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*Wolfram Brandes, Felicitas Schmieder,  
Rebekka Voß (Eds.)*

# PEOPLES OF THE APOCALYPSE

ESCHATOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND POLITICAL SCENARIOS

 MILLENNIUM STUDIES

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## Peoples of the Apocalypse

# **Millennium-Studien**

zu Kultur und Geschichte

des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.

# **Millennium Studies**

in the culture and history

of the first millennium C.E.

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## **Volume 63**

# Peoples of the Apocalypse

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Wolfram Brandes, Felicitas Schmieder  
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Wolfram Brandes, Felicitas Schmieder, Rebekka Voß

## Introduction

The three major monotheistic world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, incorporate the idea that God created the world and, at the end of time, will destroy it. Then the Messiah, the returning Christ or the Mahdi will save the righteous while sinners will, together with their evil, be condemned to eternal perdition. In the pre-modern epochs studied here (the fourth-to-seventeenth centuries of the Common Era), these framing predictions were commonly known, accepted as natural conditions of human existence and, consequently, were taken very seriously. Given their shared claim as revealed religions, they possess fairly detailed divine indications about the End, their adherents were, therefore, ever inspired to read holy texts in search of new interpretations of divine visions. As a result of such quests, prophets urged people to change their course, often with a moral message, and instructed them to fulfill more or less specific actions in preparation for the world's imminent End.

Thus, these monotheistic religions, including their internal variants (e.g. Sephardic and Ashkenazic Judaism; Latin, Byzantine and Armenian Christianity; Shiite and Sunnite Islam), established its own end-time scenario, each with a well-known order of basic events and embellished in numerous regional or local story lines. These scenarios did not emerge independently within a given religious culture; rather, their development resulted from vivid exchanges and reactions among them. Whether directly or by reputation, members of these religious communities knew each other, despised or feared one another, and envisioned their counterparts as eschatological enemies or, less commonly, as eschatological allies. Knowledge of another religion's teachings often prompted an opposing position in the form of a counter-eschatology, a pre-modern type of entangled history that has received little scholarly attention to date.

This volume emerges from the third in a series of conferences that have each addressed one shared element in Christian, Jewish and Muslim texts on events that would anticipate the end time and the close of history. At each gathering, while considering sources that span late Antiquity to the early modern period, the participating scholars examined distinctive aspects represented by each religion's approach as well as interlaced concepts. The first of these conferences compared tangible notions of the end time in the three monotheistic religions;<sup>1</sup> the next examined the central antagonist depicted in each religion's end-time predictions, who would oppose its savior, namely: the Antichrist in Christianity, Armilos in Judaism and the Dajjāl in Islam.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen, ed. Wolfram Brandes / Felicitas Schmieder, Berlin 2008 (Millennium-Studien 16).

2 Antichrist. Konstruktionen von Feindbildern, ed. Wolfram Brandes / Felicitas Schmieder, Berlin 2010.

The most recent gathering focused on end-time peoples, which is to say, the future vision for each religious society and its respective allies and antagonists. The biblical forces of Gog and Magog, first mentioned by Ezekiel in the Hebrew Bible and later in the canonical Apocalypse of John (Ch. 20) of the New Testament, are destructive end-time peoples familiar to all three of these religions. Extensive lists of murderous groups, whether for good or evil, and those who merit salvation hold variably defined roles in end-time scenarios. Jews traditionally hoped – in a highly significant example – for the return of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, displaced as a result of the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel (8<sup>th</sup> century BCE). According to the legend, since that dispersal, they have been living in an unknown locale beyond the undulating Sambatyon River, impatiently awaiting the Messiah's arrival, when they will assume their crucial military role in the eschatological re-establishment of an independent Jewish kingdom.

Christians and Muslims also envisioned roles that Jewish people would fulfill during the end time. The former identified Gog and Magog with the Ten Lost Tribes. In German speaking lands, those tribes were feared as “Red Jews”<sup>3</sup> who would arrive with the Antichrist to assail Christians. For Christians and Jews, this fabled people was ascribed with inverse meanings: while Jews looked toward the Ten Tribes as saviors, Christians associated their arrival with fear and gnashing teeth. On the inter-religious apocalyptic map, proximate to the Ten Tribes, we also find the dwelling of the mythic Prester John, for whom Christians longed, as well as the Levites, whom the Bible describes as weeping beside the rivers of Babylon and Arabic sources identify as *Banu Musa* (the sons of Moses) who had allegedly been visited by the prophet Muhammad himself.<sup>4</sup>

Much as the Antichrist, Gog and Magog, the Ten Tribes, the Red Jews, the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness (of the Dead Sea Scrolls), and the Ishmaelites (from Pseudo-Methodius's apocalypse) – to name the most prominent examples – were associated with historically attested peoples at various times, human end-time groups were even more readily identified with these mythic figure. In the thirteenth century, Mongol invaders from the East were widely identified in Europe and the Middle East as the fearsome Gog and Magog, much as the Goths and Huns had been identified with them in late Antiquity and, subsequently, in Koran; and, much later, Native Americans would analogously be viewed by Europeans as the Ten Lost Tribes. Even modern travelers report encounters with descendants of the Ten Tribes

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Gow, *The Red Jews. Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200–1600*, Leiden 1995; for the “entangled history” of the Red Jews in German and Yiddish lore, see Rebekka Voß, *Entangled Stories. The Red Jews in Premodern Yiddish and German Apocalyptic Lore*, in: *AJS Review* 36,1 (2012) 1–41.

<sup>4</sup> Micha Perry, *The Imaginary War between Prester John and Eldad the Danite and its Real Implications*, in: *Viator* 41 (2010) 1–23. Beckingham, Charles F. / Hamilton, Bernard (Ed.), *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, Aldershot 1996. On the Sons of Moses in Muslim texts, see Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an: the Children of Israel and the Islamic Self Image*, Princeton 1999.

in China, Ethiopia and Yemen. Recent political rhetoric has coined terms like *Schurkenstaaten* (rogue states) and “the axis of evil” to evoke eschatological scenarios being perpetrated by outside forces.

Such associations arise in milieux that are characterized by reflections on the end time: individuals, distinct groups and whole societies (to the extent that we can chronicle them) seem to have broached them in relation to concerns regarding the world’s demise as an imminent threat. Eschatological thinking especially appears to have influenced perspectives on the present and future during crises, whether instigated by economic or political mechanisms or by natural catastrophes, with such events having fueled latent apocalyptic fears. Chronological calculations served as similar catalysts, as evidenced near the turn of the sixth and ninth centuries, the approach of the first millennium, and 1453 CE.<sup>5</sup>

In his analysis of a brief, late twelfth-century prophetic interpretation of a passage from Leviticus, Alexander Patschovsky has shown that fateful prophecies and the ideas that radiate from them could be traced to widely varying origins.<sup>6</sup> Paradoxically, peaceful times could provide particularly fertile ground for apocalyptic suspicions. This very point is conveyed in a passage from Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians that has become a lynchpin for considerations of the end time:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and security; then sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child; and they shall not escape. (1 Thess. 5:2–3).<sup>7</sup>

While the resonance of this message was heightened at times of tribulation, insecurity and conflict, prophecy’s efficacy as a coping mechanism is also pertinent in less dramatic circumstances. If prophecy weren’t operational at all times, it would not have been understood at times of peril: the regular usage of prophetic language guaranteed its availability when danger arose, periods that were often separated by generations.

Given that eschatological ideas, by definition, apply to the future, specifically the time remaining as the end approached, they could offer explanations and solutions

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<sup>5</sup> Wolfram Brandes, *Tempora periculosa sunt*. Eschatologisches im Vorfeld der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen, in: Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur, ed. Rainer Berndt, I: Politik und Kirche, Mainz 1997, 49–79; id., Liudprand von Cremona (*Legatio* cap. 39–41) und eine bisher unbeachtete west-östliche Korrespondenz über die Bedeutung des Jahres 1000 a.D., in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift 93 (2000) 435–463; id., Anastasios ὁ δίκωπος. Endzeiterwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr., in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift 90 (1997) 24–63; id., Der Fall Konstantinopels als apokalyptisches Ereignis, in: Geschehenes und Geschriebenes. Studien zu Ehren von Günther S. Henrich und Klaus-Peter Matschke, ed. Sebastian Kolditz / Ralf C. Müller, Leipzig 2005, 453–470. These volumes each provides an extensive bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Patschovsky (Ed.), Eine Antichrist-Auslegung zu Lev. 24, 10–14: Das Werk Joachims von Fiore?, in: Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters 67 (2011) 544–591, here 547.

<sup>7</sup> Translation according to Douay Rheims, <http://www.drbo.org>.

not evident in the present. Common knowledge about the end time provided a foundation for societal agreement about the future and an eschatological delay would offer an opportunity to plan and enact change before that end.<sup>8</sup> Prophetic language – especially, though not exclusively, with eschatological overtones – could thus inform political language.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to reduce prophecy to a single dimension, as an instrument of political propaganda or a language of revolution (though it certainly has been and can be either of these). Whereas prophecy, even in its eschatological form, need not be political in a literal sense, it is never solely political. Prophecy necessarily refers to a religiously grounded ethical-moral framework and, furthermore, prophecy requires a social dimension. Whether it claims to address humanity with a universal message or all members of a specific religion, it inevitably has a regional character and is concerned with a particular social order.

Thus eschatological prophecy shapes a defined communicative space where references need not be made explicit but for which allusions suffice because of their ubiquity. These eschatological images and meanings enter the vocabulary of a political language that can often be as cryptic as it is direct, especially when the prophecy that copyists must or wish to deliver entails their own interpretation or when orality is a strong factor (on some level, these are always considerations for historians since wording which seems cryptic to us would have been accessible to its intended audience). Adequate familiarity with the references and codes – plus (often) some level of scholarly background – are essential keys to understanding communications from any such framework, for contemporaneous and modern audiences alike. However, it is fair to assume a broad knowledge of teachings about the last days from preaching and images (such as illustrations in books and sites visible to the public, for example: depictions of the Last Judgment on tympana over church entrances and the facades of town halls; and, the apocalyptic Antichrist window of St. Mary's church in Frankfurt an der Oder, which includes Jewish characters). Prophetic language, there-

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**8** Felicitas Schmieder, *Zukunftswissen im mittelalterlichen Lateineuropa: Determinanten sozialen und politischen Handelns, wenn die Zeit gemessen ist*, in: Andreas Hartmann / Oliwia Murawska (Ed.), *Representing the Future. Zur kulturellen Logik der Zukunft*, Bielefeld 2015, 199–216; ead., *Mittelalterliche Weltveränderungsanstrengungen angesichts des nahenden Endes – des Alexander von Roes Programm für ein vereinigtes Europa*, in: Wolfgang Kruse (Ed.), *Andere Modernen. Beiträge zu einer Historisierung des Moderne-Begriffs*, Bielefeld 2015, 41–53; ead., *Eschatologische Prophetie im Mittelalter: Ein Mittel "politischer" Kommunikation?*, in: *Politische Bewegung und symbolische Ordnung. Hagener Studien zur Politischen Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für Peter Brandt*, ed. Werner Daum / Wolfgang Kruse / Eva Ochs / Arthur Schlegelmilch, Berlin 2014, 17–31.

**9** A conceptual and quite general sense of politics is evoked here, which is therefore, adaptable to pre-modern conditions, defined as "active participation in the formation and regulation of human communities" whose influence effected certain demands and goals, irrespective of their outcome; "Die aktive Teilnahme an der Gestaltung und Regelung menschlicher Gemeinwesen": Klaus Schubert, Martina Klein: *Das Politiklexikon. Begriffe – Fakten – Zusammenhänge*, Bonn <sup>5</sup>2011, S. 227 s. v. "Politik".

fore, was not limited to the educated elite or members of a discrete cohort; rather, its message would have been widely comprehensible despite being directed to particular groups.

Another aspect of this theme becomes evident: peoples of end time and the end time itself are not automatically bound with warnings against the impending destruction of this world. At historical moments when fear of such a trajectory is palpable, biblical and other prophecies are read anew or written accordantly, and corresponding actions are prompted and likely initiated. However, other circumstances are catalysts for less literal, and thereby less eschatological, interpretations of biblical prophecies. Exegetical hermeneutics provide ample tools for such readings because the art of interpreting according to the Four Senses of Scripture (*sensus scripturae*), not only allowed but demanded the application of literal (or “historical”), moral, allegorical and typological perspectives. This tradition affirmed that an anagogical (and therefore eschatological) reading was possible for any end-time composition, irrespective of its timeframe. Allegory enabled references to a universal history without explicitly asserting that the world would soon end. In principle, the four readings that correspond to each of the four senses are coexistent and equally valid despite what we may view as contradictory aspects. Medieval exegesis neither expected nor required unambiguous interpretations. To the contrary, understandings of a given text need not be ranked or favored relative to one another; exegesis could operate on multiple levels without a need for comparison. An allegorical perspective could effectively “de-eschatologize” without directly stating that aim. However, when being positioned against explicit eschatological interpretations, a non-eschatological allegorical approach could be emphasized.

The Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament and the Koran are replete with prophetic texts that include clear references to the end of the world, as well as others that highlight the consequential implications of certain actions in time, which all aim to alter current reality or life in the near future. If we assume that the populations discussed in this volume all accepted that God had created the world and would someday destroy it, then it is doubtful that they would have differentiated between concrete and metaphorical (moral, allegorical) end-time expectations vis-à-vis planning for the future materially or ethically. Prophetic language would therefore have been the normative idiom for looking forward. Only the fervor of debate would have led one exegete or another to argue for a singular truth. Then alone would apocalyptic thinkers in the literal sense of the world (i.e. those with true interest in the end) have sought to present themselves and their followers in a more favorable light. Such times set the stage for different discursive strategies: some employed this terminology as an exhortation; others harnessed prophecy to better recognize the exigencies of their own time and use it as a backdrop that could bolster their own convictions; still others maintained a general message whose appeals became contextualized before a well-known background. Finally, we cannot discount the occasional intellectual whose interest focused on the development of sophisticated exegesis.

In the contributions to this volume, Gog and Magog symbolize foreign peoples or internal enemies who fulfill a variety of roles, ranging from eschatological harbingers to admonishers and purifiers and even tools of a punitive God. They could be, but were not necessarily, read anagogically and their role in the world could, even when seen as eschatological, still be interpreted in a literal-anagogical or a moral-anagogical way. Even the clearly eschatological apocalypse by Pseudo-Methodius explains the victory of the Ishmaelites (Muslim antagonists of that late seventh-century author, whose triumph was foretold as a preliminary step toward peaceful Christian domination) as a purification (*castigatio*) of the sins of Christianity: The Ishmaelites are the destined victors, not because God loves them but as a result of the sins of those whom they vanquish.<sup>10</sup>

Even though the organizing theme of this volume is synonymous with the subject of our conference, determining the structure of a volume on peoples of the end time was challenging indeed. As editors, we contemplated numerous options for ordering this collection, each with its own merits: chronological sequencing of the subject matter; clustering according to the religion of the material or movement being studied; dedicating one section for each motif; or, interweaving this combination of elements together in the presentation of articles. We ultimately decided to draw on each of these priorities; thus, rather than offering a brief synopsis of each paper, we also highlight some of the narratives, imagery and argumentation that connect the content presented here.

## Warring Peoples

The three papers in the first section are linked by the theme “Warring Peoples.” These studies discuss the earliest material in this volume and are presented chronologically; each considers a crisis that relates to one of three consecutive turns of the century – 400, 500 and 600 CE – which involves a people that threatened the borders of a specific in-group.

In “Rome’s wild peoples: Crossing borders and anticipating doom during the Roman Empire’s final century,” Veronika Wieser focuses on the turn of the fifth century CE, when Christians as well as polytheists grappled with the empire’s decline and the fall of Rome (410 CE) while foreign peoples poised themselves for invasion at all borders. The formation of ethnic identity on the basis of antique ethnography and Roman-Christian discourse was a contributing factor in this atmosphere of anticipation and concern. This sentiment was compounded by the widespread belief

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<sup>10</sup> Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen, edd. W.J. Aerts / G.A.A. Kortekaas (CSCO 569; Subsidia 97), Löwen 1998, 139/140 (c. 11); English translation: Benjamin Garstad, *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius / An Alexandrian World Chronicle*, Cambridge (Mass.)/London 2012, 110/111.

(attested by historians such as Sulpicius Severus) that 500 CE was an eschatological auspicious year, which could witness the end of the world. Thus the migrations of different peoples toward Rome were interpreted apocalyptically and their appearance (which often reflected apocalyptic traits) was viewed through an eschatological lens. The pervasive presence of foreigners (“barbarians”) within the Roman Empire (in the military, civilian society, etc.) was not only considered an external threat but many saw it as a signal of Rome’s quickly approaching demise.

Near the turn of sixth century, the Persian Sasanians, viewed as a rising power, extended their settlements to the eastern borders of the Roman Empire, thereby meriting a place in an end-time scenario. In “The Persian wars of Anastasios (502–506 CE) as an end-time event,” Katharina Enderle studies historical events that incidentally occurred close to a time when the end of the world had been predicted and the inevitable eschatological interpretations held by those who witnessed them. Scholarship has consistently overlooked the fact that the year 6000 since the creation of the world, which was popularly considered portentous, fell during this period. As a corrective, in this paper, Enderle warns against underestimating the general influence of eschatological perspectives on world history that were widespread in the fifth and sixth centuries CE. Her discussion concentrates on the contemporaneous “Oracle of Baalbek,” in which the Sasanian Persians appear as people of end time. She contextualizes this eschatological text within the historiographical works of that time that make similar assertions, especially the chronicles of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite and Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, who each document these claims quite clearly (although, admittedly, any analysis of these sources must take the complexity of their transmission into account).

Lutz Greisiger traces eschatological portrayals of Gog and Magog breaking through the northern gates, from their biblical origins (Ez. 38–39; Jer. 1:13–15) through the early seventh-century Byzantine promulgation of anti-Persian rhetoric in “Opening the Gates of the North in 627: War, Anti-Byzantine Sentiment and Apocalyptic Expectancy in the Near East prior to the Arab Invasion.” Spanning from the Hebrew Bible via Josephus Flavius to the Byzantine integration of breaching these gates with the Romance of Alexander the Great, Greisiger discusses three elements that characterize the depiction of Gog and Magog: their association with a specific historical people (e.g. the Huns in the fifth century); their identification with peoples that were blocked from the known world by Alexander’s famous wall; and, their eschatological role (e.g. allied with the Antichrist, according to an exegesis on Ch. 20 of the Apocalypse of John). Not until the seventh century were these three aspects integrated within Syriac Greek-Aramaic culture: circa 630, the Syriac legend and song of Alexander combined these motifs and introduced the image of these gates into the vast literature on this historical figure. This literary shift is explained in a detailed analysis of the events of this epoch, with particular emphasis on the roles of Jews and non-chalcedonian Christians. An interpretation of the biblical Daniel that identified the Sasanian Persians’ mortal threat to the Roman Empire as the fourth world empire, led broad stretches of the empire’s population to read their ad-



vances as apocalyptic signs. By defeating the Persians in 628, Rome had proven itself as the *katechon* (the power that could forestall the end, as per the second letter to the Thessalonians). Imperial propaganda could then reject an apocalyptic view of the present. Nevertheless, the Gök Turks, who marched with their ally Emperor Heraclius through the Caucasus against the Persians, were still perceived as echoes of the Huns, the nations blocked off by Alexander, and Gog and Magog.

Another thematically related paper from our conference deserves mention here, “Gog, Magog and the Huns: remarks on the eschatological ‘ethnography’ of the migration period” by Wolfram Brandes, which was published<sup>11</sup> in advance of this volume. Starting from the fifth-century identification of the Huns with these two end-time peoples, Brandes considers descriptions of the Huns’ appearance and brutality in the “Song of Alexander” and an apocalypse ascribed to Ephrem (both seventh-century Syriac compositions), among other sources. Gog and Magog’s savagery became a topos of apocalyptic literature, subsequently adopted by other genres (such as the *Chronography* of Theophanes, which uses similar language when describing the Muslim Arab conquest of Pergamon in 716).

## Unknown Peoples

Time and again, previously unknown peoples appeared on the horizons of pre-modern societies: either as an extension of the original culture or as foreigners who were considered intruders (as discussed in the first section of this collection). If the balance of power became unfavorable for the recipient group and the life styles clashed (especially in the case of a settled versus nomadic dichotomy), an eschatological explanation could readily emerge. Each of the three major monotheistic religions responded with this trope to the Mongols’ territorial expansion. The three articles in this section each examine Latin-Christian sources from various periods, demonstrating how the encounter with the Mongols was processed over time. David Cook’s treatment of Muslim perspectives on the Mongols was included in an earlier conference (and volume);<sup>12</sup> herein, his paper on Muslim depictions of Turks, with its many parallels, appears below (in Section IV).

In “Traveling toward the peoples of End Time: C. de Bridia as a religious re-interpretation of Carpini” Gregor Werner investigates reports sent by the first Franciscans who were dispatched as papal envoys (in the 1240s) to the Mongols, who had taken control of vast sections of Asia and also entered Europe. Werner assesses

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<sup>11</sup> Wolfram Brandes: Gog, Magog und die Hunnen: Anmerkungen zur eschatologischen “Ethnographie” der Völkerwanderungszeit, in: *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, ed. by Walter Pohl / Clemens Gantner / Richard Payne, Aldershot 2012, 477–498.

<sup>12</sup> David Cook, *Apocalyptic Incidents during the Mongol Invasions*, in: *Endzeiten*, cf. n. 1, p. 293–312.

one report – previously categorized as a version of the account written by another member of the party (John of Plano Carpini, Benedict of Poland) or as a modern fabrication – as an independent, contemporaneous recasting of the delegation’s experiences with the Mongols. Whereas John of Plano Carpini, author of the longest, most systematic and widely circulated report, concentrated on relating factual data that could school Latin Europeans for further dealings with the Mongols, this source, attributed to C. de Bridia, was authored for another purpose entirely. Werner reads this record as an alternative presentation of this journey, composed in an eschatological tenor that situates this encounter within a divine plan. Thus C. de Bridia evaluates Mongol warfare according to the books of Maccabees, whereas Plano Carpini describes actual Mongol military techniques in great detail. As in several contributions to this volume, here we encounter a text that, rather than confronting its audience with a discussion of the approaching end time, emphasizes that the Mongols’ impressive capacities represent heavenly punishment for the sins committed by Christians; interestingly, in this source, the Mongols speak of their own impending destruction to their Christian visitors.

The encyclopedic *Livre de Sidrac* (likely ca. 1260s), whose text claims authorship before the Common Era, is the subject of Petra Waffner’s “The peoples of end time in the French *Livre de Sidrac* (13th century).” Originally written in Old French and of undetermined provenance (hypotheses have pointed to France and the Middle East), this source is found in varied manuscripts and versions in several European vernaculars, all dated from the late Middle Ages. The specifics of its transmission and reception remain unclear. The *Livre* is an extensive catalogue of questions; distinct portions of this text bear unmistakable eschatological traits: most notably, it recounts the history of the world, with a focus on events rather than the peoples responsible for them, all in an encrypted language of *ex eventu* prophecies. Although some standard topics from contemporary Western prophetic sources are incorporated, the *Livre* includes little stock content. It foretells an apocalypse that will be instigated by Greek actions; Muhammad later appears as a counter-Christ (as distinct from the Antichrist); and, Mongols are responsible for a broad spectrum of roles during an extensive period of end-time events until the final battles in world history are waged around the “dry tree.”

The previous two papers demonstrate a clear trajectory in Western eschatological interpretations of the Mongols, from a relatively early stage in C. de Bridia (written in the wake of the Mongol defeat of Christian knights in 1241) to the later *Livre de Sidrac* (where the Mongols are envisioned as apocalyptic allies); that is to say, the imagery moves from singularly dire to far more differentiated. While the Mongols were in Europeans’ sights, their initial onslaught was vividly remembered until the fifteenth century (when the last remains of their empire disappeared and the Ottomans finally became a far more prominent enemy advancing from the East); nonetheless, the Mongols became increasingly familiar to the Latin West as Europeans approached them as travelers, merchants and missionaries, and, in the Middle East, they even were considered allies against the Mamluks. This shift would logically

have anticipated relinquishing their association with Gog and Magog, but that specter was never completely forgotten. Instead, as Felicitas Schmieder argues in “The ‘natural meekness’ of Gog and Magog? The Mongols as an end-time people in the context of changing knowledge and desires,” rather than ceasing to link the Mongols with Gog and Magog, many sources attributed additional qualities to them. The resilience of imagery relating to Gog and Magog and burgeoning interpretations of the Mongols were likely rooted in the broader significance that Europeans ascribed to this Asian nation: a people as prominent as the Mongols must have a significant place God’s plan. This perspective led to a relativizing position with respect to the existence of an enemy that represented absolute evil; such a modification might be attributed the aforementioned *sensus scripturae*, which allowed for exegetical interpretations that represented a range of readings that need not be harmonious with one another (for further discussion of such hermeneutical issues, see the paper by Pavlína Cermanová in this volume).

## Jewish Peoples of the Apocalypse

From the twelfth century onward, especially in Christian readings, Gog and Magog became increasingly identified with the biblical Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. This ascription had negative overtones among Christians (and Muslims) whereas Jews associated end-time hopes with these tribes.<sup>13</sup> In this context, the images of Jews and end-time peoples were closely linked, leading to interesting results with regard to both content and function. Alexandra Cuffel, in “Jewish Tribes and Women in the Genesis and Battle of the Dajjāl: Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammād al-Khuzā‘ī al-Marwzī’s *Kitāb al-Fitan*,” hones in on the multiple and, at times, contradictory roles assigned to Jews in medieval Muslim apocalyptic literature. On the one hand, Jews are depicted as Muslim allies and followers of the Messiah and, on the other, as enemies who appear in the army of the Dajjāl, the opponent of the savior in Muslim apocalypticism. Although scholars commonly ascribe this dissonance to Jewish and Christian influences on Muslims thought, Cuffel emphasizes – based on her analysis of the *Kitāb al-Fitan des Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammād* (al-Khuzā‘ī al-Marwzī, ninth century) – the polemical dialogue that took place in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages between Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions, which were closely intertwined long before they were adopted by Muslims. Nu‘ayim’s presentation of a Jewish Dajjāl seems to stem from Christian sources that ascribe Jewish origins to Antichrist (some say from the lost tribe of Dan) and, analogously, claim that the army of the Dajjāl (like that of Antichrist) would be recruited from Jews. By contrast, Jewish apocalyptic writings, such as *Sefer Zerubavel* and similar traditions which mock the virgin birth by tracing Armilos’s maternal lineage to a virgin statue made of stone, seem to provide source material for Nu‘ayim’s story of the Dajjāl being born with a statue enclosed within his

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13 Cf. n. 3.

body. The mother and other female protagonists as well as the improper sexual behavior in the drama of Dajjāl originate with characterizations of Miriam/Maria, mother of Jesus, in Hebrew counter-narratives to the gospels.

