Twitter Thread by Ali A Olomi



Ali A Olomi
@aaolomi

In Islamic eschatology, the world will be flooded by a mighty invasion in the end of days.

The great army of the monstrous Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) will rampage throughout the earth.

A thread-

Yajuj and Majuj are mentioned in the Qur'an (Kahf and Anbiya).

They are sealed away behind a mighty wall by a legendary king, Dhul al-Qarnayn who is frequently linked to Alexander the Great and occasionally Cyrus the Great, though neither are exact matches

It is commonly believed they scratch at the wall daily, tearing nearly through until God intervenes and restores the barrier.

Thus sealed away, the world is safe from Yajuj and Majuj, that is, until the end of days.

Once released they are so numerous it is said when they come upon Tiberias lake or the Tigris and Euphrates they will drink it dry.

When they stand in formation their army stretches from Syria to ends of Persia.

Islamic eschatology regularly features the idea of an invading army and a great battle and Yajuj and Majuj is central to the narrative.

They will fill the world with violence and horror, even daring to turn their arrows to the heavens attempting to strike at God.

They will swarm the Earth, until it becomes difficult to find food and water. Then Isa (Jesus) who had returned, will ask God to intervene.

God will then send insects to attach to their necks and kill them.

The mightiest army will by laid low by the tiniest bugs.

Yajuj and Majuj are prominent characters in medieval geographic and cosmographic treatise like the works of Al Qazwini.

They are frequently treated as monstrous humans. A tradition from ibn Abbas deems them as inhuman, different from human and jinn both.

But most scholars identify them as human and descendants of Adam.

Despite being human, medieval depictions show Yajuj and Majuj as monstrous beings; hairy creatures with talons and nails.

Written descriptions say they are covered in great ears.

They are racialized as an amorphous other frequently linked to either Turks, or Mongols.

Scholar Zadeh notes the wall marks the edges of Abbasid imperial geographic imagination.

The wall holding them back is generally associated with places like Armenia, or Ibn Battuta may have linked it to the Great Wall of China.

One night, the 9th C caliph, Al Wathiq, awoke from a nightmare, drenched in sweat. Horror gripped him for in his dream he saw the wall of Yajuj and Majuj breached.

He quickly dispatched an emissary to ensure the wall was still intact.

In the report, the wall was described as so mighty not even the wind could pass.

Artistic rendering of the building of the wall show jinn and human working together to build it—a reminder of how great the threat of Yajuj and Majuj was for human and jinn alike.

Medieval astrologers like, Abu Ma'shar attempted to use astrology to predict the coming of the end.

They postulated the world would come to an end and the armies of the Yajuj and Majuj unleashed when all the planets aligned in Pisces.

In the 19th century, some Muslim thinkers linked Yajuj and Majuj with European colonists.

Yajuj and Majuj is shared across confessional boundaries and much of the contours of the narrative is drawn from the Jewish and Christian Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39 & Revelations 20: 7-10).

Theologically, Yajuj and Majuj are important for Islamic eschatology.

It also provides an important insight into medieval imagination of geography, conceptions of the other, and the boundaries of empire

For those interested in more on Islamic esotericism, apocalypticism, astrology, and jinn you can check out my patreon. I'm releasing a new episode on the astrologer Abu Ma'shar today. https://t.co/OWDXsBjUiR

I'll be covering more on Islamic apocalypticism in future threads