the falsehood of Mehmed, stating “Mehmed himself - with fearsome face, wild eyes, terrible voice, cruel words, and horrible gestures - demands murder, and now he orders this one, now that one to be killed. He washes his hands in the blood of Christians. He defiles everything. He pollutes all. The temples of our God are given over to the false prophet…” Although Pius II does not explicitly state that Mehmed is the Antichrist, he refers to him as a false prophet who denies Jesus. He is referring to the warnings of the “Little Apocalypse” of the gospels, wherein Matthew 24:3-5; 23-24 and Mark 13: 21-23, Jesus warns against “False Prophets” and False Messiahs.” Though the term “Antichrist” isn’t used in these verses either, the terms and verse are

50. Von Cotta-Schönberg, 59
51. Von Cotta-Schönberg, 125
52. Von Cotta-Schönberg, 129
53. Von Cotta-Schönberg, 137
54. Von Cotta-Schönberg, 145
linked to the Antichrist, and it was commonly known that the Antichrist was to be a false prophet.

The coming end of the world is a theme prevalent through medieval Christian writing when authors are faced with unexplainable consequences. As demonstrated by the sources here, reoccurring themes continue to develop and appear throughout a long range of time. From the seventh century and into the sixteenth century, Christian writers used the apocalypse to continually explain reoccurring defeats and setbacks from the Muslims. In the lands of Syria, where the Eastern Roman Empire once reigned, apocalyptic texts were produced to provide hope and answers for the oppressed Christians in their community. In the high Middle Ages, apocalyptic texts demonized Muhammad and sought to explain the evil nature of Islam. Finally, after the fall of Constantinople, the capital of medieval Christendom, apocalyptic ideology from Pope Pius II was given to persuade western Christians to unite and defeat a common enemy. All these apocalyptic writings from a wide range of eras have one thing in common: either references to the Antichrist or the call of the Last World Emperor. In demonizing Islam, Christian apocalyptic producers used the notion of the Antichrist to provide explanation. In other sources, Christians looked for a last world emperor to come and liberate them from the Muslims. However, not all apocalyptic texts regarding the rise of Islam were the same across all eras. In the Byzantine apocalypse, such as *The Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius* and the *Edessean Fragment*, fear was explained in a religious sense. Reference to biblical texts and early Christian theologians is continuously seen throughout these texts to build a narrative explained by scripture. On the other hand, the late Middle Ages took political interests over religious interests. In the call for crusade, Pope Pius II used the political motifs and interests of European Kings to persuade them to go to war against the Muslims. Islam was not just a differing religious
ideology; it was a political enemy of Europe and of western culture. In the end, one thing stayed the same; Islam was an evil entity that would be destroyed at the end of time.
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