As with other papers in this volume, Cuffel's contribution highlights a hermeneutic entanglement between an eschatological future that informs a moral-political interpretation of the non-apocalyptic present: On the one hand, Jews become the ultimate enemy of Islam who can't be trusted. On the other hand, Nu'ayim's teaching of Jewish tribes who are destined – again influenced by Jewish and Christian sources on the end-time tribes – to join forces with Muslims in their battle against the Dajjāl and his Jewish army point to positive perceptions of actual Jews during the ninth century. Nu'ayim's presentation of women conveys similarly ambivalent messages, underscoring a sinister side that is emphasized in tenth to sixteenth century sources, where women, too, will help a false Messiah to mislead believers. Cuffel reads this as a mirror on the changing status of women between the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, when they became ever more restricted to the domestic sphere.

Let us now turn to Armenian perspectives on the eschatological role of Jews. In "Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century: a Fictional Community or New Encounters?" Zaroui Pogossian starts on a basic level since her article represents scholarship on the Christian Orient rarely appears in Western languages; it is the sole contribution in this volume dedicated to the lesser studied, yet no less rich, eschatological tradition of a non-orthodox, pre-chalzedonian church (though these traditions are noted by Cuffel in her study of early Islamic texts). This tradition originates in twelfth-century Cilicia ("little Armenia" on Mediterranean coastline, between modern Turkey and Syria), when Armenians were deeply connected not only with eastern Mediterranean religious currents but also with two newcomers, one from Central Asia, one from the Latin West: the Turkic Selçuks and the Crusader movement, respectively. This exposure was the primary catalyst for striking growth in Armenian eschatological literature in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (as in the Latin West but in addition to a general feeling of crisis, prompted by distinctive causalities).

The texts that Pogossian analyzes – the visions of Saint Nerses, the *Sermo de Antichristo*, the prophecies of Agaton and the Counsel of Vardan Aygek'i – have unified messages of prophetic expectations that call for penitence on the basis of apocalyptic interpretations of present circumstances. The significance of this material extends far beyond the denominational and regional inflections of this prophetic and apocalyptic genre: three of these four texts seem to have remained in circulation for centuries, with evidence of having been adapted according to particular events (including the Armenian encounter with the First Crusade), proven by unambiguous documents and, to some degree, the contradictory positions preserved in their twelfth-century version. Moreover, Armenian texts from the Cilician period do not indicate simple transfer but rather a complex textual production that borrows and adapts motifs, and also relies on oral traditions and versions, thus mirroring Armenians' dynamic political alliances during turbulent times.

Pogossian illustrates the Armenian view on peoples considered outsiders by discussing their projections of Jews' roles in the apocalypse, as presented in "historical apocalypses" that engage past and present events that are interpreted in light of a prophesied future. In their presentation of apocalyptic enemies (and alliances), these sources include not only (Byzantine) Christians but certain Muslim groups as well as tribes that were physically barred by Alexander the Great, along with Gog and Magog. The role of Jews here tends to be consistent with other sources (as outlined in Cuffel's article, improper sexual behavior by the Antichrist's Jewish mother is mentioned here); however, Armenian texts also convey elements that are without parallel in other apocalyptic literature, especially with respect to the ultimate Jewish conversion to Christianity and their martyrdom by the Antichrist. In these narratives, the portrait of Jews goes well beyond the biblical foundation, where it is subject to political trends and Jews are accused of cooperating with a Muslim enemy. While the eschatological meaning of Byzantines and, moreover, of Muslims for Cilician Armenians (who were predominantly refugees that had been driven out by Selçuks) are easily explained, the significance of Jews in this scenario is far less clear. An in-depth study of the sources – seeking local and foreign traditions in Armenian texts and translations from other languages – and a contextual examination of the political, religious and intellectual climate of twelfth-century Cilicia, leads to the justifiable query whether a real encounter between Armenians and Jews took place in Cilicia.

Jewish interest in eschatological narratives and the fate of the Ten Lost Tribes prompted a favorable interweaving of these themes into yet another messianic context. The third article in this section examines how Jews viewed themselves as an eschatological people: In "Back to the Future: The Ten Tribes and Messianic Hopes in Jewish Society during the Early Modern Age," Moti Benmelech looks through the prism of correspondence between Jews in Italy and the land of Israel (circa 1430 to 1530) during a proliferation of reported rediscoveries of the Ten Tribes. Due to their aforementioned role as an end-time army for the liberation of Jerusalem, the rumored reappearance of the Ten Lost Tribes held messianic and thus political significance. While waves of preoccupation with the Ten Tribes had surfaced in the past – e.g. the ninth century, when Eldad ha-Dani (of the tribe of Dan) purportedly appeared – Benmelech explains how fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Jewish responses to such accounts differed from earlier patterns. Whereas the Eldad episode was deemed to have halakhic significance, other "sightings" of the Ten Tribes had been discussed in theological and exegetical contexts. Benmelech contextualizes the absence of an eschatological response in these earlier instances by citing contemporaneous discourses that exploited reports on the reappearance of the Ten Tribes without messianic implications. For Jews in the diaspora, he claims, the Ten Tribes were unreachable and void of political meaning until the late Middle Ages.

Benmelech explains that the imminent messianic import the Ten Tribes and, especially, their alleged military successes in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries were outcomes of particular historical constellation: the strengthened diplomatic ties between Italians and Ethiopia – which had been identified since the early fourteenth

century as the realm of Prester John which was long envisioned in close vicinity to the Jewish lost tribes – raised hopes for the discovery of the Ten Tribes; however, Jewish adaptations of the fearsome qualities ascribed to the Red Jews in Christian eschatological traditions from German-speaking regions – that had reached northern Italy via Jewish migrations – were also influential. This article concludes by observing that rumors about the Ten Tribes not only spurred messianic activity among Jews but, at the opposite end of the spectrum, these same portents were used to justify and reinforce a passive stance for, even as expectations of salvation intensified, the mighty forces beyond the Sambatyon River would surely prevail without reinforcements from diasporic Jewry.

## Muslim Perspectives

Anna Akasoy’s “Al-Andalus and the Andalusis in the Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition” is situated in a western Islamic region that had long been separated from the Caliphate in Bagdad. Once more we find evidence of the entanglement of diverse traditions within the Islamic world noted in Cuffel’s work (above; and, below, we will encounter a Christian perspective on the Iberian Peninsula from an early-modern English vantage point). Andalusians might have been viewed as a shining hope for Umayyad Sunnis who longed for an eschatological conquest over Shiite Egypt; however, considering their geographic position in the Islamic sphere, they were more commonly seen as a marginal and, at times, a heretical presence. Rarely were Andalusians posited as an end-time people. The source for the study is the *Kitab al-Fitan (Book of Burdens)* by Abū ‘Abdallāh Nu‘aym (d. 844 CE), one of Islam’s earliest apocalyptic eschatological texts. Its author seems to have learned about al-Andalus in Egypt, which was considered the “motherland of Andalusian historiography.” One prophetic tradition announces that a group of Andalusians (sometimes identified as Muslims, sometimes as non-Muslims) would cross the sea to fight the Egyptians who, in some versions, are supported by Syrians. In a parallel version, these Andalusians become allied with Turks, Byzantines and Ethiopians. For this example – which could be located historically but need not be – we could pose the core questions that pertain to similar apocalyptic narratives: First, could such a prophecy, focusing on a specific people, have been spurred by historical circumstances and thus anticipated events that would have been recognizable for a contemporary audience? Alternatively, could this narrative have been compelling precisely because of its unexpected teachings? Or, rather, by the potency of literary traditions related to the people being named and, therefore, recalled? In Islamic literature, al-Andalus is a region for jihad where Muslims become either fighters or martyrs; Muslims must defend their religion despite perilous conditions, much as the prophet once did. The special role of al-Andalus has been kept alive in the Islamic world precisely because of its tenuous position.

In Muslim apocalyptic literature, both Andalusians and Turks, whose end-time roles have been touched on above, are specified as enemies during the end time given their roles as internal and external challenges to the Islamic world. For Turks, who were accepted as Muslims by Muslim observers who wrote in Arabic, ethnicity is the distinctive element; whereas, for Andalusians, cultural distinctiveness is at issue. In this corpus, Andalusians can thus be designated as unbelievers as well as Muslims.

Given the speed with which Turks embraced Islam, much like those earlier Arab and Persian observers, David Cook's "The Image of the Turk in Classical and Modern Muslim Apocalyptic Literature" shows how the oscillation between their depictions as end-time enemies versus defenders of Islam are parallel to fluctuating political realities. Cook traces tendencies in Muslim apocalypticism from its nascent stages to the present. Classic texts that refer to Turkish military strength generally denigrate this people as progeny of Japhet (Noah's third son) or as Gog and Magog. Contrary to reality, in such sources, Turks are usually painted as non-Muslims who are allied with the Byzantines, mortal enemies of Islam, and, together with Jews, as followers of the Dajjāl. The occasional positive, messianic role of Turks was fortified in the thirteenth century, when another fearsome people emerged from the steppes: the Mongols, who were more readily identified as Gog and Magog. This was but one of the defining changes in the political landscape; another was the clash between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which prompted re-interpretations, rejections and renewals of longstanding suspicions. Within living memory, the independence of Arabic states from the Ottoman Empire ultimately fueled anti-Turkish sentiments in Muslim apocalyptic literature, which was reinforced in the 1990s and 2000s, as modern Turkey approached the West and brokered peace with Israel.

## Protestant Variations

In this section we move to the late Middle Ages; it is noteworthy that our use of the term "protestant" is not limited to movements that resulted from the Reformation. The four articles presented here discuss: Hussites vis-à-vis their precursors and opponents; the Anabaptists of Münster; the struggle between the English High Church and Protestants; and, fifteenth-century anti-clerical laity who raised their voices against the religious establishment. Time and again, identification of certain actors with Gog and Magog or comparable, negative eschatological players is only one part of the equation; the assertion of one's own group as an affirming force in the end time is at least as significant. Latin Christian prophecy became far more complex in the late Middle Ages but its study is confounded by the meager number of critical editions. We are fortunate to have promising young scholars in the field whose work is featured here.



In “Gog and Magog: Using Concepts of Apocalyptic Enemies in the Hussite era,” Pavlína Cermanová opens her study of Hussite Bohemia with an overview of the factors that typified contemporaneous apocalyptic interpretation, with particular attention to their sources and regional familiarity with them. In Hussite eschatology, Gog and Magog are none other than Jews and personae identified with the key problems of their time: hypocrites and heretics, false prophets and schismatics, Beghards and Beguines. Insecurity bred a desire for screens on which societal anguish could be projected and for a bright line to demarcate right from wrong, within communal structures and as a barrier to outsiders. As is well known, Latin European tradition has transmitted a large reservoir of possible interpretations for Gog and Magog; in an effort to define the possible associations in this milieu, Cermanova gathered translations of the works that were available in Bohemia to Hussites and their adversaries, including major works, such as Pseudo-Methodius’s apocalypse or Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* and extant versions of the *Alexander Romance*, and less prominent texts that were instrumental in spreading tangible expectations for Gog and Magog, such as Jacques de Vitry’s *Historia Orientalis*, Pseudo-Joachim of Fiore’s *Super Isaiam*, works by a Joachite, John of Rupescissa (crucial for the study of Bohemia), and the Alexander Minorita’s commentary on the Apocalypse. Special attention is placed on texts that do not place Gog and Magog within a Jewish framework, thereby opening the possibility of association with the end-time peoples as a means for denigrating any opponent, especially in times of crisis like the pre-Hussite and Hussite periods. It is particularly striking how rarely Gog and Magog were actually mentioned, especially by comparison to the frequency with which the Antichrist was referred to during that same era. Gog and Magog are discussed in three cases: their meaning for church history, as symbols of evil in the Church and society of that time and place, and, as a necessary evil in the process of reaching redemption. Cermanova documents this pattern in the works of four authors whose lifetimes span nearly a century: Milic of Kremsier (d. 1374), Mathias of Janov (d. 1393), Jacob of Mies (d. 1429), and Nikolaus Biskupec of Pilgrim (d. 1460).

Further west, but in close proximity to Hussite Bohemia, clerics and a growing segment of the laity were contemplating the signs of the times and the end of time. The brothers Wirsberger, discussed by Frances Courtney Kneupper in “The Wirsberger Brothers: Contesting Spiritual Authority through Prophecy,” exemplify such lay thinkers. In 1467, Livin Wirsberger, a noble from the land of Eger (in the vicinity of Hussite country), was accused and convicted of heresy in Regensburg after he had been distributing prophetic letters for years to members of the high nobility, ranking personages in imperial cities, the Franciscan provincial of Saxony and the theological faculties of Erfurt, Leipzig and Vienna. The contents of this correspondence verged on a personal interpretation of the gospels, which he probed in hopes of solving the ardent problems of the time – reform of Church and society – by announcing the end of the world.

Admittedly, the two letters to Nuremberg provided as exemplars raise questions regarding their author’s psychological stability; nevertheless, they articulate “a per-



ceptible, articulated eschatological program [stating that the end will come in 1471], as well as a conscious campaign to spread this program and to obtain the ear and approval of the people of the Reich.”<sup>14</sup> These are not compositions from the learned (clerical) elite but samples of lay popular prophecy (defined as accessible to all literate circles of society, both clerical and lay, and therefore mostly in the vernacular). Namely, these letters represent a source which is rarely preserved. Here we can grasp the eschatological ideas of people who were outside of the official church, beyond the bounds of spiritual and political identity in the fifteenth-century Empire, which were taking hold in the contested space of end-time prophecy that clerics had to increasingly share with the general public. In this atmosphere, the factors that secured a clerical monopoly on interpreting God’s word were being undermined: language was controversial, clerical authority was scrutinized and control over knowledge of the future was disputed. The brothers Wirsberger were fully aware of their precarious situation: they were boldly anti-Latin and, thus, anti-clerical, they nursed fantasies of violence, and they cultivated biblical interpretations that countered false clerical teachings, while hinting that the clergy were aligned with the Antichrist. Nevertheless, they could also appear submissive, for they approached religious and secular leaders, requesting that these authorities assess their interpretations so they might ascertain whether their visions were from God or the devil. Paradoxically, their use of the vernacular enlarged their audience in some respects while limiting it in others. These texts are unreservedly pro-German, expressing a German-centered eschatology. Therein lies the critical role of the imperial cities, explaining why Nuremberg, Regensburg, Erfurt, Eger are asked for approval despite their lack of clerical authority: they represented the Empire, the Zion of prophecy, Germans and their prescribed end-time roles.

The eschatology of the Anabaptists of Münster is rooted in the Reformation era, as Anselm Schubert presents in “*Nova israhelis republica: The realm of the Anabaptists at Münster 1534–35 as the true Israel.*” This group of reformers acted with expectations of a literal and imminent end since they understood themselves as the holy, chosen people who would become the surviving remnant. This community organized their lives according to a hierarchy that followed the biblical model and incorporated aspects of rabbinic tradition. After presenting a critical overview of the latest scholarship, Schubert studies how and under which conditions the establishment and legitimization of this rule of Zion was successful, that is, how the Anabaptist realm of Münster was organized and how its residents made their town the “heavenly Jerusalem.” In Westfalia the teachings of an Anabaptist leader, Melchior Hofmann, was implemented: the Anabaptists would survive as “spiritual Jerusalem” (in the sense of *verus Israel*, the true Israel) in a terrestrial town identified as eschatological Jerusalem, defy the evil powers of end time until the second coming of Christ. Once the expected date of the end time – Easter 1534 – had elapsed and fol-

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<sup>14</sup> Kneupper in this volume, p. 258.

lowing the death of Jan Mathijs, Jan van Leiden, the new head of Anabaptist Münster, returned to the theme of New Jerusalem, reinterpreting it as a means to explain the failed prophecy: the end of the world would only come once all of Münster became completely holy, as the exemplar that would inspire reversals throughout the world. The model for such a holy community was, naturally, Old Israel: its Old Testament institutions, its judiciary, then its monarchical constitution were emulated. This interpretive paradigm was maintained during the siege of Münster, with reference to the redemption of Israel who had been enslaved in Egypt when God turned away from His people.

As king of New Israel, Jan van Leiden was celebrated as *David redivivus*, as David restored, but without the usual eschatological identification with the Messiah. This new David was interpreted as the Hauptmann (captain) who would be the harbinger of Christ's second coming. Schubert speculates that this teaching may have been adapted from the post-biblical Jewish messianic topos of a warlike Messiah ben Josef who will pave the way for the true Messiah ben David. This position makes affirm that the Anabaptists of Münster, rather than claiming to represent the thousand years of Christ's rule on earth, actually understood themselves as the "true Israel" who would ready the world for the millennium, thereby fulfilling Old-Testament prophecies of salvation for (Old) Israel typologically, an unusual interpretation within the Radical Reformation.

Such positive self-identification as an end-time people was exceptional; in the early modern period, focusing on enemies was the norm, as the remaining articles in this section underscore. We next turn our focus to the New Israel of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. As Andreas Pečar explains in "England's salvation and God's enemies Gog and Magog: England's threatened political identity as a "protestant nation" (1588–1640)," in this scenario, the peoples of the end time are yet again portrayed as a looming external force. When England reads itself as New Israel, it does so in a spiritual sense, where the Church has replaced Jews as the people of the Covenant. As Pečar shows, in the sixteenth century, Gog and Magog became constitutive for England's political-religious self-concept as a Protestant nation and the paradigm for determining allies and foes. Here too, the reference to the Apocalypse of John cannot only be understood eschatologically, but as a justification of England's mission in the world and its religious policy. The standard reformation position saw the pope as the Antichrist or, together with the Turks, as Gog and Magog. In the end time, which was considered imminent, England would participate in the battle against the powers of evil. The Spaniards, when their Armada attacked England in 1588, could thus become an apocalyptic people (see Akasoy's article) which was destined for defeat by the chosen England with the help of God.

Interestingly, this interpretation continued to have currency after the peace treaty with Spain in 1603. For the Scottish King James VI who, after the death of Elizabeth I, was crowned James I of England, this narrative was a rhetorical tool that proved the strength of his Protestant convictions and his loyalty toward England. This was particularly important since James had been baptized a Catholic though he was raised

Calvinist, had promoted a trans-confessional Christian union against the Turks and had extended greater tolerance to English Catholics than his predecessors on the English throne. These tendencies caused many faithful Englishmen to worry that their country might deviate from the plan for salvation prescribed in the Apocalypse of John. In his article, Pečar emphasizes the consequences that rhetorical statements which invoked biblical end-time prophecies had for political debates and resultant decisions and actions: from the demand that the English Parliament grant Catholics permission to worship freely, to England's position in the Thirty Years War.

## Non-Apocalyptic Peoples of the End Time

In contrast to the preceding sections that, despite some consideration of earlier traditions, concentrated on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the early modern period, the contributions here return to early-medieval Latin-Christian eschatology.

In "Apocalyptic Outsiders and their Uses in the Early Medieval West," James T. Palmer studies outsiders – in the guise of foreign tribes (in the classic apocalyptic sense of Gog and Magog) as well as individuals and groups (e.g. heretical persons or movements) – in early medieval Western Christendom. These outsiders have been typologically marked by four defining features: First, the notion of outsiders is related to the question of evil in the world, evidenced by the (real or literary) antagonistic dichotomies between the groups involved. Second, geographical positioning has considerable weight: North functions as the home of "evil tribes," namely Gog and Magog, as derived from the Goths of late Antiquity and the medieval Normans; in contrast, the civilized South is threatened by apocalyptic outsiders. Third, the dynamics of conflict are expressed through dissonance, especially when one culture is endangered by an external foe within an apocalyptic scenario. Finally, the appearance of outsiders evokes passive reactions – i.e. when groups or individuals were identified with Gog and Magog – though there is potential for a more active response. That is to say, the populace and/or their ruler could take the initiative to thwart an apocalyptic menace. Palmer distinguishes between internal and external enemies; the latter category includes Jews, whose connection to Antichrist had been asserted since the early eighth century, especially by the apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. Apocalyptic outsiders could generate incentives for societal reform, especially in the moral sphere, by holding up a mirror so society might recognize its own shortcomings, thereby serving as a catalyst for improvement. Furthermore, the presence of admonishers, whose faith has been tried yet remains firm, could offer spiritual reinforcement for the status quo.

In the context of eleventh-century Church reform, Christian eschatology turned inward, thus joining the discourse on moral decline. In "Christian Moral Decline: A New Context for the *Sybilla Tiburtina* (Ms Escorial & .I.3)," Anke Holdenried analyzes the example of the *Sybilla Tiburtina* – which must be viewed in the context of Cluny – in the scholarly dispute on whether prophetic eschatology can be isolated

from the impending end. This article concentrates on the period when the *Tiburtina* begins to be physically transmitted (the Escorial manuscript at the heart of this study is dated to 1047), irrespective of speculation regarding manuscripts that never existed or are no longer extant, e. g. in the context of *Reichseschatologie* (imperial apocalypticism).

In its Iberian context – in which Muslims are present, if weakened – the Escorial manuscript, with its far-reaching popularity (measured by the number of extant copies and their locations), seems anything but imperial. Rather, drawing on late antique exhortations, suffering for moral lapses, punishment for sins, and potential betterment are emphasized; this ethical component was not unusual, but it met a special need in eleventh century societies that were craving reform. Holdenried contends that such moral underpinnings should receive greater attention; awareness of this component of these texts should complement (not compete with) their anagogical sense, as several articles in this volume likewise argue.

In the context of Church reform, Delia Kottmann investigates the famous murals in the Abbey Church Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, which primarily illustrate the Narthex with selections from the Book of Revelation as representations of the struggle against the Empire (“The Apocalyptic Cycle of the Romanesque Murals in the Narthex of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe (Vienne): Do They Illustrate Political Ideas of Gregorian Reform?”). These late eleventh-century Narthex paintings, which have many gaps (only five of originally twelve scenes are well preserved), depict the Apocalypse of John. Much as spiritual and especially allegorical approaches dominated readings of this New Testament book between c. 400 and c. 1200, over and above historical or visionary understandings, so too should the murals in Saint-Savin be viewed with moral inflections, expressing a longing for better times. In this context, they communicate political ideas from the Gregorian reform that upheld the supremacy of Church and Papacy. Kottmann studies one scene, which incorporates the ark of the covenant, apocalyptic women (*mulier amicta sole*; the woman clothed with the sun) and a dragon, as well as New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ. The woman in Apoc. Ch. 12 is read with a lesser Marian emphasis and a stronger ecclesiological one, highlighting the authority of the Church. The selection and presentation of these scenes, their iconographic idiosyncrasies, their emphasis on persons and relationships, and, not least, the choice of colors (*hyacinthus, purpura, coccus, byssus* – representing the four cardinal virtues and the four elements) all suggest that both artist and sponsor had *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (written ca. 1080–1081) in mind, through which its author, Bruno of Segni, enters political discourse.

As we have seen, the end time is obviously the common thread that links the papers collected here, but it should be noted that moral purification and, thus, divine retribution frequently come to the fore as well. The political patterns of interpretation discussed above permeate this scholarship, indicating that they may also have been a priority for the prophetic thinkers studied here.



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**| Kriegerische Völker / Warsome Peoples**



Veronika Wieser

# Roms wilde Völker: Grenzüberschreitungen und Untergangsstimm(ung)en im letzten Jahrhundert des römischen Imperiums

Die Jahre 375/6 und 568 sind traditionellerweise die Grenzen einer Epoche, die als die Zeit der Völkerwanderung oder der „invasions barbares“ eines der fundierenden Narrative der spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen westeuropäischen Geschichte bildet.<sup>1</sup> Die Wander- oder Fluchtbewegungen von Goten, Vandalen, Burgundern oder Langobarden quer durch ganz Europa sind ein integrativer Bestandteil der Erzählungen und Interpretationen um Krise und Zusammenbruch oder Kontinuität und Transformation des weströmischen Imperiums.<sup>2</sup> Diese Erzählungen und Herkunftsmymthen sind stark teleologisch ausgerichtet. Von einem Anfangspunkt aus auf einen Endpunkt zu finden sie ihren Abschluss in der Gründung eines Königreichs auf römischen Boden. Folgt man diesen zielgerichteten Abbildungen, in denen die Herkunftsmymthen der barbarischen Völker eingeschrieben sind, dann starteten beispielsweise die Goten im hohen Norden von der Insel Scandza aus.<sup>3</sup> Generationen

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Walter Pohl, Helmut Reimitz und Christian Zolles möchte ich für ihre wertvollen Ideen und Hilfestellungen zu diesem Artikel danken, Martin Zolles für die Idee zum Titel.

**1** Aus der umfassenden Literatur, besonders für einen Überblick über die rezenten Forschungspositionen siehe Walter Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung. Eroberung und Integration* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln <sup>2</sup>2005); ders., *Rome and the barbarians*, in: *Antiquité tardive* 16 (2008) 93–101; ders., *Völkerwanderung*, in: Michael Borgolte (Hg.), *Migrationen des mittelalterlichen Jahrtausends: Europa, Afrika und Asien* (Berlin im Druck); ders., *Migrations, ethnic groups, and state building*, in: Michael Maas (Hg.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila* (Cambridge 2014) 247–263; Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (Cambridge 2007) bes. 3–34, 455–498; Patrick J. Geary, *Völkerwanderung as Cross-Cultural Interaction*, in: Michael Borgolte / Julia Dücker / Marcel Müllerburg / Paul Predatsch / Bernd Schneidmüller (Hg.), *Europa im Geflecht der Welt. Mittelalterliche Migrationen in globalen Bezügen* (Berlin 2012) 45–54. Vgl. dazu auch neuere Studien, die das Motiv des Verfalls der römischen Welt und die Konfrontation zwischen Römern und Barbaren wieder beleben: Brian Ward Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford 2005); Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire. A New History* (London 2006); ders., *Empires and Barbarians. Migration, Development and the Birth of Europe* (Basingstoke/Oxford <sup>2</sup>2010) bes. 22–35. Zur Kontroverse um Migration bzw. Invasion vgl. die Beiträge von Guy Halsall, Peter Heather, Walter Goffart, Walter Pohl, Ian Wood in: Thomas F. X. Noble (Hg.), *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms* (London/New York 2006) sowie die Diskussion in: Andrew Gillett (Hg.), *On Barbarian Identity. Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2002).

**2** Zum Themenkomplex Krise bzw. Transformation vgl. allgemein Clifford Ando, *Narrating decline and fall*, in: Philipp Rousseau / Jutta Raitzel (Hg.), *Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester/Malden/London 2009) 59–76; Averil Cameron, *The perception of crisis*, in: *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 45 (Spoleto 1998) 9–34.

**3** Jordanes, *Getica* 24, 121–122, hg.v. Theodor Mommsen (MGH AA 5, 1, Berlin 1882) 53–138, hier 60. Vgl. exemplarisch Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton



später gelangten sie nach Skytien, überquerten 376 die Donau, zogen durch Thrakien weiter nach Südgallien und Italien bis sie schließlich in Spanien ein Königreich gründeten. In historischen Atlanten werden diese Bewegungen als eine chaotische Vielzahl von Pfeilen und Schleifen dargestellt. Sie ähneln dabei, so Guy Halsall, einer „spaghetti-like confusion of coloured arrows, to their eventual goals, almost as if these were predestined“.<sup>4</sup>

Die *origines gentium* sowohl der frühmittelalterlichen *regna* wie auch der modernen europäischen Nationen erhielten und bezogen ihre nationale Identität aus den ethnischen Identifikationsangeboten des römischen Imperiums und deren Bedeutungsproduktionen im römisch-christlichen Diskurs.<sup>5</sup> Antike Ethnografie und der Text der Bibel gemeinsam lieferten die Folie für die Konstruktion ethnischer Identität, die zur Schlüsselkategorie für die Etablierung der politischen und religiösen Strukturen der frühmittelalterlichen Gesellschaft wurde, wie Walter Pohl in seinen Arbeiten wiederholt verdeutlicht hat.<sup>6</sup> Regiert wurde im Namen einer *gens*, wie beispielsweise *rex gentis Langobardorum* oder *rex Francorum*.

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2002); ders., The crisis of European identity, in: Noble (Hg.), *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*, 33–42.

<sup>4</sup> Guy Halsall, *The Barbarian Invasions*, in: Paul Fouracre (Hg.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History 1, 500–700* (Cambridge 2005) 35–55, hier 36; vgl. auch Friedrich Wilhelm Putzger, *Historischer Weltatlas* (Leipzig 1877 / ND Bielefeld 1961) „Germanische Völkerwanderung“.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Collins, *The western kingdoms*, in: Averil Cameron / Bryan Ward-Perkins / Michael Whitby (Hg.), *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, AD 425–600* (The Cambridge Ancient History 14, Cambridge 2000) 112–134; Walter Pohl, *The barbarian successor states*, in: Leslie Webster / Michelle Brown (Hg.), *The Transformation of the Roman World, AD 400–900* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1997) 33–47; die Beiträge in: Hans-Werner Goetz / Walter Pohl (Hg.), *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (The Transformation of the Roman World 13, Leiden Boston/Köln 2003); Julia M. H. Smith, *Europe after Rome. A New Cultural History 500–1000* (Oxford 2007) 253–292; Peter Sarris, *Empires of Faith. The Fall of Rome to the Rise of Islam, 500–700* (Oxford 2011) 81–124; zur Konstruktion nationaler Identität vgl. exemplarisch: Herwig Wolfram, *Origo et religio: ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts*, in: Noble (Hg.), *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*; Alheydis Plassmann, *Origo gentis. Identitäts- und Legitimitätsstiftung in früh- und hoch mittelalterlichen Herkunftserzählungen* (*Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters* 7, Berlin 2006); ders., *Introduction: Strategies of identification. A methodological profile*, in: ders. / Gerda Heydemann, *Strategies of Identification. Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout 2013) 1–64; Ian N. Wood, *Barbarians, Historians, and the Construction of National Identities*, in: *Journal of Late Antiquity* (2008) 61–81.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Pohl, *Aux origines d'une Europe ethnique: Identités en transformation entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, in: *Annales: Histoire, Sciences sociales* 60/1 (2005) 183–208; ders., *Christian and barbarian identities in the early medieval West: introduction*, in: ders. / Gerda Heydemann, *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West* (Turnhout 2013) 1–46; ders., *Telling the difference: Signs of ethnic identity*, in: ders. / Helmut Reimitz (Hg.), *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (The Transformation of the Roman World 2, Leiden/Boston/Köln 1998) 17–70.

Doch nicht nur als Instrument legitimer politischer Herrschaft, sondern als *Zeichen* des Untergangs war der Begriff „barbarisch“ eine zentrale referentielle Größe der Völkerwanderungszeit.

In dem komplexen Prozess der Umwandlung der römischen Welt und besonders im „monumentalen Genre“<sup>7</sup> der Historiografie über den Zusammenbruch des Imperiums nehmen Goten, Hunnen, Vandalen oder Langobarden einen kategorialen Platz ein. Die Positionen der modernen Forschungsdebatte dazu unterteilte Guy Halsall in „movers“ und „shakers“, in jene, die einerseits im Einfall der Barbaren, und in andere, die in den innenpolitischen, sozialen Problemen des Reichs und im Aufstieg des Christentums die Ursachen des Kollaps oder der Transformation erkennen.<sup>8</sup> Bedrückend klingt dabei nicht nur die lange Zeit einflussreiche Charakterisierung Edward Gibbons nach, der die Völkerwanderung als „the greatest, and perhaps most awful scene in the history of mankind“<sup>9</sup> bezeichnete, als bedrückend – „depressing reading“ – kann nach John Liebeschuetz Auffassung auch die Verknappung ebensolcher vielfältiger Erzählungen auf einfache Formeln gelten.<sup>10</sup> Denn besonders die Periode des Übergangs von Spätantike zu Frühmittelalter ist ein Zeitraum, der in der Forschungsdiskussion lange von dichotomen Denkmodellen geprägt war wie Walter Pohl präzisiert:

Antike und Mittelalter, Katastrophe oder Kontinuität, Römer und Germanen, Imperium und Barbaren, Christen und Heiden, Kaiser- und Königtum, Reichsbewusstsein oder gentiles Denken, römisches oder germanisches Recht, lateinische Schriftkultur oder volkssprachliche mündliche

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7 Bernhard Siegert, Der Untergang des römischen Reichs, in: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht / K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (Hg.), Paradoxien, Dissonanzen, Zusammenbrüche. Situationen offener Epistemologie (Frankfurt am Main 1991) 495–514, hier 497.

8 Guy Halsall, Movers and shakers: the barbarians and the Fall of Rome, in: *Early Medieval Europe* 8/1 (1999) 131–145; Bezug darauf nehmen u. a. Walter Goffart, Rome's final conquest: the barbarians, in: *History Compass* 6/3 (2008) 855–883, Edward James, Europe's Barbarians, AD 200–600 (Edinburgh 2009) 4 und Walter Pohl, Die Anfänge des Mittelalters – Alte Probleme, neue Perspektiven, in: Hans-Werner Goetz / Jörg Jarnut (Hg.), *Mediävistik im 21. Jahrhundert. Stand und Perspektiven der internationalen und interdisziplinären Mittelalterforschung* (München 2003) 361–378.

9 Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 6 (Everyman's Library 192, New York 1974) 642, eröffnete damit einen Diskurs der bis heute Echo findet, in u. a. den Arbeiten von Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, und Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*.

10 John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, A. H. M. Jones and the later Roman Empire, in: ders., *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity. Religion, Barbarians and their Historiography* (Aldershot 2006) Kapitel 16, 1, als Antwort auf Alexander Demandts sechs Erklärungsmodelle über den Fall Roms; vgl. auch Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (München 1984); kritisch zum Diskurs des Niedergangs Glen W. Bowersock, *The vanishing paradigm of the fall of Rome*, in: *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 49/8 (1996) 29–43 und Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome. A History of Europe from 400–1000* (London <sup>2</sup>2010) 76–108;

Tradition, Geld- oder Naturalwirtschaft, Sklavenhaltergesellschaft oder Feudalismus, Abendland oder Morgenland.<sup>11</sup>

Diese Gegensatzpaare sind auch zentral in den Erzählungen vom Untergang des römischen Imperiums und dessen Ursachen. Die Theorien dazu spiegeln gleichzeitig das „Ensemble der wissenschaftlichen Diskurse wieder, die seit dem 19. Jahrhundert herrschend gewesen sind“, und produzieren „aufgrund der Unmöglichkeit, denselben [Untergang] zu datieren, seit Gibbons tendenziell unabschließbare Werke“,<sup>12</sup> so der Medienhistoriker Bernhard Siegert.

In den letzten Jahrzehnten jedoch hat sich kaum ein Bereich in der Mediävistik so stark verändert wie eben diese Anschauungen von Römern und Barbaren bzw. Krise und Kollaps. Anstelle von Darstellungen, die eine serielle Deutung der Ereignisse der Völkerwanderungszeit und deren monokausale Erklärungen dazu betonen, sind Modelle getreten, die nicht ein einziges großes und abgeschlossenes Narrativ, sondern viele einzelne Erzählstränge und soziale (Verhandlungs-)Prozesse fokussieren.<sup>13</sup> Konsens besteht heute in den Vorstellungen, dass nicht mehrere Völker als homogene Verbände durch Europa wanderten. Vielmehr handelte es sich dabei um verschiedene Gruppen, die sich „nach mehrfachen Brüchen“ immer wieder neu bildeten und dabei an spezifische ethnische „Traditionen anknüpften“<sup>14</sup> – oder allgemeiner formuliert nach Jean-Luc Nancy, dass es sich dabei um mehrere Arten handelte, „Volk zu sein“ oder „sich zu deklarieren“.<sup>15</sup>

Doch es sind keine Selbstbezeichnungen, sondern der umgekehrte, nämlich aus römischer Sicht, und der retrospektive Blick auf die Ereignisse der Völkerwanderungszeit, der unser modernes Wissen darüber konstituiert<sup>16</sup> – sei es aus heidnischem

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**11** Pohl, *Anfänge des Mittelalters* 363; vgl. auch ders., *Ursprungserzählungen und Gegenbilder. Das archaische Frühmittelalter*, in: Frank Rexroth (Hg.), *Meistererzählungen vom Mittelalter* (Historische Zeitschrift, Beiheft 46, München 2007) 23 – 41.

**12** Siegert, *Untergang* 497, s. Anm. 7.

**13** Pohl, *Anfänge des Mittelalters* 372, s. Anm. 11.

**14** Pohl, *Völkerwanderung* 13 – 29, s. Anm. 1; zur Dekonstruktion des Germanenbegriffs: Herwig Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen. Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter* (Frühe Völker, München 1998); Hans-Werner Goetz, *Gens. Terminology and Perception of the „Germanic“ Peoples from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, in: Richard Corradini / Max Diesenberger / Helmut Reimitz (Hg.), *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages. Texts, Resources and Artefacts* (The Transformation of the Roman World 12, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2003) 39 – 64; Jörg Jarnut, *Germanisch. Plädoyer zur Abschaffung eines obsoleten Zentralbegriffes der Frühmittelalterforschung*, in: Walter Pohl (Hg.), *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen. Von der Bedeutung des frühen Mittelalters* (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 8, Wien 2004) 107 – 113; eine Zusammenfassung der Auseinandersetzung um den Begriff der „Ethnogenese“ bei Andrew Gillett, *Ethnicity, history, and methodology*, in: ders., *On Barbarian Identity*, 1 – 20; Walter Pohl, *Ethnicity, theory and tradition: a response*, in: ebd. 221 – 240.

**15** Jean-Luc Nancy, *Identität. Fragmente, Freimütigkeiten* (Wien 2010) 61.

**16** James, *Europe's Barbarians*, s. Anm. 8, ist ein rezenter Versuch diesen umgekehrten Blick zu dekonstruieren und die Völkerwanderungszeit aus „barbarischer“ Perspektive zu erzählen (ebd. 1 – 20); ebenso dazu Michael Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars* (Cambridge 2007) 60 – 70, 87 – 99.

Blickwinkel von Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res gestae*), Eunapios von Sardes (*Historiae*), ein halbes Jahrhundert später von Zosimos (*Historia nova*) oder aus christlicher Perspektive von Orosius (*Historiae adversum paganos*). Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts sind es die Schilderungen des byzantinischen Beamten Priskos und wiederum hundert Jahre später die Kriegsgeschichten des Prokopios, die Informationen über diesen Zeitraum bieten. Ergänzend dazu finden sich Einträge bei Eutropius (*Ab urbe condita*), Aurelius Victor (*Liber de Caesaribus*), Claudius Claudianus (*Carmina*) und in der christlichen Historiografie bei Hieronymus, Hydatius von Chaves und Prosper von Aquitanien. Schließlich werden die Ereignisse dieser Zeit auch in den unzähligen Briefen und Predigten der christlichen Elite im Mittelmeerraum kommentiert. Erst mit Jordanes (um 550, *Getica*) und Paulus Diaconus (um 790, *Historia Langobardorum*) stehen Erzählungen zur Verfügung, die eine vermeintlich barbarische Perspektive eröffnen.<sup>17</sup>

Die Demarkationslinien ethnischer Wahrnehmung und Zuschreibung zwischen Römern und Barbaren waren seit mehreren Jahrhunderten entlang der sich kontinuierlich ausdehnenden geographischen Grenzen des Imperiums verlaufen. Zunächst ein spezifisches kulturelles Konstrukt des Hellenismus, differenzierte der Begriff „barbarisch“ (*barbaróphonos*, „unverständlich sprechen“) die Zugehörigkeit zur griechischen Gemeinschaft. Weniger war damit eine bestimmte Gruppe von Fremden gemeint, sondern mehr eine konzeptionelle Kategorisierung, die Diversität in verschiedenen Kontexten, etwa „fremdsprachig“, „wild“, „dekadent“ oder „anders/fremd“, transportierte.<sup>18</sup> Es waren demnach die narrativen Modelle der griechisch-

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**17** Benjamin Cornford, Paul the Deacon's understanding of identity, his attitude to barbarians, and his „strategies of distinction“ in the *Historia Romana*, in: Richard Corradini / Matthew Gillis / Rosamond McKitterick / Irene van Renswoude (Hg.), *Ego Trouble. Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 15, Wien 2010) 54–78; Walter Pohl, Paulus Diaconus und die *Historia Langobardorum*: Text und Tradition, in: Anton Scharer / Georg Scheibelreiter (Hg.), *Historiografie im frühen Mittelalter* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32, Wien 1994) 375–405; zu Jordanes vgl. Brian Croke, Jordanes and the Immediate Past, in: *Historia. Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 54/4 (2005) 473–494; ders., Latin Historiography and the Barbarian Kingdoms, in: Gabriele Marasco (Hg.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century AD* (Leiden/Boston 2003) 497–527; Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton 1988) 20–111; Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford 1991) 3–67; Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars* 43–56, s. Anm. 16.

**18** Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek-definition through Tragedy* (Oxford 1991) 3–13; Yves A. Dauge, *Le barbare: recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation* (Collection Latomus 176, Brüssel 1981); Wilfried Nippel, The Construction of the 'Other', in: Thomas Harrison (Hg.), *Greeks and Barbarians* (Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World, Edinburgh 2002) 278–310, bes. 281 und 293–296; Greg Woolf, *Tales of Barbarians. Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West* (Chichester 2011); vgl. weiters aus der umfangreichen Literatur Andrew Gillett, The Mirror of Jordanes: Concepts of the Barbarian, Then and Now, in: Philip Rousseau / Jutta Raithel (Hg.), *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester/Malden/London 2009) 392–408; Walter Pohl, Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West: Introduction, in: Walter Pohl / Gerda Heydemann (Hg.), *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in Early Medieval Europe* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 14, Turnhout im Druck).

römischen Geografie und Ethnografie, die die barbarischen Völker entlang der römischen *limites* und in weiter entfernten Gebieten wie Indien, Äthiopien oder dem hohen Norden organisierten. Diese wurden im Zeichen von Eroberung und Expansion, von Abgrenzung und Überlegenheit, als wundersame Erscheinungen, im Blick zivilisatorischer Ängste oder der Glorifizierung archaischer Tugenden gelesen.<sup>19</sup> Dabei wurden Relationen zwischen längst verschwundenen Völkern mit zeitgenössischen hergestellt (etwa bei Plinius), zwischen geografischen, klimatischen Gegebenheiten und physischen Eigenschaften (die Germanen bei Tacitus, die Gallier bei Ammianus Marcellinus) oder zwischen den Lebens- und Ernährungsgewohnheiten und dem Grad der Zivilisierung (der Kannibalismus der skythischen Völker bei Pomponius Mela). Nach diesen Ordnungsmustern bewohnten zahllose Völker die antiken Weltkarten und konstituierten auch über Strategien des „Othering“ römische Identität. Doch gleichzeitig scheinen diese ethnografischen und geografischen Beschreibungen bisweilen „static, eternal, and without history“<sup>20</sup>, dazu bestimmt, eine Konservierung der Völker vorzunehmen. Patrick Geary argumentiert folgenderweise: „No people ever disappeared, no trait ever changed.“<sup>21</sup> Erst die Beziehung zum Imperium stellte deren barbarische Identität her.<sup>22</sup>

Beispielhaft für die Beschreibung barbarischer Wildheit werden die Darstellungen der skythischen Völker bei Herodot, Pompeius Trogus und Plinius, Tacitus oder Flavius

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**19** Eine wertvolle kulturgeschichtliche Analyse bis in das Spätmittelalter bietet Marion Steinicke, *Apokalyptische Heerscharen und Gottesknechte. Wundervölker des Ostens in abendländischer Tradition vom Untergang der Antike bis zur Entdeckung Amerikas* (ungedruckte Dissertation Berlin 2002), hier 7: „Als *archaika* überwundener Kulturstufen sowie als *exotica* weit entfernter Länder bilden sie [Wundervölker] utopische oder barbarische Gegenwelten, artikulieren sie innerste Hoffnungen und Beunruhigungen, lassen Wunsch- und Angstprojektionen der eigenen und ausschließlichen Position kultureller Wahrnehmung erkennen.“ Vgl. auch Andrew H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 2005); zu Kosmografie und Raumvorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters vgl. allgemein Helmut Reimitz, Artikel: Raumbewußtsein, in: RGA Bd. 24, 2. Auflage (Berlin/New York 2003) 174–179; vgl. zum Diskurs des „Monströsen“: Ian N. Wood, *Where the Wild Things are*, in: Walter Pohl / Clemens Gantner / Richard Payne (Hg.), *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1000* (Aldershot 2013) 531–542; David Williams, *Deformed Discourse. The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Exeter 1996); John Block Friedman, *Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse 2000); D. Felton, *Rejecting and embracing the Monstrous in Ancient Greece and Rome*, in: Asa Mittman / Peter Dendall (Hg.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (Aldershot 2012) 103–132; zur Verwendung dieser Motive in einer apokalyptischen Deutung vgl. Jason R. Berg, ‘Breasts of the North’ and Other Apocalyptic Imagery in the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister, in: dies., Christian Zolles / Catherine Feik / Martin Zolles / Leopold Schlöndorff (Hg.), *Abendländische Apokalypik. Kompendium zur Genealogie der Endzeit* (Kulturgeschichte der Apokalypse 1, Berlin 2013) 563–576.

**20** Geary, *Myth of Nations* 108, s. Anm. 5.

**21** Geary, *Myth of Nations* 107, s. Anm. 5; vgl. dazu auch Peter Heather, *Reappearing and disappearing tribes*, in: Walter Pohl / Helmut Reimitz (Hg.), *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (The Transformation of the Roman World 2, Leiden/Boston/Köln 1998) 95–112.

**22** Geary, *Myth of Nations* 108, s. Anm. 5.

Josephus, die ihr Echo in den Quellen des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts etwa bei Ammianus Marcellinus für die Beschreibungen der Goten und Hunnen haben.<sup>23</sup> Daher konnte man in der Zeit der Völkerwanderung auf ein bestehendes narratives Repertoire zurückgreifen, in dem der Name eines Volkes durch eine kulturelle Eigenschaft bedeutet wird. Grausamkeit und Terror sind beispielsweise für Victor von Vita untrennbar mit einem barbarischen Namen verbunden:

*Nonnulli qui barbaros diligitis et eos in condemnationem vestram aliquando laudatis, discutite nomen et intellegite mores. Numquid alio proprio nomine vocitari poterant, nisi ut barbari dicerentur, ferocitatis utique, crudelitatis et terroris vocabulum possidentes?*<sup>24</sup>

Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Selbst/Ich und dem Anderen, dem Fremden findet allerdings nicht ausschließlich über dichotome Zuschreibungen statt, wie Erich Gruen argumentierte, sondern ist Teil eines relationalen Verhandlungsprozesses: „It resists a simple formula and requires repeated reconceptualization [...] The expression of collective character in antiquity [...] owes less to insisting on distinctiveness from the alien than to postulating links with, adaption to, and even corporation of the alien.“<sup>25</sup> Im selben Maß, wie Barbaren ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der römischen Welt waren, war das Imperium eine zentrale Referenz für die politischen, wirtschaftlichen und vor allem seit dem 4. Jahrhundert für die religiösen Strukturen des *Barbaricum*. Über eindeutige, gegensätzliche Grenzziehungen hinaus beinhaltet „barbarisch“ als mehrdimensionales kulturelles Konstrukt beständige Prozesse der Verhandlung, Erneuerung und Veränderung, die entlang differenzierter, hierarchischer Ordnungsmuster verlaufen („[...] of preference, of ambivalence, of hostility, of competition, of partnership and co-operation“) und damit soziale Wirklichkeit herstellen.<sup>26</sup> Die Grenzen ethnischer Identität fallen dabei nicht mit den geografischen des Imperiums zusammen. Guy Halsall formuliert dazu prägnant:

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. Herodot, Historien IV, 6 – 11; sowie die früheste, erhaltene römische Geografie des Pomponius Mela (aus dem Jahr 43/44), *De chorographia* II, 1, 14 und III, 7, 59, hg.v. Alain Silberman (Société d'Édition „Les Belles Lettres“, Paris 1988); Plinius, *Naturalis historia* VI, 14 – 15 und VII, 2; und später bei Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI, 2, 12 – 16; vgl. als kurze Einführung Hermann Parzinger, *Die Skythen* (München <sup>3</sup>2009) sowie Timo Stickler, *Die Hunnen* (München 2007);

<sup>24</sup> Victor von Vita, *Historia persecutionis Africanae provincia* 3, 62, hg.v. Karl Halm (MGH SS AA 3, 1, Berlin 1879).

<sup>25</sup> Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton 2011) 352; Geary, *Myth of Nations* 128, s. Anm. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London/New York <sup>3</sup>2007) 6; vgl. ebenso Nancy, *Identität* 40, s. Anm. 15: „Aber wenn eine Identität sich in und als die Bewegung realisiert, durch die sie sich auf das zubewegt, was sie niemals auf das Identische reduzieren wird, oder um es so zu sagen, wenn eine wahrhafte Identität nicht eine Identität an sich ist, sondern eine Identität für sich, dann bedeutet das, dass keine Identität an sich gegeben ist“; vgl. zur Konstruktion kultureller (Gruppen)Identitäten Bernhard Giesen, *Codes kollektiver Identität*, in: Werner Gephart / Hans Waldenfels (Hg.), *Religion und Identität. Im Horizont des Pluralismus* (Frankfurt/Main 1999) 13 – 43; zur Bedeutung des Identitätsbegriffs für die Mediävistik vgl. Pohl, *Introduction: Strategies of Identification*, s. Anm. 6.



People within the Roman Empire could behave in ways which were seen as barbaric; people from outside the Empire, from the Barbaricum, as it came to be called in the fourth century, could behave in ways which exemplified the truly Roman. In sum, you did not have to be a barbarian to be barbarian, although no one could deny that it helped.<sup>27</sup>

Der im 4. Jahrhundert einsetzende tiefgreifende kulturelle, intellektuelle und politische Wandel brachte jene Strukturen hervor, die konstitutiv für die „Entstehung des christlichen Europa“<sup>28</sup> waren, sowie gleichermaßen eine Vielzahl von „transitions that eventually created rather different societies“.<sup>29</sup> Vor der *conversio* Kaiser Konstantins bildeten die barbarischen Nachbarn die Antithese zur bestehenden Ordnung des Imperiums. In den darauf folgenden Jahrzehnten hingegen waren es barbarische Heiden und christliche Barbaren, wie der christliche Gote Alarich, der heidnische Gote Radagaisus oder der Vandalen Stilicho als römischer *magister militum*, die in Beziehung zum römisch-christlichen *populus* gesetzt werden. Diese Beispiele bilden die Vielfältigkeit und Ambivalenz der zeitgenössischen, religiösen und ethnischen Identifikationsprozesse ab.<sup>30</sup> Mit dem räumlichen Zusammenbruch der weströmischen Militärgrenze, „als die Riegel unserer [römischen] Grenzbefestigungen geöffnet waren und die barbarischen, bewaffneten Heerscharen wie die Asche des Ätna ausströmten“,<sup>31</sup> verloren die antiken ethnischen Kategorien ihre bisherige Eindeutigkeit und Gültigkeit.

Fragmentarisch und ausführlich, polarisierend und vielfältig, widersprüchlich und mehrdeutig waren die zeitgenössischen Erzählungen, die sich um die Ereignisse der Jahre 376, 378 und 405/6 formieren. Um diese deutlichen Zäsuren in der Geschichte der römisch-barbarischen Beziehungen herum waren die bisherigen Grenzen sozialer Identität nicht nur in Frage gestellt, sondern auch überschritten. In diesem Kontext ermöglichte der christlich-eschatologische Diskurs neue narrative Möglichkeiten der Abgrenzung und Positionierung. In einer römisch-imperialen Untergangsstimmung

<sup>27</sup> Halsall, *Barbarian invasions* 40, s. Anm. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Wie Peter Brown in seinem gleichnamigen Buch dokumentiert: ders., *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, AD 200–1000* (2003); vgl. dazu auch die Beiträge in Glen W. Bowersock / ders. / Oleg Gabar (Hg.), *Interpreting Late Antiquity. Essays on the Postclassical World* (Cambridge-Mass./London 2001); Leslie Webster / Michelle Brown (Hg.), *The Transformation of the Roman World, AD 400–900* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1997); Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity, AD 395–700* (London 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Walter Pohl, *Christian and Barbarian Identities*, s. Anm. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ian N. Wood, „The Ends of the Earth“: The Bible, Bibles, and the Other in Early Medieval Europe, in: Mark Vessey / Sharon V. Betcher / Robert A. Daum / Harry O. Maier (Hg.), *The Calling of the Nations. Exegesis, Ethnography, and Empire in a Biblical-Historical Present* (Toronto 2011) 200–216; Gerda Heydemann, *Biblical Israel and the Christian gentes. Social metaphors and concepts of community in Cassiodorus' Expositio psalmodum*, in: Walter Pohl / dies., *Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 13, Turnhout 2013); Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge 1997);

<sup>31</sup> Anm. XXXI, 4, 9, hg. v. Wolfgang Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Römische Geschichte Bd. 4, 2* (Berlin 1971).

wurden die barbarischen Einfälle vor einem endzeitlichen Hintergrund in neue Bedeutungszusammenhänge gesetzt. Die Kommentare der Zeitgenossen dazu eröffneten ein differenziertes Spektrum an Deutungsmöglichkeiten, das gleichzeitig die bisherigen Erzählungen apokalyptischer Motive transformierte. Es stellt sich dabei die Frage, ob die Mehrdeutigkeit und Vielfältigkeit ethnischer Zuschreibungen in einer eschatologischen Interpretation aufgelöst oder miterzählt wurden.

Als eine der wichtigsten und umfangreichsten Quellen für die römische Geschichte des 4. Jahrhunderts skizzierte der spätantike Historiker Ammianus Marcellinus die Überschreitung der Donaugrenze bei Durostorum-Silistr(i)a durch gotische Verbände als eine Geschichte von gleichermaßen Flucht und Invasion.<sup>32</sup> In jenem Jahr 376, schrieb er, sammelten sich unter der Führung von Alaviv und Fritigern gotische Terwingen am nördlichen Donauufer, schickten Gesandte zu Kaiser Valens und baten diesen (*suscipi se humili prece poscebant*) um Aufnahme in das römische Reich, „wobei sie versprachen, in Frieden leben und, wenn die Umstände es erforderten, Hilfstuppen stellen zu wollen“.<sup>33</sup> Als *plebs extorris* waren sie auf der Flucht vor den Hunnen, die ein Jahr zuvor das Reich des Ermanarich, König der Ostrogoten-Greutungen, überrannt hatten, auf dem Weg nach Thrakien.<sup>34</sup> Gerüchte, dass „die Nordvölker neue und größere Vorfälle als üblich“ verursachten, verbreiteten sich rasch:

Das ganze, sich vor den Quaden von den Markomannen bis zum Schwarzen Meer erstreckende [Gebiet] durchstreifte eine Horde von Barbaren entlegener Völkerschaften, die mit plötzlicher Gewalt von ihren Sitzen vertrieben worden sei, und sich mit ihren Angehörigen in der Donaugegend verstreue,

berichtet Ammianus.<sup>35</sup> Unzählige (*innumerae gentium multitudines*)<sup>36</sup> überquerten die Donau, „Tag und Nacht scharenweise auf Schiffen, Flößen und ausgehöhlten

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**32** Vgl. zum Forschungsstand Guy Sabbah, Ammianus Marcellinus, in: Gabriele Marasco (Hg.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century AD* (Leiden/Boston 2003) 43–84; vgl. auch John Matthews, Ammianus' Historical Evolution, in: Brian Coke / Alanna Emmett (Hg.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1983) 30–41; zu dessen Darstellung der Barbaren vgl. ders., *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Baltimore 1989) 304–382.

**33** Amm. XXXI, 4, 1, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfarth; Übersetzung nach: *Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung. Auszüge aus den antiken Quellen über die Germanen von der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahre 453 n. Chr.*, hg. u. übers. v. Hans-Werner Goetz / Steffen Patzold / Karl-Wilhelm Welwei, 2 Teilbde. (Darmstadt 2006/7); zum vorausgegangenen Konflikt zwischen Athanarich und Fritigern vgl. Herwig Wolfram, *Die Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnografie* (Frühe Völker, München<sup>3</sup> 1990) 81; Brent D. Shaw, *War and Violence*, in: Glen W. Bowersock / Peter Brown / Oleg Gabar (Hg.), *Interpreting Late Antiquity. Essays on the Postclassical World* (London/Cambridge, MA 2001) 130–169, bes. 161.

**34** Amm. XXXI, 3, 9, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfarth.

**35** Eine andere Perspektive bei Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos VII*, 33, 10, hg. v. Carl Zangmeister (CSEL 5, Wien 1882 / Hildesheim 1967); zunächst wurde die mögliche Tragweite dieser Vorfälle wenig beachtet: Amm. XXXI, 4, 4, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfarth; vgl. auch die Darstellung der Hunnen bei ebd., XXXI, 2–9, 11–13 und 15–26, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfarth.



Baumstämmen“, einige sogar schwimmend, und viele davon ertranken, „wegen des dichten Gedränges bei dem Versuch, gegen die Strömung zu kämpfen“. <sup>37</sup> Auch die Schilderung dieser Vorfälle bei Markomannen bis zum Schwarzen Meer trug zu dem allgemeinen Eindruck bei, dass hier angsterfüllte Menschen vor den Hunnen flüchteten, <sup>38</sup> die für Ammianus „die Saat des ganzen Verderbens und [den] Ursprung der verschiedenen Katastrophen“ <sup>39</sup> darstellten. Korruption in der römischen Armee und die nicht ausreichende Versorgung mit Nahrungsmitteln, führten zur rasch Eskalation der Situation in Thrakien. <sup>40</sup> Die aufgenommenen Goten rebellierten erfolgreich gegen die thrakische Armee, sie erhoben „zu Hunger und Unrecht getrieben, ihre Waffen“. <sup>41</sup> Unter der Führung Fritigerns zogen die gotischen Truppen gemeinsam mit Taifalen und greutungischen Verbänden, plündernd durch das Land, so dass „die Römer den Namen der Skythen [Goten] ebensowenig wie die Skythen den der Hunnen“ <sup>42</sup> ertragen konnten. Von der Zerstörung zeichnet Ammianus ein eindringliches Bild:

Nichts blieb, indem diese [Goten] vorausgingen, unberührt, es sei denn, es war unzugänglich und abgelegen. Denn ohne Rücksicht auf Alter oder Geschlecht brannten sie alles unter Morden und gewaltigen Feuern nieder; Säuglinge wurden von der Mutterbrust gezerrt und umgebracht, die Mütter entführt und die Ehefrauen ihrer Männer zu Witwen gemacht, indem man diese vor ihren

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**36** Amm. XXXI, 4, 6, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfarth, zitiert nach: P. Vergilius Maro, *Georgica II*, 105 – 108, hg. v. Otto Schönberger (Stuttgart 1994): *Quem qui scire uelit, Libyci velit aequoris idem discere, quam multae Zephyro turbentur arenae aut ubi navigiis violentior incidit Eurus, nosse quot Ionii veniant ad litora fluctus*; vgl. Eunapios, fr. 42, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei 64 – 65, berichtet von 200.000 Menschen; oder auch hg. u. übers. v. Roger C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapios, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, 2 Bde. (Liverpool 1981/1983).

**37** Amm. XXXI, 4, 5, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt, Übersetzung nach: *Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung*, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei, 87.

**38** Eunapios, fr. 42, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei 64 – 65, beschreibt kampffähige Männer, die „die Hände unter Schreien und Jammern [ausstreckten] und Zweige als Zeichen der Bittflehenden [hielten]; und sie baten, den Strom überschreiten zu dürfen, indem sie ihr Schicksal beklagten und sich als Verstärkung für die Hilfstruppen [im römischen Heer] anboten.“ Vgl. dazu auch Zosimos IV, 20, 4 – 5, hg. u. übers. v. François Pasquod (Société d’Édition „Les Belles Lettres“, Paris 1979); Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* 162, s. Anm. 1.

**39** Amm. XXXI, 2, 1 – 25 und XXXI, 3, 1 – 9, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt; eine Zusammenfassung der verschiedenen Erklärungsmodelle in der Forschungsdiskussion und dem Einfluß der Schilderungen bei Ammianus auf nachfolgende bei Halsall, *Barbarian invasions* 45, s. Anm. 4 („domino theory“): „The Huns are thought to have ‘pushed’ the Goths into the Roman Empire, and to have ‘pushed’ other Germanic tribes, who in turn ‘pushed’ those in front of them, and so on, until the Roman frontier was swamped by fleeing Germanic barbarians.“

**40** Amm. XXXI, 4, 9, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt: die Offiziere Lupicinus (der comes rei militaris per Thracias) oder Maximus, deren „hinterhältige Gier der Quell allen Übels“ versuchten die Lage in Thrakien gewinnbringend auszunützen.

**41** Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos VII*, 33, 9 – 19, hier 12, hg. v. Zangmeister; vgl. auch Amm. XXXI, 4, 9 – 11 und XXXI, 26, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt.

**42** Eunapios, fr. 42, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei 68 – 69.

Augen erschlug; heranwachsende und erwachsene Jungen wurden über die Leichen ihrer Eltern [hinweg]geschleppt [...].<sup>43</sup>

Ihren vorläufigen und nachhaltigen Höhepunkt findet diese Erzählung von Gewalt und Zerstörung schließlich am 9. August 378 in der Schlacht von Adrianopel, in der Kaiser Valens und seine Armee vernichtend geschlagen und er selbst getötet wurde.<sup>44</sup>

Nicht nur die politischen Entwicklungen seit dem Donauübergang der Goten 376, sondern mehr noch ihre Interpretationen im Spiegel der Zeitgenossen konstituierten eine Erzählung, deren Ausgang größtenteils bereits antizipiert war. Liest man bei Ammianus noch von den anfangs friedlichen Absichten der Goten (*quiete uicturos se pollicentes*), von bislang noch unschädlichen Fremden (*peregrinos adhuc innoxios*), sahen Orosius und Eunapios die künftigen militärischen Konflikte bereits voraus, da diese ohne Bündnisvertrag und in voller Bewaffnung aufgenommen worden waren.<sup>45</sup> Zunächst, urteilte Ammianus, gab „die Angelegenheit [...] mehr zur Freude Anlass als zur Furcht, und so priesen die verschmitzten Schmeichler das Glück des Kaisers um so höher, das aus den entferntesten Ländern so viele Rekruten herausziehe und ihm unverhofft anbiete, dass man, wenn man die eigenen mit den fremden Streitkräften vereinigte, ein unbesiegbares Heer hätte [...]“.<sup>46</sup> Aber, so folgerte der Historiker retrospektiv im Jahr 390, „wurde im stürmischem Eifer und Drang der Untergang der Römischen Welt herbeigeführt.“<sup>47</sup>

Mit der Schlacht von Adrianopel endet Ammianus' Geschichte des weströmischen Imperiums, und auch Hieronymus wählte dieses Jahr und ebenjenes Ereignis als Schlusspunkt seiner Chronik.<sup>48</sup> Nicht weil er „Angst habe“, wie er im Vorwort schreibt,

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43 Amm. XXXI, 6, 7, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt, Übersetzung nach: Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei 97.

44 Die verschiedenen Erzählungen dazu bei Amm. XXXI, 13, 1 – 19, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt; Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos VII*, 33, 10 – 12, hg. v. Zangmeister.

45 Amm. XXXI, 4, 1 und 10, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt; zum „Entwaffnungsbefehl“ vgl. Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos VII*, 33, 10, hg. v. Zangmeister und Eunapios, fr. 42, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei, sowie Zosimos, *Historia nova* 4, 20, 6, hg. v. François Paschoud, Zosime: *Histoire nouvelle*, I-III, 5 Bde. (Paris 1971 – 1989) und Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei 66, Fn. 205; kriegerisch ist auch Eunapios' Darstellung der Donauüberquerung, in der die „kühnsten und verwegensten Skythen [Goten] beschlossen, den Zugang zu erzwingen“, und dabei getötet wurden; damit ist aber vermutlich eine weitere Gruppe gotischer Verbände gemeint, von Greutungen unter der Führung von Alatheus und Vidirich sowie Farnobius, von Alanen unter Safrax, Hunnen und Taifalen, die gewaltsam versuchten über die Donau zu gelangen; vgl. Amm. XXXI, 4, 12 – 13 und XXXI, 5, 3, hg. v. Seyfahrt; Wolfram, *Goten* 127, s. Anm. 32.

46 Amm. XXXI, 4, 4, hg. v. Seyfahrt; zur strategischen Entscheidung Kaiser Valens vgl. allg. Heather, *Empires and Barbarians*, s. Anm. 1; Wolfram, *Goten* 126, s. Anm. 32; Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei Fn 202.

47 Amm. XXXI, 4, 6, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt.

48 Hieronymus, *Chronica a. 378*, hg. v. Rudolf Helm / U. Treu, Eusebius' Werke 7 (GCS 47, Berlin<sup>3</sup>1984): *Lacrimabile bellum in Thracia. In quo deserente equitum praesidio Romanae legiones a Gothis cinctae usque ad interneconem caesae sunt*; vgl. Hydatius, *Chronica praefatio* 4, hg. u. übers. v. Richard

„offen und wahrheitsgemäß über die Lebenden zu berichten, [...] sondern, weil nun, da Barbaren in unserem Land wüten, alle Dinge unsicher geworden sind.“<sup>49</sup> Die Konsequenzen der Schlacht beschrieb er zwanzig Jahre später in einem Brief an Heliodorus. Er stellte fest, dass

zwischen Konstantinopel und den Julischen Alpen täglich Römerblut fließt; Goten und Sarmaten, Quaden und Alanen, Hunnen, Vandalen und Markomannen durchziehen Skythien, Thrakien, Makedonien, Tessalien, Dardanien, Dakien, Epirus, Dalmatien und ganz Pannonien und verwüsten und verheeren diese Gebiete.<sup>50</sup>

Nicht als Endpunkt einer politischen Entwicklung, sondern als deren Beginn beschrieb auch der Kirchenhistoriker Rufinus 402/3 retrospektiv die Schlacht von Adrianopel als *initium mali*, als den „Anfang des Übels für das römische Reich, damals und für alle späteren Zeiten“.<sup>51</sup>

An der Wende vom 4. zum 5. Jahrhundert wurde die politische Landschaft im lateinischen Westen dauerhaft verändert und in rascher Abfolge schienen die Ereignisse, die nach 378 folgen, Elemente einer einzigen großen Krise zu sein, die mit der Plünderung Roms 410 auf einen Höhepunkt zuzusteuern schien.<sup>52</sup> Ähnlich den gotischen Verbänden 376 überquerten am 31. Dezember 406 Alanen, Vandalen ([H]asdingen und Silingen) und Sueben die Rheingrenze.<sup>53</sup> Sie waren dabei nur ein Teil einer

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Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana. Two Contemporary Accounts of the final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1993), zum Enddatum der Hieronymus Chronik: *Sed quoniam in cuiusdam studii sui scriptura dixisse eum constat debacchantibus iam in Romano solo barbaris omnia haberi permixta atque confusa, opinamur ex huius indicio sermonis in hoc per se annorum uolumine subdito de successione temporum ab ipso nihil adiectum*; vgl. Stefan Rebenich, *Christian Asceticism and Barbarian Incursion: The Making of a Christian Catastrophe*, in: *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2/1 (2009) 49–59; Herwig Wolfram, *Die Schlacht von Adrianopel*, in: *Anzeiger der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 114 (1977) 227–250; Noel Lenski, *Initium mali Romano imperio: Contemporary Reactions to the Battle of Adrianople*, in: *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997) 129–168.

<sup>49</sup> Hieronymus, *Chronica praefatio* 7, hg. v. Helm/Treu: *Quo fine contentus reliquum temporis Gratiani et Theodosii latioris historiae stilo reservavi, non quo de uiuentibus timuerim libere et vere scribere – timor enim D[e]i hominum timorem expellit – sed quoniam dibacchantibus adhuc in terra nostra barbaris incerta sunt omnia*.

<sup>50</sup> Hieronymus, *Epistula* 60, 16 (an Heliodorus), hg. v. Isidor Hilberg, *Epistulae 1–70* (CSEL 54, Wien/Leipzig 1996 [1910]), Übersetzung nach: *Des heiligen Kirchenvaters Eusebius Hieronymus ausgewählte Schriften*, hg. v. Ludwig Schade, Bde. 2–3 (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter 2. Reihe / Bd. 16 und 18, Kempten/München 1936–1937); vgl. auch J. H. D. Scourfield, *Consoling Heliodorus. A Commentary on Jerome, Letter 60* (Oxford 1993).

<sup>51</sup> Tyrannus Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica II*, 13, hg. v. Migne, PL 21 (Paris 1852) 461–540C, hier: 523 A: *Quae pugna initium mali Romano imperio tunc et deinceps*.

<sup>52</sup> Mischa Meier / Steffen Patzold, *August 410 – ein Kampf um Rom* (Stuttgart 2010) 9–11, 31–40.

<sup>53</sup> Zur Datierung vgl. Prosper Tiro, *Epitoma Chronicon a. 406*, hg. v. Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica minora I* (MGH AA 9, Berlin 1894 / ND München 1982) 341–485, hier 465; für den 31. Dezember 405 spricht sich Michael Kulikowski aus: ders., *Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain*, in: *Britannia* 31

„much larger crisis exploding all around the legitimate but otherwise unfortunate rulers of the Roman west“.<sup>54</sup> Ein Jahr zuvor hatte Radagaisus eine große Armee über die Alpen nach Italien geführt und wiederholte Usurpationen führten zum endgültigen Zusammenbruch der römischen Herrschaft in Britannien.

Zu dem Eindruck, dass die Grenzen des Imperiums, besonders die nord-westlichen, ab der zweiten Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts einem größeren Druck von außen ausgesetzt waren und standhalten mussten, trug auch das anonyme Traktat *De rebus bellicis* bei.<sup>55</sup> In den 360er oder 370er Jahren entstanden, sind es neben einer Reihe von Überlegungen und Vorschlägen zu finanz-, verwaltungs-, und rechtspolitischen Reformen besonders die detaillierten militärischen Ausführungen sowie die Beschreibungen und Abbildungen neuartiger Kriegsmaschinen, die die Atmosphäre des Textes bestimmen. Wilde Völker sind es, so der Text, die das römische Reich bedrängen, und hinterhältige Barbaren, die seine Grenze angreifen. Sie zu bekämpfen sei schwierig, denn entweder nutzen sie natürliche Deckungen wie Wälder und Berge, werden von Schnee und Eis geschützt, von Sümpfen und Flüssen, oder als Nomaden, von Wüste und sengender Hitze. Durch ihre unerwarteten Einfälle stören sie die Ruhe und den Frieden.<sup>56</sup>

Und auch bei Ammianus Marcellinus erklangen zu der Zeit, als Valentinian und Valens als Kaiser regierten,

im ganzen römischen Erdkreis die Signalhörner zum Kriege, und die aufgeschreckten wildesten Völker durchstreiften die ihnen am nächsten gelegenen Grenzgegenden. Die Alemannen ver-

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(2000) 328–29; vgl. dazu aber auch ders., *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 217 Fn. 37; siehe Peter Heather, *Why did the Barbarian Cross the Rhine?*, in: *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2/1 (2009) 3–29; Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides. The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia 2006) 73–119; Ralph W. Mathisen, *Catalogues of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, in: ders. / Danuta Shanzer (Hg.), *Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World* (Aldershot 2011) 17–32, der die Beziehungen zwischen Römern und Barbaren als ständiges „give-and-take“ beschreibt; vgl. auch Roland Steinacher, *Die Vandalen. Aufstieg und Fall römischer Barbaren* (Stuttgart im Druck) Kapitel: „395–429: Von der Donau nach Afrika“.

54 Heather, *Why did the Barbarian Cross the Rhine?* 4.

55 Anonymus, *De rebus bellicis*, hg. u. übers. v. Edward A. Thompson, *A Roman Reformer and Inventor. Being a New Text of the Treatise De Rebus Bellicis* (Oxford 1952 / New York 1979); zur allg. Stimmung vgl. auch Amm. 17, 1, 13; 17, 10, 9; 30, 6, 2, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt; zu der militärischen Situation an den Donau- und Rheingrenzen vgl. Shaw, *War and Violence* 159–160, s. Anm. 33, mit einem Vergleich der unterschiedlichen Grenzorganisation zwischen West und Ost; dazu auch Amm. XXXI, 3, 1 und XXX, 3, 5, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt; vgl. ebenfalls Goffart, *Barbarian Tides* 21, s. Anm. 52: „The core migration Age starts near A.D. 370 from a position of rest and equilibrium.“

56 Anonymus, *De rebus bellicis* 6, 1, hg. u. übers. v. Thompson; hier: eigene Übersetzung (meiner Kollegin Cinzia Grifoni danke ich für ihre wertvollen Vorschläge dazu): *Inprimis sciendum est, quod imperium Romanum circumlatrantium ubique nationum perstringat audacia, et omne latud limitum tecta naturalibus locis appetat dolosa barbaries. Nam plerumque memoratae gentes aut siluis teguntur aut extolluntur montibus aut uindicantur pruinis, nonnullae uagae solitudinibus ac sole nimio proteguntur. Sunt quae paludibus fluminibusque defensae nec inueniri facile queunt et tamen quietem pacis lacerant inopinatis incursibus.*

wüsteten gleichzeitig Gallien und Rätien, die Sarmaten und Quaden Pannonien; Pikten und Sachsen sowie Schotten und Attacotten erschütterten Britannien mit unablässiger Bedrohung; die Austorianer und andere Maurenvölker drangen heftiger als gewöhnlich in Afrika ein, und in Thrakien verheerten die Räuberscharen der Goten.<sup>57</sup>

Der beste Schutz gegen wilde Barbaren wie Alarich oder Radagaisus wären für Paulinus, Bischof von Nola, die Gebeine der Heiligen und besonders Gebete zum Heiligen Felix:

Und wende [heiliger Felix] die in einem Strom von Kriegslärm näherrückenden Schlachten von unseren Gebieten ab. Das gottlose Heer soll von unseren heiligen Grenzen fern bleiben, denen deine Gnade Schutz ist.<sup>58</sup>

Diese militärischen Auseinandersetzungen konnten allerdings nicht nur im Kontext einer umfassenden politischen Krise verstanden, sondern nun auch als Elemente eines bevorstehenden Weltendes interpretiert werden. So war Paulinus kurz vor Anbruch des 5. Jahrhunderts davon überzeugt, dass „der Tag der Prüfung täglich näher kommt und jede Stunde bringt uns dem Gericht näher“, denn er konnte vermehrt göttliche Zeichen und Wunder beobachten.<sup>59</sup> In seinem Entwurf für das Apsismosaik der vom ihm neu erbauten Basilika in Fundi fanden seine Vorstellungen über eine nahe Endzeit Ausdruck. Das Bild des Weltgerichts beschreibt er in einem Brief an Sulpicius Severus:

In der Mitte des Himmels leuchtete blutrot das Kreuz, darüber schwebte in einer rötlichen Wolke die Hand Gottvaters mit einer Krone, während die Taube des Heiligen Geistes darunter Strahlen

<sup>57</sup> Amm. 26, 4 (März 364), hg. u. übers. v. Seyfahrt; Übersetzung nach: Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold 28–29.

<sup>58</sup> Eigene Übersetzung; Paulinus von Nola, Carmen 26, 425–427, hg. v. Wilhelm von Hartel / ergänzt v. Margit Kamptner, *Opera 2: Carmina, indices et addenda* (CS EL 30, Wien <sup>2</sup>1999): *Sic modo bellisono venientes flumine pugnas de nostris avertit [sc. Felix] locis. Manus impia sacris finibus absistat, quibus tua gratia vallum.* Vgl. auch Sigrid Mratschek, Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola. Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen (Hypomnemata 134, Göttingen 2002) 63 Fn. 77.

<sup>59</sup> Paulinus von Nola, *Epistula* 38, 7 (an Aper, um 399 n. Chr.), hg. v. Matthias Skeb (*Fontes Christiani* 25/3, Freiburg/Basel/Wien/Barcelona/Rom/New York 1988): *Et quia iam cotidie magis adpropinquat recognitionis dies omnisque nos hora iudicio adplicat, satagit et properat bonus minus praeripere nos ab ira ventura et „de complexu huius“, ut scriptum est, „nocentis et viperae generationis“ abducere. Hinc in omni loco plura cotidie miracula solito signaque crebrescunt, ut omnem, quantum in ipso est, hominem salvum fiat.* Vgl. auch Mratschek, Briefwechsel 38–48, s. Anm. 56. Zu Paulinus' Vorstellungen von Jüngstem Gericht, Erlösung und Besitz siehe Dennis E. Trout, Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters, and Poems (Berkeley 1999) und grundlegend Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton 2014); zukünftig auch: Veronika Wieser, Eine Gemeinschaft im Schatten der Endzeit: Die Bauwerke des Paulinus in Nola und Fund, in: Erwin Dirschel / Kurt Appel (Hg.), *Das Testament der Zeit* (Quaestiones, in Vorbereitung).

über das schneeweiße Gotteslamm ausgoß, das auf dem Hügel mit den vier Evangelienströmen inmitten der blühenden Lichtungen des Paradieses stand.<sup>60</sup>

Auf einem Felsenthron hält sitzend Christus Gericht über die christliche Gemeinschaft, über die Schafe und Böcke, wohlwollend über die einen während er die anderen mit seiner linken Hand zurück stößt.

Nicht nur in Italien, auch in Gallien wurde an der Wende vom 4. zum 5. Jahrhundert vom aquitanischen Gelehrten Sulpicius Severus eine Weltchronik in dem Bewusstsein verfasst, dass das Ende seiner eigenen, römisch-christlichen Welt unmittelbar bevorstehen würde. Schließlich wären die 6000 Weltjahre, die aus der typologischen Deutung der sechs Schöpfungstage mit Psalm 90,4 oder 2 Petrus 3,8 abgeleitet werden, beinahe erfüllt.<sup>61</sup> So schrieb Sulpicius Severus: *Mundus a Deo constitutus est abhinc annos iam paene sex milia, sicut processu uoluminis istius digeremus.*<sup>62</sup> Alle irdischen Dinge würden für ihn im Chaos versinken, und nach den

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**60** Paulinus von Nola, *Epistula* 32, 17 (vermutlich an Sulpicius Severus), hg.v. Matthias Skeb (*Fontes Christiani* 25/2, Freiburg/Basel/Wien/Barcelona/Rom/New York 1988); Übersetzung nach Mratschek, Briefwechsel 133 Fn. 83, s. Anm. 56.

**61** Psalm 90,4: „Denn tausend Jahre sind vor dir wie der gestrige Tag, der vergangen ist“; vgl. dazu den Daniel-Kommentar von Hippolytus von Rom, der den ersten christlichen Kommentar zu einem Buch des Alten Testaments und den ersten ausführlichen zu diesem Buch darstellt: Hippolytus, In Daniele IV, 23 – 24, hg.v. Gustave Bardy (*Sources Chrétiennes* 12, Paris 1947); darin setzt er die Geburt Christi in das Weltjahr 5502/01; ähnlich Iulius Africanus, *Chronographiae*, hg.v. Martin Wallraff / Umberto Roberto / Karl Pinggéra, übers. v. William Adler (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte NF 15, Berlin/New York 2007); dazu ausführlich bei Wolfram Brandes, Anastasios ὁ δίκωπος, Endezeitwartungen und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr., in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 90 (1997) 24 – 63, sowie Richard W. Burgess, Apologetic and chronography. The antecedents of Julius Africanus, in: M. Wallraff (Hg.), *Julius Africanus und die christliche Weltchronistik. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 157 (Berlin/New York 2006) 17 – 42; Vgl. allg. zu Zeitkonstruktion in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Historische Chronologie des Abendlandes. Kalenderreformen und Jahrtausendrechnungen. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart 2000); Arno Borst, *Computus. Zeit und Zahl in der Geschichte Europas* (Berlin<sup>3</sup> 2004); Wesley Stevens, *Cycles of Time and Scientific Learning in Medieval Europe* (Variorum Collected Studies Series 482, Aldershot 1995); Michael Allen, *Universal history, 300 – 1000: Origins and Western developments*, in: Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Hg.), *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden/Boston 2003) 17 – 42; zur eschatologisch-apokalyptischen Bedeutung des Zeitbegriffs Richard Landes, *Lest the Millennium be fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography* 100 – 800 CE, in: Werner Verbeke / Daniel Verhelst / Andries Welkenhuysen (Hg.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leiden 1988) 137 – 211 sowie James T. Palmer, *The Ordering of time*, in: Wieser/Zolles/Feik/Zolles/Schlöndorff (Hg.), *Abendländische Apokalyptik* 605 – 618. Vgl. zu Sulpicius Severus besonders die Arbeiten von Jacques Fontaine wie beispielsweise: *La perception du temps chez Sulpice Sévère: contradictions et cohérence*, in: *Revue des études anciennes* 90 (1988) 163 – 176; sowie rezent Veronika Wieser, *Die Weltchronik des Sulpicius Severus. Fragmente einer Sprache der Endzeit im ausgehenden 4. Jahrhundert*, in: dies., Zolles, Feik, Zolles, Schlöndorff, *Abendländische Apokalyptik* 661 – 92.

**62** Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica I*, 1, hg. u. übers. v. Ghislaine de Senneville-Grave (*Sources Chrétiennes* 441, Paris 1999)



Prüfungen (*vexationes*) der christlichen Gemeinschaft brach eine Zeit an, die schwierig und gefährlich war. Die Kirche wurde von großem, noch nie dagewesenem Übel bedroht: *Sequuntur tempora aetatis nostrae gravia et periculosa, quibus non usitato malo pollutae ecclesiae et perturbata omnia.*<sup>63</sup> Am Ende dieses nun letzten Zeitalters (*finis saeculi*) prophezeite Sulpicius die Rückkehr Kaiser Neros, der als Vorbote des Antichrist die letzte, die zehnte, Christenverfolgung anführen würde, ebenso wie er die erste begonnen hatte:

*Qui [Nero] non dicam regum, sed omnium hominum et uel inmanium bestiarum sordidissimus dignus extitit, qui persecutionem primus inciperet. Nescio an et postremus experit, siquidem opinione multorum receptum sit ipsum ante Antichristum uenturum.*<sup>64</sup>

Verortete der anonyme Autor von *De rebus bellicis* die barbarischen Völker noch außerhalb des römischen Reichs, so hatten diese für Sulpicius Severus ca. dreißig Jahre später dessen Grenzen längst überschritten. Das römische Territorium war für ihn von fremden Völkern und Rebellen besetzt. Die Barbaren inmitten der römischen Armee, in den Städten und Provinzen kündigten für ihn das nahe Ende an:

[...] *Siquidem Romanum solum ab exteris gentibus aut rebellibus occupatum aut dedentibus se per pacis speciem traditum constat. Exercitibusque nostris, urbibus atque prouinciis permixtas barbaras nationes, et praecipue iudaeos, inter nos degere nec tamen in mores nostros transire uideamus. Atque haec esse postrema prophetae annuntiant.*<sup>65</sup>

In Sulpicius' Weltchronik verdichtet sich die Wahrnehmung einer akuten Bedrohung und wird in einem christlichen Bedeutungszusammenhang mit einer nahen Endzeiterwartung verbunden. Zerrütet wird die *plebs Dei* dabei nicht nur von inneren Streitigkeiten, sondern bedrängt wird sie von allen Seiten.<sup>66</sup>

Eingeschlossen und besetzt von „zahllose[n] und wilde[n] Völker“ sah auch Hieronymus 409 die gallischen Provinzen. Nicht nur die barbarischen Völker – Quaden, Vandalen, Sarmaten, Alanen und Gepiden, Heruler, Sachsen, Burgunder und

<sup>63</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica II*, 46, 1, hg. u. übers. v. de Senneville-Grave.

<sup>64</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica II*, 28, 1, hg. u. übers. v. de Senneville-Grave; zu seinem Verständnis des Antichrist vgl. ders., *Dialogi II*, 14, 1–3, hg. v. Karl Halm, *Sulpici Severi libri qui supersunt* (CSEL 1, Wien 1866).

<sup>65</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica II*, 3, 2, hg. u. übers. v. de Senneville-Grave.

<sup>66</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica II*, 51, 5, hg. u. übers. v. de Senneville-Grave: *Et nunc, cum maxime discordiis episcoporum omnia turbari et misceri cemerentur cunctaque per eos odio aut gratia, metu, inconstantia, inuidia, factione, libidine, auaritia, arrogantia, somno, desidia deprauata, postremo plures aduersum paucos bene consulentes insanis consiliis et pertinacibus studiis certabant. Inter haec plebs Dei et optimus unus quisque probro atque ludibrio habebatur*; vgl. Jo Vaesen, *Sulpice Sévère et la fin des temps*, in: Werner Verbeke / Daniel Verhelst / Andries Welkenhuysen (Hg.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leiden 1988) 49–71; Bernard McGinn, *Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, in: ebd. 1–48.

Alemannen – sondern ebenso die Völker Assurs, die das Israel des Alten Testaments bedrohen, stellten nun eine Gefahr für Gallien dar.<sup>67</sup>

Nicht singuläre Ereignisse, sondern auch Prozesse werden in der Rezeption dieser Krise, der „death crisis of the western empire“<sup>68</sup>, abgebildet. Dabei wird ein narratives Netz aus Ähnlichkeiten gespannt, in dem sich das Geschehen dieser Zeit aus historiografischer Perspektive als Teil einer einzigen Serie lesen und deuten lässt. In diesem Ensemble ähnlicher Erzählungen wird mit dem Topos der Bedrohung und des Untergangs ein diskursiver Raum eröffnet, in dem von den sozialen Zäsuren der Jahre 376, 378 und 405/6 rückblickend als dem Beginn einer geschichtlichen Episode gesprochen werden kann. So wurde es möglich, dass Hieronymus diese Ereignisse als 30jährigen Krieg zwischen Imperium und Barbaren deutete und in einen historischen Zusammenhang setzte, den er in einem Brief an Geruchia 409 entwarf: „Seit geraumer Zeit“, schrieb er, „waren wir vom Schwarzen Meer bis zu den Julischen Alpen nicht mehr Herren des uns gehörigen Gebietes. Nachdem die Feinde die Donau, den uns schützenden Damm, überschritten hatten, wurde dreißig Jahre lang im Herzen des römischen Reiches Krieg geführt.“<sup>69</sup> Nicht nur das Ende des Imperiums, sondern sogar das der Welt sah er gekommen, als am 24. August gotische Truppen unter der Führung Alarichs Rom plünderten: „Die Stimme stockt, und das Schluchzen unterbricht die Worte des Schreibers. Die Stadt, die die ganze Welt erobert hat, ist selbst eingenommen worden ...“<sup>70</sup> Und er fragte: „Was bleibt noch heil, wenn Rom zugrunde geht?“<sup>71</sup>

Hieronymus' vermeintliche Sprachlosigkeit war eine der Antworten der römischen Gesellschaft, die mit der Eroberung der Hauptstadt ihr „symbolisches Zentrum“ glaubte verloren zu haben.<sup>72</sup> Denn wer könnte daran zweifeln, postulierte Lactantius

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**67** Hieronymus, *Epistula* 123, 15 (an Geruchia), hg.v. Isidor Hilberg, *Epistulae* 121 – 154 (CSEL 56/1, Wien/Leipzig 1996 [1918]); vgl. dazu auch Roland Steinacher, Aufstieg und Fall römischer Barbaren, s. Anm. 52.

**68** Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, s. Anm. 9.

**69** Hieronymus, *Epistula* 123, 16, hg.v. Hilberg, Übersetzung nach: Des heiligen Kirchenvaters Eusebius Hieronymus ausgewählte Schriften, hg.v. Ludwig Schade.

**70** Hieronymus, *Epistula* 127, 12 (an Principia), hg.v. Isidor Hilberg, *Epistulae* 121 – 154 (CSEL 56/1, Wien/Leipzig 1996 [1918]): *Dum haec aguntur in Iebus, terribilis de occidente rumor adfertur obsideri Romam et auro salutem ciuium redimi spoliatosque rursus circumdari, ut post substantiam uitam quoque amitterent. haeret uox et singultus intercipiunt uerba dictantis. capitur urbs, quae totum cepit orbem, immo fame perit ante quam gladio et uix pauci, qui caperentur, inuenti sunt. ad nefandos cibos erupit esurientium rabies et sua inuicem membra laniant, dum mater non parcat lactanti infantiae et recipit utero, quem paulo ante effuderat.* Übersetzung nach: Germanen in der Völkerwanderung, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei

**71** Hieronymus, *Epistula* 123, 16: *Quid saluum est, si Roma perit?* Zitiert nach Lucan V, 274, 24: *Quid satis est, si Roma parum est?* Übersetzung nach: Die Germanen in der Völkerwanderung, hg. u. übers. v. Goetz/Patzold/Welwei 345 – 346.

**72** Meier/Patzold, August 410 (vgl. Anm. 52) zu Hieronymus: 31 – 39, zu Augustinus: 40 – 58; Richard Corradini, Die Ankunft der Zukunft. Babylon, Jerusalem und Rom als Modelle von Aneignung und Entfremdung bei Augustinus, in: Walter Pohl / Gerda Heydemann, *Strategies of Identification. Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* 13,



zu Beginn des 4. Jahrhunderts (ca. 313), dass „wenn die Hauptstadt der Welt untergeht und anfängt eine Gasse zu sein, [...] dass nun das Ende für die Menschheit und die Welt gekommen ist?“<sup>73</sup> Schließlich gibt es „[...] nichts von Menschenhand Errichtetes, was nicht gleichermaßen von Menschenhand zerstört werden kann, da ja die Werke von Sterblichen sterblich sind“.<sup>74</sup>

Nicht nur an die Grenzen der Sprache, sondern auch an jene der Geschichte und der Zeit gelangten die zeitgenössischen (christlichen) Autoren, die dabei gleichermaßen eine „Geschichte des Zusammenbruchs von Geschichte“<sup>75</sup> entwarfen. Mit dem Aufstieg des Christentums im 4. Jahrhundert zur Religion des römischen Staates hatten religiöse Identifikationsangebote für den politischen Bereich immer mehr an Bedeutung gewonnen.<sup>76</sup> Die christliche Lehre transformierte die allgemeine Wahrnehmung der Welt, die Ideen und Ansichten über die Schöpfung, den Anfang und das Ende, über das Vergehen der Zeit und ihre Ereignishaftigkeit: „Christianity“, so der Beginn des viel zitierten Artikels von Paula Fredriksen, „began with the announcement that time and history were about to end.“<sup>77</sup> Und in der ersten Hälfte des vierten Jahrhunderts schrieb

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Turnhout 2013) 65 – 142; vgl. rezent dazu die Beiträge im umfassenden Sammelband Johannes Lipps / Carlos Machado / Philipp von Rummel (Hg.), *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD. The Event, its Context and its Impact* (Palilia 28, Wiesbaden 2013).

**73** Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones VII*, 25, 7, hg. u. übers. v. Stefan Freund (Berlin 2009); Sybillinische Weissagungen II, 363 – 364, hg. u. übers. v. Jörg-Dieter Gauger (Sammlung Tusculum, Düsseldorf/Zürich <sup>2</sup>2002): „Samos auch wird ein Sandhaufen sein und Delos verschwinden, Rom wird sein eine Gasse; denn alle Orakel erfüllen sich“; vgl. dazu Augustinus, *De civitate Dei XVIII*, 23, hg. v. Bernhard Dombart / Alphons Kalb (CCSL 47 – 48, Turnhout 1955); vgl. allg. Bernard McGinn, *Teste David cum Sibylla: The significance of the Sibylline tradition in the Middle Ages*, in: ders. (Hg.), *Apocalypticism in the western tradition* (Aldershot 1994) 7 – 35, hier 10 – 12.

**74** Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones VII*, 15, 12, hg. u. übers. v. Freund.

**75** Siegart, *Untergang 495*, s. Anm. 7: „Wenn die *res narratae* die *res gestae* allein in ihrem Untergangsein bedeuten können, kann die Geschichte des *orbis terrarum* nur die Geschichte des Zusammenbruchs von Geschichte sein.“

**76** Paul Veyne, *Als unsere Welt christlich wurde. Aufstieg einer Sekte zur Weltmacht* (München 2008) 26 – 27; Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse* (Sather Classical Lectures 55, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1994); dies., *Christianity: über die Formierung einer christlichen Sprache als „totalizing discourse“* (31, 58, 123, 220 – 221); dazu Theodore S. de Bruyn, *Ambivalence within a „Totalizing Discourse“: Augustine’s sermons on the sack of Rome* (*Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1/4 (1993) 405 – 21; Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities* 1 – 14, 17 – 43, s. Anm. 59; Richard Lim, *Christian Triumph and Controversy*, in: Glen W. Bowersock / Peter Brown / Oleg Gabar (Hg.), *Interpreting Late Antiquity. Essays on the Postclassical World* (London/Cambridge, MA 2001) 196 – 218, hier 196: „The alliance of Christianity with the Roman state incorporated imperial victory ideology into ecclesiastical thinking and expectation.“ (ebd. 196).

**77** Paula Fredriksen, *Apocalypse and redemption in early Christianity. From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo*, in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 45/2 (1991) 151 – 183, hier 151; vgl. dazu auch Robert A. Markus, *Living within the Sight of the End*, in: Chris Humphrey / William M. Ormrod (Hg.), *Time in the Medieval World* (York 2001) 23 – 34; Bernard McGinn, *The End of the World and the Beginning of Christendom*, in: Malcolm Bull (Hg.), *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford 1995) 58 – 89, attestiert eine „psychological imminence, in which life is lived under the shadow of the end“ (ebd. 63); umfassend dazu John J. Collins / ders. / Stephen J. Stein (Hg.), *The Encyclopedia of Apo-*

der römische Astrologe Iulius Firmicus Maternus, dass Christen den *mundus*, das sichtbare Universum, „mit dem kräftigen Puls ewigen Lebens“, als „zeitgebunden und von kurzer Dauer“ verachten.<sup>78</sup> Dieser Zeitpfeil, den Umberto Eco eine „Erfindung des Christentums“ nannte, strukturiert die Erzählung der irdischen Geschichte, die „unumkehrbar von der Gegenwart zur Zukunft geht“.<sup>79</sup> Konnte das römische Imperium bei Amminanus Marcellinus noch als *imperium sine fine* gedacht werden, „das bestehen wird, solange Menschen leben“,<sup>80</sup> fielen in einer christlich-eschatologischen Erzählung die zeitlichen Grenzen desselben mit den Enden der Welt zusammen. Vergänglich sind in den Sybillinischen Prophezeiungen die großen Reiche der Ägypter, Perser und Meder, Babylonier, Makedonen und Römer, deren Aufstieg und Untergang nach dem Sturz der Titanen vorhergesagt wird.<sup>81</sup> Am Ende der Zeit, wenn „die ganze Erde [...] in Aufruhr geraten [ist und] überall [...] Kriegslärm dröhn[t]“, würde nach Lactantius

das Schwert die Erde durchwandern und dabei alles abmähen und alles wie eine Mahd niederstrecken. Der Grund dieser Verwüstung und Verwirrung wird sein, dass das Römertum, von dem jetzt die Welt beherrscht wird, mein Sinn schaudert, es auszusprechen, aber ich will es sagen, weil es so sein wird, von der Erde beseitigt werden [wird] [...].<sup>82</sup>

Im Laufe des 4. Jahrhunderts änderten sich die Narrative der römischen, nun zunehmend christlichen Gesellschaft fundamental. Die christliche Gemeinschaft, die als „religion with a story“<sup>83</sup> verstanden werden kann, generierte ihre Erzählungen und

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calypticism, 3 Bde. (New York/London <sup>2</sup>2000) sowie Wolfram Brandes / Felicitas Schmieder (Hg.), Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen (Millennium-Studien 16, Berlin/New York 2008) und rezent James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge 2014). Vgl. dazu auch für die moderne Perspektive rezent Yvonne Sherwood, 'Napalm Falling like Prostitutes' Occidental Apocalypse as Managed Volatility, in: Wieser, Zolles, Feik, Zolles, Schlöndorff, *Abendländische Apokalypsik* 39 – 74.

**78** Iulius Firmicus Maternus, *Consultationes Zacchaei et Appollonii* 1, 1, hg. v. Germanus Morin (Bonn 1935).

**79** Umberto Eco, *Die Zeit ist eine Erfindung des Christentums?*, in: Umberto Eco / Jean-Claude Carrière / Stephen Jay Gould, *Das Ende der Zeiten* (Köln <sup>2</sup>1999) 241 – 245, hier 243.

**80** Amm. 14, 6, 3, hg. u. übers. v. Seyfarth, zitiert nach: P. Vergilius Maro, *Aeneis* 1, 278 – 279, hg. v. Johannes Götte (Sammlung Tusculum, München/Zürich 1983): *His ego nec netas rerum nec tempora pono, imperium sine fine dedi*. Andrew Merrills attestiert Ammianus einen „residual optimism within his work, even in the wake of the disaster at Adrianople“ (ders., *History and Geography* 29, s. Anm. 19); vgl. auch John Matthews, *Ammianus and the eternity of Rome*, in: Christopher J. Holdsworth / Timothy P. Wiseman (Hg.), *The Inheritance of Historiography* 350 – 900 (Exeter 1986) 17 – 29; Karla Pollmann, *Unending Sway: The Ideology of Empire in Early Christian Latin Thought*, in: Mark Vessey / Sharon V. Betcher / Robert A. Daum / Harry O. Maier (Hg.), *The Calling of the Nations. Exegesis, Ethnography, and Empire in a Biblical-Historical Present* (Toronto 2011) 176 – 199.

**81** Sybillinische Weissagungen III, 156 – 190, hg. u. übers. v. Gauger; vgl. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other* 325 – 341, s. Anm. 25.

**82** Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* VII, 15,10, hg. u. übers. v. Freund; vgl. auch Sybillinische Weissagungen III, 156, hg. u. übers. v. Gauger.

**83** Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* 86, sowie 15 – 24, s. Anm. 74.

deren Bedeutungen aus dem Text und den Metaphern der Bibel. Einzelnen Ereignissen wurden im Rahmen des göttlichen Heilsplans eine spezifische Bedeutung zugeschrieben. So handelte es sich nicht nur um düstere Zukunftsprognosen, die in Zeiten gesellschaftlichen Umbruchs das Ende der Welt verkünden, sondern vor allem um „Strategien der Gegenwartsbewältigung“ und Weltdeutung, die ganz im Sinn einer „Integration der Geschichte in das christliche Weltbild und die der christlichen Geschichte in die Weltgeschichte“ in eschatologischen Konzepten Ausdruck fanden.<sup>84</sup>

Das biblische Modell für eine eschatologische Interpretation des römischen Imperiums findet sich im alttestamentlichen Buch Daniel, in Daniels Vision von den vier Tieren, deren Deutung als vier Weltreiche (Dan. 7,17–18) und in der Traumvision Königs Nebukadnezars im zweiten Buch. Darin werden die vier Teile einer Statue, aus unterschiedlichen Metallen und Materialien (Gold, Silber, Kupfer, Eisen und Ton; Dan. 2,31–45) mit dem Bestehen vier großer Weltreiche in direkte Verbindung gesetzt und irdisches mit himmlischem Geschehen eng verknüpft. Diese Ausdeutungen finden sich bei Hippolytus, Hieronymus, Sulpicius Severus und Orosius.<sup>85</sup> In der Chronik des Sulpicius Severus wird nach der Wiederkehr Christi, der alles Irdische zerstört, ein ewiges Reich für die Heiligen errichtet (vgl. Dan. 2, 44; 7, 9–28 und 12, 2–3):

*In lapide vero sine manibus abscisso, qui aurum, argentum, aes, ferrum testumque comminuit, Christi figura est. Is enim non conditione humana editus, siquidem non ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo natus est, mundum istum, in quo sunt regna terrarum, in nihilum rediget regnumque aliud incorruptum atque perpetuum, id est futurum saeculum, quod sanctis paratum est, confirmabit.*<sup>86</sup>

Die Grenzen seiner Welt in Auflösung erfuhr siebzig Jahre später auch Hydatius von Chaves, der in seiner Chronik für die Jahre von 379 bis 468/9 an die Arbeiten von Eusebius und Hieronymus bewusst anknüpfte.<sup>87</sup> Den Einträgen zu 410, 414, 439 und

<sup>84</sup> Corradini, *Ankunft der Zukunft*, s. Anm. 70; vgl. auch Anthony Grafton / Megan Williams (Hg.), *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book. Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (London/Cambridge, MA 2006) 133–177.

<sup>85</sup> Vgl. Hippolytus, In *Danielem II*, 11, 12, 14; IV, 2–5 und 7–8, hg.v. Bardy; Hieronymus, *Comm. in Danielem II*, 7, 1–7 und I, 2, 31–35, hg.v. François Glorie (CCSL 75 A, Turnhout 1964); Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos II*, 1, 4–6 und VII, 2, 1–12, hg.v. Zangmeister; später bei Adso Dervensis, *De ortu et tempore antichristi 109–117*, hg.v. Daniel Verhelst (CCCM 45, Turnhout 1976); vgl. allg. zu Interpretation und Rezeption John J. Collins, *The apocalyptic vision of the Book of Daniel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 16, Missoula 1977); ders., *A Commentary on Daniel* (Hermeneia. A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, Minneapolis 1993); Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 20, Leiden/Boston 2005); Sumi Shimahara, *Daniel et les visions politiques a l'epoque carolingienne*, in: *Medievales 55* (2008) 5–18; Daniel D. Verhelst, *Adso of Montier-en-Der and the Fear of the Year 1000*, in: Richard Landes / Andrew Gow / David C. Van Meter (Hg.), *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050* (Oxford 2003) 81–92.

<sup>86</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica II*, 3, 3, hg. u. übers. v. de Senneville-Grave.

<sup>87</sup> Hydatius, *Chronica praef.* 6, hg.v. Richard W. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two contemporary accounts of the final years of the Roman empire* (Oxford

456 stellte er Textstellen aus dem Alten Testament, aus Ezechiel und dem Buch Daniel gegenüber. In den politischen Ereignissen dieser Jahre sah er die biblischen Prophezeihungen erfüllt: *Et ita quatuor plagis ferri famis pestilentie bestiarum ubique in toto orbe seuientibus, predictae a domino per prophetas suos adnuntiationes implentur.*<sup>88</sup> Er selbst wurde dabei zum Chronisten wie auch zum Propheten der letzten Tage. Die Geschichte der christlichen Gemeinschaft lief für ihn eindeutig auf ein nahes Ende zu, das er für den 27. Mai 482 erwartete.<sup>89</sup>

Zäsuren, wie die Jahre 376 und 378, 405/6 oder 410 konnten nicht nur als soziale Katastrophen, sondern auch insofern als Grenzziehungen verstanden werden, als mit diesen Datierungen gleichermaßen eine Definition von (christlicher) Identität verbunden war.<sup>90</sup> Schließlich verändert ein kulturelles Trauma, so Jeffrey Alexander, „[that] occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever“, die Identitätskonzepte einer Gesellschaft nachhaltig.<sup>91</sup> Die „barbarian forces of chaos“<sup>92</sup> störten damit nicht nur die politische, sondern auch die symbolische Ordnung der römischen Welt, in der die Verweiskraft der bisher gültigen ethnischen Zuschreibungen und Grenzziehungen in Frage gestellt wurde:<sup>93</sup>

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1993): [...] *et conclusi in angustias imperii Romani metas subdidimus ruituras et, quod est luctosius, intra extremam uniuersi orbis Galleciam.*

**88** Hydatius, *Chronica a. 410*, hg.v. Burgess, zu Ezech. 14,21 und Off. 6,8; vgl. dazu Andrew H. Merrills / Richard Miles, *The Vandals* (Malden, MA/Oxford 2010) 42–43; Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, *Philologische Studien zur Chronik des Hydatius von Chaves* (Palingenesia 47, Stuttgart 1994) 155–157; Tom Kitchen, *Apocalyptic Perceptions of the Roman Empire in the Fifth Century A.D.*, in: Veronika Wieser / Christian Zolles / Catherine Feik / Martin Zolles / Leopold Schlöndorff, *Abendländische Apokalyptik. Kompendium zur Genealogie der Endzeit* (Kulturgeschichte der Apokalyptik 1, Berlin im Druck); zu Hydatius' „apocalyptic feeling“ vgl. auch Steven Muhlberger, *The fifth-century chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452* (Leeds 1990) 260–264 und Veronika Wieser, *Spanning the Century. Narratives between past and future in the Chronicles of Jerome, Sulpicius Severus and Hydatius*, in: dies., Walter Pohl (Hg.), *Historiographies of Identity 1: Historiographies as Reflection about Community: Ancient and Christian Models* (Leidern in Vorbereitung)

**89** Burgess, *Chronicle of Hydatius* 155–83.

**90** Hans Waldenfels, *Zur gebrochenen Identität des abendländischen Christentums*, in: Werner Gephart / ders. (Hg.), *Religion und Identität. Im Horizont des Pluralismus* (Frankfurt/Main 1999) 105–124, hier 105: „Diese [markanten Daten der Geschichte] hatten zumeist – mit unterschiedlicher Akzentsetzung – den Charakter von Brückenschlägen, Umwälzungen oder Transformationen. Jedenfalls lassen sie erkennen, was auf dem Weg der Identitätsbestimmung tatsächlich geschieht.“; vgl. auch Jenkins, *Social Identity* 5, s. Anm. 26.

**91** Jeffrey Alexander, *Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma*, in: ders. / Ron Eyerman / Bernhard Giesen / Neil J. Smelser / Piotr Sztempka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity 1* (Berkeley 2004) 1–30, hier 1.

**92** Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire* 69, s. Anm. 9.

**93** Vgl. Nancy *Identität* 56, s. Anm. 15: „Man spricht nur davon [Identität], wenn es keine Zeichen mehr gibt, oder wenn diese auf nichts mehr verweisen“.

„Ungeordnet wird die Welt sein, wenn die Menschen zugrunde gehen [...]“,<sup>94</sup> so die zeitgenössische Interpretation bei Lactantius.

Gerade in diesem Kontext erfuhren barbarische Völker in einem eschatologischen Zusammenhang als Boten des nahen Weltendes, als Gog und Magog, eine Neuinterpretation und Dynamisierung. In der Verschränkung antiker Ethnografie und Geografie mit dem Text der Bibel wurde eine Argumentation von sozialer Identität zwischen ethnischen Identifikationsangeboten und endzeitlichen Deutungen möglich. Die biblischen Modellerzählungen der wilden Völker, Ezechiel und Offenbarung, boten dabei einen Meta-Text, einen „Great Code“,<sup>95</sup> wie Northrop Frye argumentiert, anhand dessen politischen Ereignissen und kulturellen Prozessen bestimmte Bedeutungen eingeschrieben werden konnten und der gleichzeitig ein breites, durchaus widersprüchliches, narratives Spektrum eröffnete.

In Ezechiel (38,14–16 und 39,4; 10–12) und Offenbarung (20,7–8) wird der Kampf des Fürsten Gog aus dem nördlichsten Land Magog gegen Israel beschrieben bzw. handelt es sich um die Völker Gog und Magog (*quorum numerus est sicut arena maris*),<sup>96</sup> die am Ende der Zeit von Satan, der aus seinem Gefängnis befreit wird, gemeinsam mit den Völkern an den vier Enden der Welt in den Krieg geführt werden: *Et cum finiti fuerint mille anni, soluetur satanas de custodia sua, et egredietur ut seducat gentes in quattuor angulis terrae, Gog et Magog, ut congreget eos ad bellum.*<sup>97</sup>

Am Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts bedrohten diese biblischen Völker die römisch-christliche Welt. Ambrosius von Mailand schrieb nach der Schlacht von Adrianopel, dass in Ezechiel ebenjene kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen mit einem gotischen Heer bereits vorhergesagt worden wären, und er setzte Goten mit Gog gleich: „Dieser Gog ist der Gote, der, wie wir sehen, schon aufgebrochen ist, über den uns ein künftiger Sieg verheißen wird vom Herrn.“<sup>98</sup> Und für Quodvultdeus, Bischof von Karthago, war die Zuschreibung zwischen „Goten und Mauren“ mit Gog und Magog ebenfalls ein-

<sup>94</sup> Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones VII*, 16, 13, hg. u. übers. v. Freund.

<sup>95</sup> Northrop Frye, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature* (San Diego/New York/London 1983); siehe auch den Beitrag von James Palmer in diesem Band.

<sup>96</sup> Hieronymus, *Comm. in Hiezechielem XI*, 38, 1493, hg.v. François Glorie, *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opere 1: Opera Exegetica 4* (CCSL 75, Turnhout 1964).

<sup>97</sup> Hieronymus, *Comm. in Hiezech. XI*, 38, 1489–1491, hg.v. Glorie; vgl. auch Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, *The Gog and Magog Tradition in Revelation 20:8*, in: H. J. Jonge / Johannes Tromp (Hg.), *The Book of Ezekiel and its Influence* (Aldershot 2007); zur Etymologie von Gog vgl. Edward Lipinski, *Gyges et Lygdamis d'après les sources neo-assyriennes et hébraïques*, in: *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica 24* (1994) 65–72; Steinicke, *Apokalyptische Heerscharen* 65, s. Anm. 19;

<sup>98</sup> Ambrosius, *De fide ad Gratianum Augustum II*, 16, 137–138, hg.v. Otto Faller (CSEL 78, Wien 1962); Übersetzung nach: *Über den Glauben an Gratian*, hg. u. übers. v. Christoph Marksches (*Fontes Christiani 47/2*, Turnhout 2005); Ambrosius stellt Kaiser Valens als *militans pro Deo* in den „aktiven Dienst für den Christengott“, vgl. Peter Brown, *Autorität und Heiligkeit. Aspekte der Christianisierung des Römischen Reiches* (Suttgart 1998) 35;

deutig.<sup>99</sup> Dieselbe Frage nach den biblischen und ihrer Verbindung zu zeitgenössischen Völkern entweder als Strafe Gottes oder als Boten des Weltendes wurde auch für Hieronymus akut, als im Jahr 395 Hunnen im Kaukasus und in Syrien einfallen. Die Hunnen, vermerkte Hieronymus kurz nach dem Überfall im Frühsommer desselben Jahres an Heliodorus, wurden bereits bei Herodot als Skythen erwähnt, die zur Zeit König Darius den Orient zwanzig Jahre lang bedroht hätten, und nun als „des Nordens Wölfe [...] Mord und Schrecken“ verbreiteten.<sup>100</sup> Aufgebrochen waren sie

von den äußersten Grenzen des Mäotischen Sees, zwischen dem eisigen Tanais und den wilden Völkerschaften der Massageten, dort wo die von Alexander angelegten festen Plätze die barbarischen Stämme hinter den Felsgebirgen des Kaukasus zurückhielten.

Damit nahm Hieronymus jene Erzählung aus der Alexanderlegende auf, in der Alexander der Große an einem Bergpaß im Kaukasus, weit jenseits der Grenzen der Zivilisation, die skythischen Völker hinter eisernen Toren einschließt.<sup>101</sup>

Im ersten Jahrhundert hatte Flavius Josephus den Namen der Skythen, der eine Vielzahl an Stereotypen von grausamen und primitiven Barbaren bezeichnete, zum ersten Mal in Verbindung mit den apokalyptischen Völkern Gog und Magog argumentiert: *Magog vero Magogas a se nominatos instituit, a Graecis Scythae sunt appellati.*<sup>102</sup> In Hieronymus' Zeit, als Barbarenvölker „einem Strome gleich, der alles mit sich reißt [...] die Grenzen Ägyptens, Palästinas, Phöniziens und Syriens [überfluteten],“ erfuhr diese Erzählmöglichkeit der skythischen Völker eine radikale Aktualität.

**99** Quodvultdeus, *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei. Dimidium temporis* 13, 35, hg.v. René Braun, *Opera Quodvultdeus Carthageniensi episcopa tributa* (CCSL 60, Turnhout 1976): *Gog et Magog, ut quidam dixerunt Gotos et Mauros, Getas et Massagetas, per quorum saeuitiam ipse iam diabolus ecclesiam uastat et tunc amplius persequetur, cessare etiam faciens iuge sacrificium; propter quod ammonet dominus dicens: venio cito, beatus qui uigilat et seruat uestimenta sua ne nudus ambulet*; weitere direkte Bezugnahmen bei Commodian, *Carmen apologeticum* 805 ff., hg. Bernhard Dombart (Wien 1897); Isidor von Sevilla, *Etymologiae* 11, 3, hg.v. Fabio Gasti / Jacques André / Peter K. Marshall / Marc Reydellet / María Josefa Cantó (Société d'Édition „Les Belles Lettres“, Paris 2010). Vgl. den umfassenden Überblick bei Sverre Bøe, *Gog and Magog. Ezekiel 38 – 39 as Pre-text for Revelation 19, 17 – 21 and 20, 7 – 10* (Tübingen 2001); vgl. dazu auch den Beitrag von James Palmer (in diesem Band).

**100** Hieronymus, *Epistula* 60, 17, hg.v. Hilberg.

**101** Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1, 6, 1; sowie ders., *De bello Iudaico* 7, 7, 4, über den Gebirgspass; vgl. auch auch Strabo, *Geographika* 78 – 80; auch bei Tacitus, *Historiae* I, 6 wird ihre wichtige militärische Bedeutung erwähnt; vgl. allg. Alexander R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge-Mass. 1932); W. J. Aerts, *Gog, Magog, Dogheads and Other Monsters in the Byzantine World*, in: A. A. Seyeed-Ghrab / F. C. W. Doufekar-Aerts / S. McGlenn (Hg.) *Gog and Magog. The Clans of Chaos in World Literature* (Amsterdam/West Lafayette 2007) 23 – 36; F. C. W. Doufekar-Aerts, *Dogfaces, Snake-tongues, and the wall against Gog and Magog*, in: ebd. 37 – 52;

**102** Flavius Josephus, *Bellum Iudaicum* 7, 7, 4; zum Begriff der Skythen vgl. Pohl, *Völkerwanderung* 105, s. Anm. 1; Wolfram Brandes, *Gog, Magog und die Hunnen. Anmerkungen zur eschatologischen „Ethnografie“ der Völkerwanderungszeit*, in: Walter Pohl / Clemens Gantner / Richard Payne (Hg.), *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300 – 1000* (Aldershot im Druck), sowie dessen Beitrag in diesem Band.



sierung.<sup>103</sup> In seinem Kommentar zu Ezechiel, der etwa fünfzehn Jahre nach dem ersten Einfall der Hunnen in Syrien entstand, rekurrierte Hieronymus auf das Motiv der Alexanderlegende, führte es allerdings in letzter Konsequenz nicht mit den biblischen Horden zusammen:

*Igitur Iudaei et nostri iudaizantes putant Gog gentes esse Scythias immanes et unnumerabiles quae trans Caucasum montem et Maeotim paludem et propter Caspium mare ad Indiam usque tendantur – et has post mille annorum regnum esse a diabolo commouendas –, quae ueniant in terram Israel ut pugnent contra sanctos, multis secum gentibus congregatis [...].<sup>104</sup>*

Vielmehr entschied sich Hieronymus gegen eine endzeitliche Deutungsmöglichkeit wie sie Ambrosius von Mailand propagierte. Im Vorwort nahm er dazu explizit Stellung:

*In prophetia difficillima illud breuiter admonebo, quod vir nostrae aetatis haud ignobilis, ad imperatorem scribens, super hac natione dixerit: ‘gog iste gothus est’, cui qua ratione possint omnia quae in ea scripta sunt coaptari, non est meum sed eorum qui hoc putant disserere.<sup>105</sup>*

Gegen einen direkten Bezug zwischen Goten bzw. Hunnen und apokalyptischen Völkern argumentierte auch Augustinus, Bischof von Hippo.<sup>106</sup> Als sich im Jahr 419 der Bischof von Salona, Hesychius, an ihn wandte und Gewissheit über das Ende der Welt suchte, antwortet Augustinus, dass das römische Reich bereits Schlimmeres überstanden hätte. Geirrt hätten sich jene, die angesichts militärischer Bedrohungen und Auseinandersetzungen, wie unter Kaiser Gallienus, an ein nahes Ende glaubten.<sup>107</sup>

**103** Hieronymus, *Epistula* 126, 2 (an Marcellinus und Anapsychia), hg.v. Hilberg.

**104** Hieronymus, *Comm. in Hiezech. XI*, 38, 1475–80.

**105** Hieronymus, *Comm. in Hiezech XI, praefatio* 14; vgl. auch ders., *Liber quaestionum hebaicarum in Genesim* 14, 18, hg.v. P. de Lagarde, *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera 1: Opera Exegetica* (CCSL 72, Turnhout 1959): *Scio quendam Gog et Magog tam de praesenti loco quam de Ezechiel ad Gothorum nuper in terra nostra uagantium historiam retulisse: quod utrum uerum sit, proelii ipsius fine monstratur.*

**106** Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* XX, 11, hg.v. Dombart/Kalb: Nicht „irgendwelche Barbarenvölker irgendwo auf der Erde“, wären mit Gog und Magog gemeint, auch nicht „irgendwelche andere[n] Fremdvölker außerhalb des römischen Machtbereichs“. Die barbarischen Völker sind über die gesamte Erde verstreut, „denn es ist von den Völkern an allen vier Enden der Erde die Rede, und diese sind’s, die als Gog und Magog bezeichnet werden.“

**107** Augustinus, *Epistula* 199, 35, hg.v. Alois Goldbacher (CSEL 57/4, Wien/Leipzig 1911): *Bellis autem per diuersa interualla temproum et locorum quando non terra contrita est? Nam, ut nimis antiqua praeteream, sub imperatore Gallieno, cum Romanas prouincias barbaries usque quaque peruaderet, quam multos fratres nostros, qui tunc erant in carne, putamus propinquum finem credere potuisse, quoniam longe post ascensionem domini factum est!* Vgl. zu den Diskussionen über die Festlegung des Zeitpunkts des Endes *Epistula* 197, 4 und *Epistula* 199, 2, hg.v. Goldbacher; vgl. Jacques Chocheyras, *Fin des terres et fin des temps d’Hésychius (Ve siècle) à Béatus (VIIIe siècle)*, in: Werner Verbeke / Daniel Verhelst / Andries Welkenhuysen (Hg.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leiden 1988) 72–81; Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen, Augustinus und der Fall Roms: Theodizee und Geschichtsschreibung, in: Andreas Goltz / Hartmut Leppin / ders. (Hg.), *Jenseits der Grenzen* (Berlin 2009)

Nicht als Boten des Weltendes sondern als ein wesentliches Element im göttlichen Heilsplan sah Augustinus die Rolle der barbarischen Völker. Schließlich würde Christus nicht eher wiederkehren, als sein Evangelium nicht auch den entferntesten heidnischen Völkern gepredigt worden sei: „Der Herr hat [der Kirche] nicht allein die Römer versprochen, sondern alle Völker der Welt.“<sup>108</sup>

In Orosius *Historien* ist nicht Herodot, sondern Thukydides Vorlage für die Darstellung der Goten, und nicht Skythen, sondern Geten dringen 376 in die römischen Provinzen ein. Diese Interpretation bot für Orosius die Möglichkeit, dem zeitgenössischen Narrativ einer großen Katastrophe eine alternative, die Ereignisse relativierende Deutung zur Seite zu stellen.<sup>109</sup> Denn obwohl Goten/Geten für Alexander den Großen, Pyrrhus und Caesar ein Zeichen des Schreckens darstellten, haben sie für Orosius diese Bedrohung verloren, da sie durch Bitten und nicht durch Waffengewalt „erhoffen die Gemeinschaft eines Bündnisses mit Rom zu erlangen.“<sup>110</sup> Auch in der Schilderung der beiden gotischen Heerführer Alarich und Radagaisus unterschied er zwischen den beiden Zuschreibungsmodellen, indem er dem christlichen Goten Alarich den heidnischen Goten Radagaisus gegenüberstellte, der ein „Heide, Barbar und echter Skythe“<sup>111</sup> ist.

An all diesen Beispielen wird deutlich, dass die Abgrenzungsstrategien und Identifikationsprozesse zwischen Heiden, Christen, Römern und Barbaren nicht entlang sondern zwischen, in der Verschränkung ethnischer und endzeitlicher Identitätsdiskurse organisiert wurden.<sup>112</sup> Als letztes Beispiel dafür kann eine kurze Stelle aus der Chronik des Sulpicius Severus gelten, in der Barbaren und Juden gemeinsam (*Barbaras nationes, et praecipue iudaeios [...] uideamus*) das römische Reich bedrohen. Diese spezifisch ethnisch-religiöse Definition der barbarischen Völker, in deren Diskussion sich sowohl der zeitgenössische wie auch der Forschungsdiskurs der Moderne kreuzen, kann einerseits als das Resultat einer versehentlichen oder bewussten Ver-

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135 – 152; zu Augustinus' Interpretation der Plünderung Roms vgl. auch *De civitate Dei III*, 31, hg.v. Dombart/Kalb.

**108** Augustinus, *Epistula* 199, 47, hg.v. Goldbacher: *Non enim Romanos sed omnes gentes dominus semini Abrahae media quoque iuratione promisit. Ex qua promissione iam factum est, ut nonnullae gentes, quae non tenentur ditione Romana, reciperent euangelium et adiungerentur ecclesiae, quae fructificat et crescit in uniuerso mundo*; sowie eine allgemeine Diskussion *Epistula* 197, 4, hg.v. Goldbacher; vgl. Markus 13, 10, Matthäus 24, 14; 28, 19 und Offenbarung 10, 11; 14, 6.

**109** Pohl, *Völkerwanderung* 57 – 58, s. Anm. 1; Meier/Patzold, *August* 410 58 – 68, s. Anm. 52.

**110** Orosius, *Historiae aduersum paganos I*, 16, 2, hg.v. Zangmeister: *Modo autem Geate illi qui et nunc Gothi, quos Alexander euitandos pronuntiauit, Pyrrhus exhorruit, Caesar etiam declinauit, relictis uacuefactisque sedibus suis ac totis uiribus toti Romanas ingressi prouincias simulque ad terrorem diu ostentati societatem Romani foederis precibus sperant, quam armis uindicare potuissent.*

**111** Orosius, *Historiae aduersum paganos VII*, 37, 4, hg.v. Zangmeister: *Hic supra [Radagaisus] hanc incredibilem multitudinem indomitamque uirtutem paganus Scythia erat: qui, ut mos ets barbaris huiusmodi gentibus, omnem Romani generis sanguinem dis suis propinare deuouerat*; vgl. auch Walter Pohl, *Rome and the Barbarians in the fifth century*, in: *Antiquité Tardive* 16 (2008) 93 – 101.

**112** Denise Kimber Buell, *Why this new Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York 2005), zum Konzept des „Ethnic reasoning“ 1 – 26.



wechslung von Juden mit Goten oder Vandalen interpretiert werden.<sup>113</sup> Andererseits verweist diese Aussage über die traditionelle Konstellation von Barbaren und Krise hinaus auf die vielfältigen Verhandlungsprozesse zwischen Christen und Heiden bzw. Christen und Juden im Verlauf des 4. Jahrhunderts. In diesem Zeitraum änderte sich in der römischen Gesellschaft die Rolle der jüdischen Gemeinschaften nicht nur im rechtlichen, sondern vor allem auch im religiös-theologischen Kontext in Beziehung zum Christentum grundlegend.<sup>114</sup> Ausdruck fand dies in den anti-jüdischen Polemiken der Predigten des Johannes Chrysostomos, Severus von Minorca und Ambrosius von Mailand ebenso wie in den das gemeinsame biblische Erbe betonenden Ansichten des Augustinus und in der apokalyptischen Deutung bei Sulpicius Severus.<sup>115</sup> Sulpicius verwendete jenes zeitgenössische Basisnarrativ der Barbaren um ein weiteres Metathema zu kommunizieren, nämlich die Bestrebung, die christliche Kirche als eigenständige religiöse und politische Gemeinschaft zu definieren. In seiner Chronik be-

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**113** Vgl. Jacob Bernays, *Über die Chronik des Sulpicius* (Berlin 1861) 28–29, Fn. 48, glaubt an eine Verwechslung zwischen Iudaeios und Gothos, aufgrund der starken Präsenz der Goten in der römischen Armee und deren Rolle im Untergangsdiskurs des Imperiums; eine zeitgenössische ähnliche Deutung der Goten bei Hieronymus, *Comm. in Daniele* I, 2, 31–35, hg.v. Glorie: *Sicut enim in principio nihil Romano imperio fortius et durius fuit, ita et in fine rerum nihil imbellicius, quando et in bellis ciuilibus et aduersum diuersas nationes aliarum gentium barbararum indigemus auxilio*; vgl. ebenfalls die Edition der Chronik von de Senneville-Grave (S. 392); Vandalos anstelle von Iudaeios argumentiert Godfrey Tanner, *Three christian latin authors in the late Roman Empire: Augustine, Orosius and Sulpicius Severus*, in: T.W. Hillard / R. A. Kearsley / C. E. V. Nixon / A. M. Nobbs (Hg.), *Ancient History in a Modern University 2: Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond* (Grand Rapids-Mich./Cambridge 1998) 401–405, hier 403 Fn. 7; die religiösen Perspektive wiederum betont Gary Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography. Narratives of redistributive Justice* (London/New York 2000) 290 Fn. 50, der darin die jüdischen Gemeinschaften im Westen des Imperiums adressiert sieht.

**114** Vgl. allg. Garth Fowden, *Religious communities*, in: Glen W. Bowersock / Peter Brown / Oleg Gabar (Hg.), *Interpreting Late Antiquity. Essays on the Postclassical World* (Cambridge-Mass./London 2001) 82–106; Alan Cameron, *The last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford 2011), der die lange Zeit eher dichotome Konstruktion von Christen und Heiden auflöst; zur Forschungsdiskussion der komplexen Beziehungen zwischen Juden und Christen in der Spätantike vgl. Guy G. Stroumsa, *Religious dynamics between Christians and Jews in late antiquity* (312–640), in: Augustine Casiday / Frederick W. Norris (Hg.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity 2: Constantine to c. 600* (Cambridge 2007) 151–172; Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews. A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (Yale 2008); dies. / Oded Ir-Shai, *Christian anti-Judaism, polemics and policies: From the second to the seventh century*, in: Steven Katz (Hg.), *The Cambridge history of Judaism 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge 2006) 977–1035; zum rechtlichen Status der Juden vgl. David Hunt, *Christianising the Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Code*, in: Jill Harries / Ian N. Wood (Hg.), *The Theodosian Code* (London 1993) 143–58; Capucine Nemo-Pekelman, *Rome et ses citoyens juifs, IVe-Ve siècles* (Paris 2010); John Toland, *The legal status of religious minorities in the medieval Mediterranean world: a comparative study*, in: Michael Borgolte (Hg.) *Hybride Kulturen im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Berlin 2010) 141–149;

**115** Augustinus, *De civitate Dei XVIII*, 46, hg.v. Dombart/Kalb; Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus Iudaeos orationes*, hg.v. Migne/PG 48, 843–942; Severus de Minorca, *Epistula ad omnem ecclesiam* (a. 418), hg. u. übers. v. Scott Bradbury, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews*, *Oxford Early Christian Texts* (Oxford 1996); Ambrosius Mediolanensis, *Epistula 74*, hg.v. Michaela Zelzer, *Sancti Ambrosii opera 10*, 3 (CSEL 82, Wien 1992), zur Zerstörung der Synagoge von Callinicum im Jahr 388.

anspruchte er im Rückgriff auf die Erzählungen des Alten Testaments, in denen er Israel als ein wiederholt gegen Gott ungehorsames Volk darstellt, das biblische Erbe für die christliche Gemeinschaft, als nun *verus Israel*.<sup>116</sup> Waren es im Alten Testament fremde Völker, wie Assur, die Israel bedrohen, so befanden sich in der Weltchronik Barbaren und Juden gemeinsam an den Grenzen des *populus Christianus* und damit gleichzeitig auch außerhalb der und im Gegensatz zur christlichen Gemeinschaft. Verstärkt wurde die Bedeutung dieser Argumentation in einer möglichen Assoziation der Juden mit dem Antichrist, der nicht nur unter den römischen Herrschern zu finden ist (*inter caesares*),<sup>117</sup> sondern in alternativer Interpretation aus dem Stamm Dans kommen wird und – nach Sulpicius Severus – bereits geboren wurde.<sup>118</sup>

Auch aus dieser Quelle geht hervor, dass zu Beginn der Völkerwanderungszeit die endzeitliche Deutung der barbarischen Völker und die eschatologische Rolle der *gentes* eng mit den verschiedenen Erzählmöglichkeiten und Aussagebedingungen ethnischer Identität verknüpft waren. Von Veränderungen, Polarisierungen und Widersprüchen gekennzeichnet, waren die einzelnen Erzählstränge und -strategien immer in konkrete soziale Prozesse und Kommunikationsverhältnisse eingebunden, die deren Deutung maßgeblich bestimmen.<sup>119</sup> Hinter auf einen ersten Blick vielleicht kohärenten Erzählungen und einfachen Formeln, wie *Gog iste Gothus est*, stehen

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**116** Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica I*, 16, 3; 16, 7; 20, 3 und 8; 24, 6–7; II, 4, 6, hg. u. übers. v. de Senneville-Grave; vgl. allg. G. K. van Andel, *The Christian Concept of History in the Chronicle of Sulpicius Severus* (Amsterdam 1976) 58–60; Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel. A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)* (Oxford 1986); Veyne, *Welt* 110–125, s. Anm. 84, der die Nähe von Christentum und Judentum als Ursache für den Bruch zwischen den beiden religiösen Gemeinschaften argumentiert.

**117** Irenäus von Lyon, *Adversus haereses V*, 26, 1 und 30, 1–4, hg. u. übers. v. Norbert Brox (*Fontes Christiani 8/5*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien/Barcelona/Rom/New York 2001); Hippolytus, *De antichristo* 14, 2 und 15, 1, hg. u. übers. v. Gian Luca Potestà / Marco Rizzi, *L'antichristo 1: Il nemico dei tempi finali. Testi dal II al IV secolo* (Scrittori greci e latini, Rom 2005) 109–233; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem III*, 13, 10 (ed. René Braun, *Sources Chrétiennes* 365, Paris 1994); Victorinus von Pettau, *Commentarii in Apocalypsim Iohannis XI*, 4, hg. v. Martine Dulaey (*Sources Chrétiennes* 423, Paris 1997); Hieronymus, *Comm. in Daniele I*, 2, 31–5; II, 7, 11b–12; IV, 11, 21, hg. v. Glorie; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei XX*, 19, hg. v. Dombart/Kalb.

**118** Für diesen Hinweis danke ich Wolfram Brandes; Zitat nach: Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi I*, 14, hg. v. Halm, zur Interpretation des Antichrist als Nachfahre Dans, vgl. Wilhelm Bousset, *Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judentums, des Neuen Testaments und der alten Kirche. Ein Beitrag zur Auslegung der Apocalypse* (Göttingen 1895 / ND Hildesheim 1983) 108–115; Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Seattle 1981) 79–801; Rebekka Voß, *Propter seditionis hebraicae. Judenfeindliche Apokalyptik und ihre Auswirkungen auf den jüdischen Messianismus*, in: Wolfram Brandes / Felicitas Schmieder (Hg.), *Antichrist. Konstruktionen von Feindbildern* (Berlin 2010) 197–217.

**119** Paul Veyne, *Die Originalität des Unbekannten. Für eine andere Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt am Main 1988) 8: „[...] die Tatsachen existieren nicht, d. h. sie existieren nicht in gesondertem Zustand, es sei denn durch Abstraktion; konkret gesprochen, existieren sie nur unter einem Begriff, der sie formt. Oder, wenn Sie so wollen, die Geschichte existiert nur im Verhältnis zu den Fragen, die wir an Sie richten“; Pohl, *Introduction*.

vielfältige Diskussions- und Verhandlungsprozesse, die ethnische Identität als mehrschichtiges Konzept in einem eschatologischen Kontext unter den Begriffen von Untergang, Katastrophe und Veränderung zusammenführen und dabei auch vereinfachen. Die Komplexität ethnischer Zuschreibungen gilt es auch in apokalyptischen Deutungen deutlich zu machen.

Katharina Enderle

## Der Perserkrieg unter Anastasios (502 – 506 n. Chr.) als Endzeitereignis

Die bekanntesten byzantinischen apokalyptischen Texte stammen aus dem 7.–9. Jahrhundert:<sup>1</sup> Vor allem die *Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, die wohl gegen Ende des 7. Jahrhunderts zu datieren ist,<sup>2</sup> aber auch mehrere Danielvisionen, z. B. die *Danieldiegese*, die im Kontext der arabischen Belagerung Konstantinopels 717/8 entstand oder die *Apokalypse Leons von Konstantinopel*, um nur ein paar Beispiele zu nennen, zeigen, dass die Bedrohungen, mit denen das byzantinische Reich in diesen Jahrhunderten konfrontiert war, besonders die arabische Eroberungspolitik, zu einer starken Zunahme apokalyptischer Wahrnehmung geführt hatte.<sup>3</sup>

Mehrere Arbeiten der letzten Jahre haben allerdings gezeigt, dass auch das 5. und 6. Jahrhundert von Endzeiterwartungen geprägt waren, deren Bedeutung in der Vergangenheit oft unterschätzt wurde.<sup>4</sup> Mehrere Faktoren hatten dazu geführt: Den Hintergrund bildete das chronologische Modell, das im Ostreich weithin akzeptiert war. Seit mehreren Jahrhunderten wurde hier ein Datierungsmodell benutzt, das darauf basierte, dass die Welt von der Schöpfung bis zur Wiederkehr Christi 6000 Jahre

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Für hilfreiche Hinweise danke ich Wolfram Brandes.

1 Für einen Überblick über die spätere byzantinische apokalyptische Literatur s. W. Brandes, Die apokalyptische Literatur, in: Ders./ F. Winkelmann (Hgg.), Quellen zur Geschichte des frühen Byzanz, 305–322, bes. 310ff.; P. Alexander, The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1985; D. Olster, Byzantine Apocalypses, in: B. McGinn (Hg.), The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism, Vol. 2, New York 1998, 48–73; K. Berger, Die griechische Daniel-Diegese. Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse, Leiden 1976; A. Pertusi, Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo. Significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in Oriente e in Occidente, Rom 1988.

2 Vgl. Brandes, Apokalyptische Literatur (wie Anm. 1), 312. Die Apokalypse wurde zunächst auf syrisch verfasst, doch schnell entstanden griechische und lateinische Übersetzungen, die mehrfach in modernen Editionen und Übersetzungen vorliegen.

3 Vgl. Brandes, Apokalyptische Literatur (wie Anm. 1), 306f.

4 Grundlegende Arbeiten dazu: W. Brandes, Anastasios ὁ δίκροπος. Endzeiterwartungen und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr., in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift 90 (1997), 24–63; P. Magdalino, The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda, in: R. Beaton / Ch. Roueché (Hgg.), The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol, Aldershot 1993, 3–34; M. Meier, Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr., Göttingen 2003; ders. Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr. – oder: Wie Osten und Westen beständig aneinander vorbei redeten, in: W. Brandes / F. Schmieder (Hgg.), Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen [= Millennium-Studien 16], Berlin/New York 2008, 41–73; S. Ashbrook Harvey, Remembering Pain: Syriac Historiography and the Separation of the Churches, in: Byzantion 58 (1988), 295–308; R. Landes, Lest the Millennium be fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography 100–800 CE, in: W. Verbeke / D. Verhelst / A. Welkenhuysen (Hgg.), The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages, Leuven 1988, 137–211.

bestehen würde. Christus, so hatten im 3. Jh. der Chronograph Sextus Julius Africanus und der Presbyter Hippolytus von Rom auf Grundlage biblischer Zitate berechnet, war im Weltjahr 5500 geboren – 500 Jahre nach der Inkarnation befand man sich demnach in den letzten Jahren der Weltgeschichte, die eigene Gegenwart konnte als unmittelbarer Übergang zur Endzeit verstanden werden. Die spätantiken Weltalterberechnungen stimmten nicht alle miteinander überein und fallen auch nicht exakt mit dem Jahr 500 unserer heutigen Zeitrechnung zusammen, aber die unterschiedlichen Versionen datieren das Weltjahr 6000 doch alle in einen relativ eng gefassten Zeitraum um 500 n. Chr. herum.<sup>5</sup>

In den 490er Jahren traten dann Ereignisse ein, die den Endzeitberechnungen Glaubwürdigkeit verliehen: Mehrere Quellen, wie die *Chronik* des Josua Stylites, berichten von Erdbeben, Hungersnöten, Seuchen und einer Heuschreckenplage.<sup>6</sup> Als dann im Jahr 502 n. Chr. die Perser in die Ostprovinzen einfielen, löste die Koinzidenz von berechnetem Weltende und seinem scheinbar offensichtlichen Eintreten in der Region eine starke apokalyptische Stimmung aus. Im Folgenden soll nun dargestellt werden, wie diese besondere endzeitliche Bedeutung des Perserkrieges in zeitgenössischen Texten motivisch gestaltet wurde.

Der Krieg, der bei Teilen der Bevölkerung so massive Endzeiterwartungen auslöste, spielte sich zwischen 502 und 506 n. Chr. ab – also genau in dem Zeitraum, in den das Weltjahr 6000 fiel. In Konstantinopel regierte zu diesem Zeitpunkt Anastasios I., er war im Jahr 491 Zeno auf den Kaiserthron gefolgt.<sup>7</sup> Die Situation bei seinem Antritt war alles andere als einfach: Zeno hatte in den 17 Jahren seiner Herrschaft mit drei ernstzunehmenden Usurpationen zu tun gehabt, in die auch mehrere Personen aus seiner Heimat Isaurien verwickelt waren. Die Isaurier, römische Bürger aus einer Bergregion in Kleinasien, hatten ab den 460er Jahren zunehmend Einfluss auf die Politik in der Hauptstadt nehmen können.<sup>8</sup> Als nach dem Tod Zenos kein weiterer Isaurier zum Kaiser gemacht wurde, kam es zum Bürgerkrieg, einer ersten, doch nicht der einzigen Belastungsprobe des neuen Kaisers. Erst 498 konnte Anastasios den Bürgerkrieg für erfolgreich beendet erklären. Die gesamte Regierungszeit von Anastasios, die 27 Jahre dauern sollte, war außerdem von heftigen religionspolitischen Auseinandersetzungen

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<sup>5</sup> Ausführlicher und mit weiterer Literatur zur Entstehung dieser Berechnungen: A. Hermann / F. Schmidtke / L. Koep: Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (RAC) 3 (1957), 30 – 60, s. v. Chronologie, v. a. 52 ff.; Landes (wie Anm. 4), bes. 138 – 149: er betont, dass im 3. Jahrhundert hinter dieser Berechnung die Intention stand, das Ende der Welt auf das 5. Jahrhundert zu verschieben, um aktuelle Endzeiterwartungen zu entkräften; Brandes, Anastasios (wie Anm. 4), 24 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. dazu Ashbrook Harvey (wie Anm. 4) mit weiteren Quellen; Aufzählung einiger Katastrophen bei Meier, Anastasios (wie Anm. 7), 389, Anm. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. zu Anastasios folgende Monographien: F. Haarer, Anastasios I. Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World, Cambridge 2006; M. Meier, Anastasios I. Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches, Stuttgart 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Ausführlichere Darstellungen zu den Isauriern und dem Bürgerkrieg bei K. Feld, Barbarische Bürger: Die Isaurier und das römische Reich, Berlin 2005; Meier (wie Anm. 7), 75 – 84.

gezeichnet, die sich um die Frage drehten, ob sich die göttliche und die menschliche Natur in Christus vereinigt hätten oder ob er aus zwei Naturen bestünde.<sup>9</sup> Der Konflikt war schon in den 430er Jahren aufgekommen; mehrere Konzilien, die zu seiner Beilegung einberufen wurden, hatten die Positionen jedoch eher verschärft. Besonders seitdem man sich auf dem Konzil von Chalkedon 451 auf eine Formel geeinigt hatte, die den Vertretern der Zweinaturenlehre entgegenkam, führten die theologischen Differenzen immer wieder auch zu gewaltsamen Auseinandersetzungen, wie etwa 457 in Alexandria, wo der chalcidonische Patriarch Proterius ermordet und durch Timotheus Ailouros, eine der Identifikationsfiguren der Gegner von Chalcedon, ersetzt wurde.

Anlass zur Besorgnis gab auch der Zustand des westlichen Teils des Imperium Romanum, das im 5. Jahrhundert viele Provinzen verloren hatte. Es wurde immer klarer, dass sich dort ein dauerhafter, und nicht nur vorübergehender, Bruch der politischen Verhältnisse ergeben hatte, es gab keinen römischen Kaiser mehr. Seit 493 herrschte der Gote Theoderich in Italien, die Beziehungen zwischen dem neuen Herrscher und dem oströmischen Kaisers neu zu definieren, war ebenfalls eine wichtige Aufgabe des Anastasios.<sup>10</sup>

Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Imperium Romanum und dem persischen Großreich, das seit dem 3. Jahrhundert von den Sasaniden regiert wurde, boten in der Spätantike immer wieder Anlass zu kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen, doch das 5. Jahrhundert war von einer langen friedlichen Phase geprägt.<sup>11</sup>

Dem Ausbruch des Krieges 502 gingen Verhandlungen über den Grenzverlauf im Osten voraus, sowie Geldforderungen des Perserkönigs Kabadas I., die Anastasios jedoch nicht erfüllte. Mit dem Einfall des persischen Heeres im August 502 hatte dennoch offenbar keiner gerechnet. Im Jahr 502 fielen die Perser unter Kabadas I. in die Provinzen Armenien, Mesopotamien und Osrhoene ein. Zunächst agierten sie dabei erfolgreich: Nach mehrmonatiger Belagerung konnten sie eine der wichtigsten Städte im Grenzgebiet, Amida, einnehmen. Unter den römischen Heermeistern erschwerten Streitigkeiten zunächst die Kriegsführung.<sup>12</sup> Erst nachdem Anastasios personelle Veränderungen vorgenommen hatte, gelang es den Römern, das Blatt zu wenden. Sie

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<sup>9</sup> Vgl. dazu ausführlich A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. Das Konzil von Chalkedon – Rezeption und Widerspruch (451 – 518)*, Freiburg 1991/2004; außerdem: H. Brennecke, *Chalcedonense und Henotikon. Bemerkungen zum Prozess der östlichen Rezeption der christologischen Formel von Chalkedon*, in: U. Heil / A. von Stockhausen / J. Ulrich (Hgg.), *Hanns Christof Brennecke. Ecclesia est in re publica. Studien zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte im Kontext des Imperium Romanum*, Berlin/New York 2007, 259 – 290.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Haarer (wie Anm. 7), 73 – 104; Meier, *Anastasios* (wie Anm. 7), 26 – 37; 92 – 102.

<sup>11</sup> Ausführliche Darstellungen des Krieges mit Vorgeschichte z. B. bei Haarer (wie Anm. 7), 29 – 72; Meier, *Anastasios* (wie Anm. 7), 174 – 222; eine Zusammenstellung der Quellen bei G. Greatrex / S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part II: AD 363 – 360. A Narrative Sourcebook*, London/New York 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Vgl. dazu A. Poguntke, *Handlungsspielräume (ost-)römischer Heermeister um 500 n. Chr.*, in: *Chlodwigs Welt*, hg. von M. Meier / St. Patzold, Stuttgart 2014, 397 – 422.

gewannen wieder die Oberhand und schlossen 506 einen Friedensvertrag mit den Persern ab.

Die Quellenlage für den Perserkrieg ist für spätantike Verhältnisse äußerst günstig.<sup>13</sup> Ausführliche zeitnahe Darstellungen liefern die *Chronik* des Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor und die im Folgenden ausführlicher behandelte *Chronik* des Josua Stylites, hinzu kommen Darstellungen aus dem späteren 6. Jh. u. a. von Prokop. Während die später entstandenen Quellen keine endzeitliche Deutung der Perser mehr überliefern, belegen alle zeitgenössischen Texte diesen Vorgang.

Die Hauptzeugen, die am ausführlichsten darauf eingehen, sind zwei sehr unterschiedliche Quellen, die beide in unmittelbarer zeitlicher Nähe zum Perserkrieg entstanden:

Der eine ist eine anonyme Apokalypse, das so genannte *Orakel von Baalbek*. Bei der zweiten Quelle handelt es sich um die bereits erwähnte *Chronik* des Josua Stylites, ein syrisches Geschichtswerk, das nur wenige Jahre nach dem *Orakel* in Edessa entstand. Beide Texte verbindet, dass sie sich intensiv damit auseinandersetzen, dass der Perserkrieg als Wendepunkt der Weltgeschichte gesehen wurde.

Zunächst zum *Orakel von Baalbek*.<sup>14</sup> Es handelt sich hierbei um einen apokalyptischen Text, der während des Perserkrieges entstand. Da der Text nur von den Erfolgen der Perser, jedoch nichts von der späteren Wende im Krieg zugunsten der Römer weiß, kann er auf 503/4 datiert werden.<sup>15</sup> Geographische Angaben lassen als Entstehungsort die Region um die Stadt Baalbek/ Heliopolis in der römischen Provinz Phoenice Libanensis vermuten.<sup>16</sup> Die Quelle ist ein seltener Beleg für die konkrete Erwartung des Endes in unmittelbarer zeitlicher Nähe: Der Autor schildert den regierenden Kaiser Anastasios als letzten irdischen Kaiser und datiert den Fall Konstantinopels vor das Jahr 510,<sup>17</sup> direkt nach der Herrschaft von Anastasios setzt ein unumkehrbarer Auflösungsprozess ein.<sup>18</sup>

Der fiktive Handlungsort der Schrift ist Rom in vorgeschichtlicher Zeit. Die Rahmenhandlung bildet eine Traumdeutung: Viele Richter in Rom hatten alle dieselbe Vision von neun Sonnen gehabt und bitten nun eine Sibylle, diesen Traum zu erklären.<sup>19</sup> Die Sibylle deutet die neun Sonnen als eine Abfolge von neun Generationen, auf die sie als Prophezeiung verkleidet die Ereignisse der Weltgeschichte bis zur Zweiten Parusie Christi verteilt, also ist z. B. die vierte Generation die Zeit von Augustus und der

**13** So auch Meier (2009), 176; eine gute Übersicht über die Quellen bei Greatrex/Lieu (wie Anm. 11), 62–81.

**14** Der griechische Text wurde mit englischer Übersetzung, Einleitung und Kommentar ediert von P. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek. The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress*, Washington 1967 [= *Dumberton Oak Studies* 10].

**15** Vgl. Alexander, *Oracle* (wie Anm. 14), 41 f.

**16** Vgl. Alexander, *Oracle* (wie Anm. 14), 43 ff.

**17** Eingebettet in den Bericht von der Gründung durch Constantin, s. *Baalbek-Orakel*, p. 14, 94 f.

**18** *Baalbek-Orakel*, p. 19, 173–22, 227.

**19** Vgl. zum Motiv der Sonnen E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, Halle 1898, 137 ff.; zur weiteren Deutung der Rahmenhandlung vgl. Alexander, *Oracle* (wie Anm. 14), 67–74.



Geburt Christi usw. Besonderes Gewicht liegt dann auf den römischen Kaisern ab Constantin, dessen Regierung in die sechste Generation fällt.<sup>20</sup>

Die siebte Generation beginnt mit Honorius und Arkadios; ab hier nehmen die Aufzeichnungen von Vorzeichen zu, genannt werden Erdbeben, Brände, Überschwemmungen und Kriege. Mit der achten Generation, die mit Leo beginnt und mit Anastasios endet, beginnen die „*birth pains of the world*“, <sup>21</sup> die die Endzeit einleiten, wie Jesus in seiner Rede von der Endzeit, die in den synoptischen Evangelien überliefert ist, den Jüngern prophezeit.<sup>22</sup> Bereits in der siebten Generation, während der Regierung von Theodosius II., treten die Perser das erste Mal in Aktion:

And the Persians will arise for a mighty war, and they will be undone by the Romans and will offer peace for forty years.<sup>23</sup>

Unter Theodosius II. war es zu den beiden einzigen nennenswerten Zwischenfällen zwischen Rom und den Persern gekommen, 421/22 und 440 gab es kleinere Invasionen der Perser, die jedoch beide schnell in Friedensverträge mündeten.<sup>24</sup> Von einem „mighty war“ kann also keine Rede sein – die Übertreibung ist wohl einerseits dem düsteren Grundcharakter einer Orakelschrift geschuldet, andererseits wird dadurch bereits die bedrohliche Rolle der Perser antizipiert, die jedoch hier noch besiegt werden können.

Entscheidend für die Charakterisierung der Perser ist dann besonders der Abschnitt, in dem der Autor seine eigene Gegenwart beschreibt: Sie markiert den entscheidenden Übergang zur Endzeit. Die Anmerkungen des Autors zur Regierung des Anastasios beschränken sich auf einige wenige Informationen. Sie schreiben Anastasios eine endzeitliche Funktion zu: Der Autor deutet den Namen „Anastasios“ als Hinweis auf den letzten Tag, also den Tag der Auferstehung.<sup>25</sup> Dann beschreibt er das Äußere des Kaisers und versieht ihn dabei mit Merkmalen zeitgenössischer Antichristvorstellungen.<sup>26</sup> Die einzige weitere Bemerkung zur Regierung des Anastasios schildert den Persereinfall:

And the Persians will arise in his times and will overturn with the sword (μαχαίρα) the cities of the East together with the multitudes of the soldiers of the Roman Empire.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Baalbek-Orakel, p. 14, 85 – 95.

<sup>21</sup> Baalbek-Orakel, p. 17, 136f.: ἄρχονται ὥδινες τοῦ κόσμου ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτοῦ.

<sup>22</sup> Die Rede ist bei Mt. 24 – 25, Mk 13 und Lk 21, 5 – 38 in ähnlichen Versionen überliefert. Das Motiv der Wehen bei Mt. 24, 8; Mk 13, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Baalbek-Orakel p. 15, 113f.: καὶ ἀναστήσονται οἱ Πέρσαι πρὸς κραταιὸν πόλεμον καὶ ὀλιθήσονται ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων καὶ δώσουσιν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ ἔτη τεσσαράκοντα.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. Haarer (wie Anm. 7), 48: „The [...] reign of Theodosius witnessed only two rather minor disturbances of this peace.“

<sup>25</sup> Baalbek-Orakel, p. 19, 164: ὅμοιοι δὲ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ.

<sup>26</sup> Vgl. dazu Brandes, Anastasios (wie Anm. 4), 57 – 62.

<sup>27</sup> Baalbek-Orakel, p. 19, 170 – 172: καὶ ἀναστήσονται ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτοῦ οἱ Πέρσαι καὶ καταστρέψουσι τὰς πόλεις τῆς Ἀνατολῆς μετὰ τοῦ πλῆθους τῶν στρατιωτῶν τῆς Ῥωμανίας μαχαίρα.



Diese Beschreibung des Perserangriffs spielt fast wörtlich auf eine Stelle aus der synoptischen Apokalypse in der Fassung des Lukasevangeliums an: Jesus gibt seinen Jüngern hier einen Ausblick auf die Ereignisse, die dem Kommen des Menschensohnes vorausgehen. In der Endphase dieses Endzeitszenarios – so prophezeit er – wird Jerusalem von einem Heer eingeschlossen, die Bewohner sollen fliehen: „Mit scharfem Schwert (στόματι μαχαίρης) wird man sie erschlagen, als Gefangene wird man sie in alle Länder verschleppen.“<sup>28</sup>

Der Verfasser hält also die Perser für das Endzeitvolk aus der synoptischen Apokalypse. Direkt im Anschluss beschreibt der Autor extremen Sittenverfall bei der Bevölkerung und den Anbruch der neunten und letzten Generation. Sie beginnt mit der Verkürzung der Tage.<sup>29</sup> Dann werden sich zwei Könige aus dem Osten und zwei aus Syrien erheben,

and the Assyrians will be countless like the sand of the sea, and they will take over many lands of the East unto Chalcedonia. And there will be much shedding of blood.<sup>30</sup>

Mit den Assyrem sind hier wohl ebenfalls die Perser gemeint. Auch in der Chronik des Pseudo-Josua werden sie als Assyrer bezeichnet (s.u.). Assur/Assyria ist auch bei Prokop ein relativ häufig benutzter Name für ihr Land. Der Zusatz, sie seien „zahllos wie der Sand am Meer“ ist eine Wendung, die in der Bibel mehrfach auftritt, auch im Zusammenhang mit Endzeitvölkern. Signifikant ist die Stelle in der Johannesapokalypse (Offb. 20, 8), wo damit die Endzeitvölker Gog und Magog charakterisiert werden.<sup>31</sup> Dass hier auf diese Stelle angespielt wird, legt der Kontext nahe. Die Perser treten also auch in dem Abschnitt des *Orakels von Baalbek* auf, in dem die Grenze zwischen historischer und eschatologischer Zeit bereits überschritten ist. Damit wird betont, dass sich mit dem Angriff der Perser wirklich ein Übergang zur Endzeit vollzogen hat. Er war das entscheidende Ereignis, das die Endzeit eingeleitet hat und dem Verfasser des Orakels die Überzeugung verlieh, dass die nächsten Jahre das Ende der Welt und die Rückkehr Christi mit sich bringen würden.

**28** Lk 21,24: καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἱερουσαλήμ ἔσται πατούμενη ὑπὸ ἔθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἔθνῶν.

**29** Motiv bei Mt. 24, 22; Mk. 13, 20.

**30** *Baalbek-Orakel*, p. 20,181f. καὶ ἔσονται οἱ Ἀσσύριοι ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης ἀναρίθμητοι καὶ παραλάβωσι πολλὰς χώρας τῆς Ἀνατολῆς ἕως Χαλκηδονίας. καὶ γενήσονται αἰματοχυσίαί πολλαί.

**31** Offb 20,8: καὶ ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσιν γωνίαις τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γῶγ καὶ Μαγῶγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, ὃν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης. (Er [= der Satan] wird ausziehen, um die Völker an den vier Enden der Erde, den Gog und den Magog, zu verführen und sie zusammenzuholen für den Kampf; sie sind so zahlreich wie die Sandkörner am Meer).

## Die Perser in der Chronik des Josua Stylites

Während das Orakel mitten im Perserkrieg entstand, belegt die *Chronik* des Josua Stylites, dass auch nach dem Sieg über die Perser noch nicht klar war, wie der Krieg eingeordnet werden sollte. Die syrische Chronik entstand kurz nach dem Perserkrieg, wohl Anfang 507. Sie wurde von einem unbekanntem Geistlichen aus Edessa verfasst und unter dem Pseudonym Josua Stylites überliefert.<sup>32</sup> Dank der Konzentration des Werkes auf die Jahre zwischen 494 und 506 liefert es ein sehr lebendiges Bild vom Alltag in den Ostprovinzen um 500.

Der Text belegt anschaulich, dass offenbar ein Großteil der Bevölkerung die Ereignisse als Endzeitereignisse wahrnahm,<sup>33</sup> wobei dem Angriff der Perser auch hier eine zentrale Rolle zukam. Doch mit dem Ende des Perserkriegs musste seine endzeitliche Deutung in Frage gestellt werden. Hauptanliegen des Autors war es daher, ein alternatives Deutungsangebot zu liefern: Die Ereignisse seien nicht im Kontext der Endzeit zu deuten, sondern als Strafen Gottes zu verstehen, die das Ziel hatten, die Bevölkerung zur Besserung zu führen.<sup>34</sup> Dass jedoch auch er selbst unter dem Eindruck der Katastrophen steht, kann er nicht verleugnen. Offensichtlich ist, dass er sich von Anfang an mit apokalyptischen Deutungsmustern auseinandersetzt, die er wohl zeitweise auch selbst geteilt hat.<sup>35</sup>

In den einleitenden Kapiteln führt er nun das von ihm propagierte Deutungskonzept ein, bereits hier wird die Rolle der Perser hervorgehoben: Nachdem Gott zuerst andere Strafen schickte, „veränderte [er] auch die Schläge, [...] und schlug uns durch die Hände des Assyrsers, der genannt wird ‚Rute des Zorns‘.“<sup>36</sup> Josua nennt die Perser hier nun ebenfalls Assyrser. Er charakterisiert sie mit einem Zitat aus dem alttestamentarischen Prophetenbuch Jesaja:

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**32** Moderne Übersetzungen von Andreas Luther, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites*, Berlin/New York 1997 und Trombley/Watts, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, Liverpool 2000 [= *Translated Texts for Historians* Vol. 32]. Beide Arbeiten mit Einführung und Kommentar zu Autor, Werk und Überlieferung. Im Folgenden nach Luther zitiert.

**33** Vgl. dazu Brandes, *Anastasios* (wie Anm. 4), 39–41 und M. van Esbroeck, *Les signes des temps dans la littérature syriaque*, in: *Revue de l'Institut Catholique de Paris* 39 (1991), 113–149.

**34** Zu den konkurrierenden Deutungen, die in der Chronik angesprochen werden vgl. auch E. Watts, *Interpreting Catastrophe: Disasters in the Works of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Socrates Scholasticus, Philostorgius, and Timothy Aelurus*, in: *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009), 79–98; bes. 79–83 und 97 f.; der aber die Bedeutung der endzeitlichen Wahrnehmung unterschätzt.

**35** *Jos. Styl.* 3, p. 35 Luther: „Das sagen wir aber unserem Verstande gemäß: daß aufgrund der Vielzahl unserer Sünden häufig Peinigungen über uns kamen. Wenn aber der Schutz Gottes nicht die Welt festhielte, daß sie nicht zugrunde geht, wäre vielleicht [schon] das Leben aller Menschen zu Ende. In welchen Zeiten nämlich haben sich in [derartiger] Heftigkeit solche Drangsale ereignet, wenn nicht in denen, siehe, in welchen wir uns befinden?“

Brandes, *Anastasios* (wie Anm. 4), 40f. hält es mit van Esbroeck (wie Anm. 33), 121 für möglich, dass eine ältere Version der Chronik, die eine apokalyptische Auffassung teilte, nach dem Ende des Krieges und dem Verstreichen des Weltjahrs 6000 überarbeitet wurde.

**36** *Jos. Styl.* 5 p. 36 Luther.

Weh Assur, dem Stock meines Zorns! Es ist der Knüppel in meiner wütenden Hand. Gegen ein ruchloses Volk schicke ich ihn, auf die Nation, der ich zürne, lasse ich ihn los, damit er Beute erbeutet und raubt wie ein Räuber, sie zertritt wie den Staub auf der Straßen. Doch Assur stellt es sich nicht so vor, sein Herz plant anders, es hat nur Vernichtung im Sinn, die Ausrottung nicht weniger Völker.<sup>37</sup>

Ein wichtiger Aspekt ist aber auch, dass im Buch Jesaja bereits die Vernichtung der Assyrer angekündigt ist:

Fürchte dich nicht, mein Volk [...], vor Assur, das doch mit dem Stock schlägt [...]. Nur noch ganz kurze Zeit, dann wird mein grimmiger Zorn es vernichten.<sup>38</sup>

Pseudo-Josua fasst die Perser also von Anfang an als das Volk aus dem Buch Jesaja auf, das als Züchtigung geschickt werden soll, aber noch nicht das Ende signalisiert, da Gott es zuvor wieder vernichten wird. Auch die Perser sind ein „böses Volk“, das keine Gnade kennt, willkürlich vernichtet und sich an Bosheit erfreut;<sup>39</sup> auch sie sind ein Werkzeug göttlichen Zorns, jedoch nur für eine gewisse Zeit.

Innerhalb des Textes kommt jedoch immer wieder das ältere Verständnis von den Persern durch, das ihren Angriff, genau wie im *Orakel von Baalbek*, als Beginn der Endzeit gedeutet hatte.

Zunächst referiert der Autor in drei größeren Abschnitten die Vorgeschichte des Perserkrieges (§§ 7–24), dann die Ereignisse in der Region von 494 bis 502 (§§ 25–46a) und dann den Perserkrieg (§§ 46b-100).<sup>40</sup> Die Manifestationen des göttlichen Zorns sind ebenfalls in drei Phasen eingeteilt, in denen er sich jeweils steigert: Zunächst geht es der Region und den Menschen äußerlich gut, doch die Seelen der Menschen sind durch Sünden krank (§§ 26–37). Worum es sich bei diesen Vergehen handelt, führt der Autor nur teilweise aus, explizit brandmarkt er die Wiederaufnahme eines heidnischen Festes.<sup>41</sup> Die Jahre bis 500 sind von einer allmählichen Steigerung von Zeichen geprägt, wie z. B. einem Kometen, einer Sonnenfinsternis und Erdbeben, die aber keine Besserung bewirken: Das heidnische Fest wird immer ausschweifender gefeiert. Im Jahr 500 erreichen die Strafen Gottes eine neue Qualität: Eine verheerende Heuschre-

<sup>37</sup> Jes 10, 5–7.

<sup>38</sup> Jes 10, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Jos. Styl. 5 p. 37 Luther: Die Willkür des bösen Volkes offenbart sich nämlich besonders darin, daß es keine Gnade denen gegenüber walten ließ, die ihnen ausgeliefert waren. Gewöhnlich zeigte es nämlich seinen Willen und freute sich an der Bosheit der Menschen, so wie es auch der Prophet dafür verflucht und sozusagen aus dem Munde des Herrn spricht (denn er weissagte ja auch über die Zerstörung Babylons): ‚Ich bin erzürnt über mein Volk, das mein Erbe befleckt hat, und ich habe sie in deine Hände ausgeliefert, und du hast ihnen keine Gnade erwiesen.‘ [= Jes 47,9] Auch uns nun behandelten sie schlecht in ihrer Willkür [ohne] Gnade, wie sie es gewohnt waren [...].

<sup>40</sup> Zur Einteilung vgl. Trombley/Watt, xii.

<sup>41</sup> Jos. Styl. 46 p. 63 Luther: Ich will nicht sagen, daß es diese Sünde allein [= das Fest] war, die in unserer Stadt begangen wurde. Vielfältig waren nämlich die Sünden, die im geheimen und in der Öffentlichkeit getan wurden.

ckenplage sucht die Gegend heim, sie führt zum Ernteausfall und damit zu Hungersnot und Krankheit (§§ 38–46). Obgleich das Fest in diesem Jahr von Kaiser Anastasios verboten wird, ist bei den Menschen noch keine Einsicht spürbar, da sie nicht aus freiem Willen verzichtet haben: Gott gewährt eine kurze Atempause und setzt dann seine Bestrafungen fort. Mit dem Angriff der Perser erreichen sie nun die dritte und höchste Stufe (§§ 47 ff.):

Im August 502 jagt ein nächtliches Nordlicht der Bevölkerung große Angst ein. Pseudo-Josua schließt sich mit ein, wenn er sagt „Wir glaubten, daß durch die Glut des Feuers die ganze Erde in einer Nacht zerstört werden würde“.<sup>42</sup> Am selben Tag sammelt sich das „gesamte Heer der Perser“, und fällt mit dem Heer der Hunnen in das römische Grenzland ein und ein Erdbeben vernichtet gleichzeitig mehrere Städte.

In welchem Maß dieser Angriff von den Betroffenen tatsächlich als apokalyptisches Ereignis wahrgenommen wurde, belegt das Kapitel, das auf den Bericht des Persereinfalls folgt:

[...] Auch auf das Land Mesopotamien, in dem wir wohnen, kamen [...] große Schmerzen, so daß die Dinge, die unser Herr Christus in seinem Evangelium in bezug auf Jerusalem vorherbestimmte und in der Tat erfüllte, und außerdem die Dinge, die über das Ende dieser Welt gesagt sind, auch zu dem passen können, was uns in dieser Zeit zugestoßen ist. Nachdem sich nämlich hier und dort die Beben ereignet hatten, [...] und [...] Hungersnöte und Seuchen [...] sowie Furcht und Schrecken [...] und große Zeichen vom Himmel gesehen worden waren, erhob sich Volk gegen Volk und Königreich gegen Königreich, und wir fielen durch die Schneide des Schwertes und wurden als Gefangene in alle Länder geführt. Unser Land wurde von fremden Völkern zertreten, so daß wir zu sagen gewagt hätten, daß das Ende der Welt gekommen sei (denn viele glaubten und redeten auch so), hätten wir nicht die Worte unseres Herrn vor Augen gehabt, der da spricht: „Wenn ihr die Kriege vernehmt und die Wirren, fürchtet euch nicht. Diese Dinge werden nämlich vorher geschehen. Noch ist aber das Ende nicht gekommen“.<sup>43</sup> Wir aber hatten erkannt, daß es nicht auf der ganzen Welt diesen Krieg gab. Damit erinnerten wir uns auch an die Worte des heiligen Paulus, [...] daß es unmöglich ist, daß das Ende kommt, bevor der lügnerische Messias auftritt.“<sup>44</sup> Durch diese Worte [...] erkannten wir, daß sich diese Dinge nicht aufgrund des Weltendes ereigneten, sondern zum Zwecke unserer Züchtigung geschahen, denn unsere Sünden wogen schwer.<sup>45</sup>

Dies belegt in seltener Deutlichkeit, dass zahlreiche Zeitgenossen des Autors die Naturkatastrophen, besonders in Verbindung mit dem Perserkrieg als Zeichen für den Anbruch der Endzeit wahrgenommen haben. Die Kombination von Erdbeben, Hungersnöten, Seuchen, Himmelszeichen und einem alles vernichtenden Volk entspricht dabei genau der Prophezeiung von Jesus in der synoptischen Apokalypse.<sup>46</sup> Mit der besonderen Nähe zur Version des Lukasevangeliums referiert der Verfasser hier eine Interpretation die exakt der Position des *Orakels von Baalbek* entspricht (s. o.).

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<sup>42</sup> Jos. Styl. 47 p. 63 Luther.

<sup>43</sup> Lk. 21, 9.

<sup>44</sup> II Thess 2, 1–3.

<sup>45</sup> Jos. Styl. 49 p. 64f. Luther.

<sup>46</sup> Alle Elemente bei Lk 21, 10f.

Auch eine weitere – wohl auf einem zeitgenössischen Bericht basierende – Quelle belegt die unmittelbare Endzeiterwartung der Bevölkerung: Eine Anekdote in der *Chronik* des Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor illustriert möglicherweise ebenfalls konkrete Auswirkungen auf das Verhalten der Betroffenen.<sup>47</sup> In dieser syrischen Sammlung mehrerer Schriften, die um 568/9 n. Chr. erstellt wurde, befindet sich auch eine ausführliche Darstellung der Belagerung und Eroberung von Amida:<sup>48</sup> Während der Belagerung ermahnt der Bischof Johannes von Amida die Reichen, sie sollten in „einer Zeit der Hungersnot, dem Kommen der Araber und der Seuche“, kurz, in dieser „Zeit der Not“ kein Getreide mehr horten, sondern es an Arme verschenken oder verkaufen, um es nicht dem Feind überlassen zu müssen. Dass der Bischof mit seinem Anliegen erfolgreich war („*and so it happened*“) zeigt wohl, dass er auf offene Ohren stieß – ein Hinweis dafür, dass sich die Endzeiterwartung tatsächlich bis ins konkrete Handeln der Bevölkerung niederschlug. Die Erscheinung des Engels Gabriel, der dem Bischof gleich anschließend die Ankunft des Feindes prophezeit, also des Engels, der auch bei den Endzeitprophezeiungen im Buch Daniel beteiligt ist, verweist ebenfalls auf den endzeitlichen Charakter dieser Textstelle.

Angesichts einer so akuten Panikstimmung scheint die Argumentation von Josua gegen die apokalyptische Deutung des Perserangriffs dieser Stelle schwach: Er stellt der weit verbreiteten Interpretation der Ereignisse als Realisierung der synoptischen Apokalypse einfach das Zitat Lk 21,9 entgegen, dass Kriege noch nicht zwangsläufig das Ende bedeuten, obgleich er selbst zugibt, dass alle Ereignisse, die ebendort als Zeichen der Endzeit aufgezählt werden, eingetreten sind.

Sein anderes Argument, die Endzeit könne noch nicht gekommen sein, weil der Antichrist noch nicht in Erscheinung getreten sei, ist wenig überzeugend, wenn man bedenkt, dass z. B. in den *Plerophorien* des Johannes Rufus, einer Sammlung von hagiographischen Anekdoten aus miaphysitischen Kreisen, gleich mehrere Personen als Antichrist bezeichnet werden bzw. seine Ankunft bereits in *vaticinia ex eventu* schon für das 5. Jahrhundert vorausgesagt wurde;<sup>49</sup> im *Orakel von Baalbek* wurde ja sogar

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**47** Die neueste Übersetzung: G. Greatrex / R. Phenix / C. Horn, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor. Church and War in Late Antiquity*, Liverpool 2011 [= *Translated Texts for Historians* Vol. 55], mit ausführlicher Einleitung zu den verschiedenen Teilen und ihrer Überlieferung. Im Folgenden nach dieser Übersetzung zitiert. Zur Herkunft des Abschnitts über Anastasios und die Belagerung Amidas s. *ibid.* 54 f.

**48** Greatrex/Phenix/Horn p. 236 f.: He warned and admonished the wealthy of the city, saying that in a time of famine and [with] the coming of the Arabs and pestilence they should not hoard grain in [such] a time of distress but sell [it] and give [it] to the needy, lest in hoarding it they store it for the enemies, in accordance with the passage in Scripture, and so it happened. The angel Gabriel appeared to him standing beside the altar table and foretold to him the arrival of the enemy, and [said] that he would be carried off as a righteous man ahead of the city in order that they repent and be spared the wrath [of God].

**49** Jean Rufus, évêque de Maïouma, *Plerophories, Témoignages et révélations contre le Concile de Chalcedoine*, ed./ tr. F. Nau, *Patrologia Orientalis* 8 (1912), 5–208, vgl. dazu Ashbrook Harvey (wie Anm. 4), 301.

der Kaiser Anastasios mit dem Antichrist verglichen (s.o.). Die Worte des heiligen Paulus waren es demnach wohl eher nicht, die die Bevölkerung zur Erkenntnis geführt hatten, das Ende stehe doch noch nicht direkt bevor, vielmehr war es wohl die Erfahrung, dass der Krieg in einen Friedensvertrag gemündet war, das Weltende aber ausblieb. Dies klingt auch bei Josua an, als er berichtet: „Wir aber hatten erkannt, daß es nicht auf der ganzen Welt diesen Krieg gab.“<sup>50</sup>

Vielversprechender war wohl sein Versuch, die Perser nicht als das Volk darzustellen, das unumkehrbar die Endzeit bringt, sondern als die Assyrer aus dem Buch Jesaja, die ebenfalls eschatologische Funktionen ausüben, jedoch noch im Vorfeld der eigentlichen Endzeit agieren. Für seinen Ansatz kann er anführen, dass im Buch Jesaja das Volk Israel u. a. wegen der Ausübung heidnischer Bräuche geächtet werden soll,<sup>51</sup> wie die Bevölkerung seiner Region. Außerdem prophezeit der Herr im Buch Jesaja nur eine kurze Zeit der Drangsal, dann wird er selber Assur vernichten, was dem Ereignisverlauf des Perserkriegs etwa entsprechen kann.

Mit dem Ende des Perserkrieges und dem Verstreichen der 6000 Jahre kommt in den Quellen häufiger die Deutung von Katastrophen als Gottesstrafe auf,<sup>52</sup> doch auch das 6. Jahrhundert ist – wie besonders die Untersuchung zur Herrschaft Justinians von Meier<sup>53</sup> gezeigt hat – regelmäßig von apokalyptischen Stimmungen geprägt, die allerdings nicht mehr so zielgerichtet an ein bestimmtes Datum gebunden sind, sondern eher diffus auftreten.

Die Texte, die die Endzeitstimmung im 5. Jahrhundert dokumentieren, arbeiten noch mit wesentlich weniger ausdifferenzierten Motivkomplexen zur Beschreibung der Endzeitszenarien als es bei den eingangs erwähnten späteren apokalyptischen Texten der Fall ist, in denen die Endzeitvölker etwa durch die Kombination mit Motiven von außerbiblischer Literatur wie dem Alexanderroman viel umfangreicher beschrieben werden.<sup>54</sup> Die älteren Texte orientieren sich an den prophetischen Schriften, häufig an Daniel, im Fall von Josua Stylites Jesaja, außerdem an der synoptischen Apokalypse und den Apostelbriefen.

Die hier untersuchten Texte aus dem ausgehenden 5. Jahrhundert beschäftigen sich zwar, wie Pseudo-Methodius zwei Jahrhunderte später, auch besonders mit dem Einfall eines fremden Volkes, doch sieht die Verarbeitung noch anders aus. Dennoch erfüllen die Perser einige Kriterien eines „Endzeitvolkes“: Sie wurden als Realisierung verschiedener Endzeitvölker aus der Bibel, den Assyrern, Gog und Magog und den nicht weiter bezeichneten fremden Völkern aus der synoptischen Apokalypse, wahrgenommen. Ihr Angriff wurde als ultimatives Zeichen der Endzeit interpretiert, das

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<sup>50</sup> Jos. Styl. 49 p. 65 Luther.

<sup>51</sup> Vgl. z. B. Jes 1, 11 – 16: Verurteilung von Schlachtopfern und Festen; Jes 1, 29: Kritik an der Verehrung von Eichen und heiligen Hainen; Götzenverehrung (passim).

<sup>52</sup> Vgl. Ashbrook Harvey (wie Anm. 4), 302 mit Quellen und Literatur.

<sup>53</sup> Meier, Das andere Zeitalter Justinians (wie Anm. 4).

<sup>54</sup> Vgl. einführend Brandes, Apokalyptische Literatur (wie Anm. 1), 310f.

*Orakel von Baalbek* und Josua belegen eindeutig, dass es sich nicht mehr um ein bloßes Vorzeichen gehandelt haben sollte, sondern um das Ereignis, das nach einer Reihe bereits vorausgehender Zeichen die unumkehrbare Endzeit eingeleitet hat. Dass der Perserkrieg nicht mit dem gleichen Aufwand verarbeitet wurde wie die arabischen Eroberungen, liegt natürlich v. a. auch daran, dass er relativ kurz war und nicht im Entferntesten eine vergleichbare Bedrohung darstellte.

Für die Analyse der apokalyptischen Wahrnehmung dieser Jahre in Ostrom hat der Perserkrieg aber einen ganz besonderen Beitrag geleistet: Zwei der wichtigsten Quellen, die heute noch erhalten sind, wurden offenbar aus dem Grund abgefasst, ihn literarisch zu verarbeiten. Daher liegt die eigentliche Bedeutung der Wahrnehmung der Perser als Endzeitvolk weniger in der Originalität ihrer Beschreibung, sondern vielmehr darin, dass sie in dem Moment, da sie angriffen als eindeutiger Beweis für den Anbruch der Endzeit gedeutet wurden und damit die Abfassung von zwei sehr bedeutenden Quellen zur apokalyptischen Stimmung im Osten inspirierten. Ohne das *Orakel von Baalbek* und die *Chronik* des Josua Stylites wäre die Quellsituation für die Endzeiterwartungen um 500 wesentlich schlechter.

Lutz Greisiger

# Opening the Gates of the North in 627: War, Anti-Byzantine Sentiment and Apocalyptic Expectancy in the Near East Prior to the Arab Invasion

Since the time of the Babylonian Exile the epitome of the “Peoples of the Apocalypse” has been the obscure designation *Gog & Magog*. The Prophet Ezekiel had warned his fellow expatriates that “Gog in the” far northern “land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal,” head of countless gruesome warriors inimical to God and His chosen people would come at Israel and inflict unprecedented horrors upon them.<sup>1</sup> Already in pre-exilic times his colleague Jeremiah had presaged that an anonymous force described as “all the families of the kingdoms of the north” would conquer the Holy City, an incursion represented in the image of a “boiling bowl” tilted from the north, that he had seen in a divinely inspired vision.<sup>2</sup> Thus the mythical peoples came to be one of the major eschatological forces of evil in all traditions rooted in the Biblical soil.<sup>3</sup>

When opening any introduction to the history of the *Alexander Romance* and related narratives one inevitably comes across the story of the Macedonian’s erection of an iron wall, rampart or gate(s) in some northern mountains by which means he is said to have excluded the “Unclean Nations”, a.k.a. *Gog & Magog*, from the civilized world. One day, at the last stages of history, all these narratives agree, those peoples would manage to burst through the Gates of the North and fulfil their divinely ordained destructive mission. Thus this story, embedded in a text originating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE as it is, appears to be an integral part of the Alexander-tradition(s).<sup>4</sup> – However, that has not always been so.

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1 Ez 38–39.

2 Jer 1,13–15.

3 See also the references to *Magog* in the genealogical tables of *Gen* 10,2 and *1 Chr* 1,5. More important here are the two more passages in *LXX* where the name *Gog* occurs in prophetic contexts: in *Num* 24,7 (the prophecy of Balaam, predicting Israel’s surpassing of *Gog*, instead of *Agag*) and in *Amos* 7,1 (reading, instead of *gizzei ha-melekh*, “mowings of the king”, *Gog ha-melekh*, “King Gog” who is thus said to be coming at the country, leading [hordes like] locust swarms; cf. Bøe: *Gog and Magog* (cf. fn. 7), pp. 65–71. In *Num* 24,7 also the *Samaritan Pentateuch* reads *Gog* instead of *Agag*: *Pentateuchus Samaritanus*, ed. [Julius] H[einrich] Petermann, fasc. 4: *Numeri*, Berolini 1885, p. 429, l. 7; and so do a number of ancient Greek and Syriac translations (Aquilas, Symmachus, Theodotion, *Syro-Hexapla*): *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt; sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta*, vol. 1: *Genesis – Esther*, ed. Fridericus (= Frederick) Field, Oxonii 1875, pp. 255–256; cf. Bøe: *Gog and Magog* (cf. fn. 7), pp. 50–60.

4 See e.g. Friedrich Pfister: *Alexander der Große in den Offenbarungen der Griechen, Juden, Mohamedaner und Christen* (Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Schriften der Sektion für



In his *Jewish War* Josephus relates that the Alans, a Scythian people residing at the coasts of Lake Maeotis (*Μαιώτις*, the Sea of Azov), in the time of Vespasian (69–79) broke through iron gates that Alexander the Great (336–323 BCE) had once erected as a barrier in the nearby mountains.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, at discussing the ethnographic scheme of Genesis 10, he incidentally notes that *Scythians* was the name by which the Greeks referred to the descendants of Magog, son of Japhet.<sup>6</sup> Neither are these passages indicative of any farther-reaching concern with the Scythians' identity as the peoples beyond Alexander's gates nor with their 'Magogian' descent; still less does the sober historian seem to be particularly interested in, or even aware of, the eschatological implications of the latter: (Gog &)Magog do not appear as a collective capable of any actions beyond human, intra-historical boundaries. The same applies to all other Jewish texts from the Second-Temple period: Gog & Magog and the construction of Alexander's gates (if the latter is mentioned at all) appear in historical, ethno- and geographical contexts and their eschatological significance (as assigned to them by no less an authority than the Biblical prophets after all) is virtually nowhere elaborated on.<sup>7</sup>

The Christian tradition on its part, while widely occupied with that eschatological role, contained a rather effective impediment to all too ready an identification of Gog & Magog with any particular *ethnos*: the *Revelation* of St. John prophesied that Satan would "go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners (*γῶνιαι*) of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."<sup>8</sup> So, those barbarian hordes, rather than being found in any particular region or direction, in fact inhabited the fringes of the world *all around*, or, as Augustine (354–430) has it, were even "spread over the

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Altertumswissenschaft 3), Berlin 1956 (= in: idem: *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman* [Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 61]. Meisenheim am Glan 1976, pp. 301–347), pp. 37–40; 43–44, and the most recent comparative overview by Richard Stoneman: *Alexander the Great. A Life in Legend*. New Haven, CT, 2008, pp. 170–185. The classic and still very useful study remains Andrew Runni Anderson: *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Monographs of the Medieval Academy of America, Bd. 5). Cambridge, MA, 1932.

<sup>5</sup> Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 7,7,4; the association of Gog & Magog with the regions beyond Lake Maeotis is also attested by Jerome, who in turn polemicizes against, most likely, Apollinaris of Laodicea: Wolfram Kinzig: "Jewish and 'Judaizing' Eschatologies in Jerome," in: *Jewish Culture and Society under the Christian Roman Empire*, ed. by Richard Kalmin and Seth Schwartz (Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 3), Leuven 2003, pp. 409–429, there: 415; 419.

<sup>6</sup> Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 1,122, cf. *Gen* 10,2.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik: "Gog and Magog," in: *EJ*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 7, pp. 683–684 and in particular the list of references in Sverre Bøe: *Gog and Magog. Ezekiel 38–39 as Pre-Text for Revelation 19,17–21 and 20,7–10* (WUNT, Reihe 2, 135), Tübingen 2001, pp. 1–2; see also Emeri [J.] van Donzel, Andrea Schmidt: *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources. Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall* (Brill's Inner Asian library 22), Leiden/Boston 2010, pp. 6–9.

<sup>8</sup> Rev 20,8.

whole earth,” and represented the “city of the devil” that in the endtime would attack the “city of Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

His contemporary Jerome (347–420), although indeed thinking of Gog & Magog as a well-defined ethnic group, testifying to an equation (like Josephus’s) of the Scythians with them in one of his writings<sup>10</sup> and declaring the Huns to be the barred peoples in another,<sup>11</sup> nevertheless eschewed identifying Gog & Magog with those very barred peoples – which only could have given Alexander’s wall an eschatological significance.<sup>12</sup> Theodoret of Cyrrihus (393–ca. 460) on the other hand indeed assumed that Gog belonged to the Scythians but at the same time mitigated Ezekiel’s prophecy by arguing that the invasion foreseen by him had already taken place in the past and was certainly not to be expected for the eschatological future.<sup>13</sup>

In 434 St. Proclus, patriarch of Constantinople (434–447), delivered a sermon on occasion of a recently averted Hunnic attack on the city. He quoted God’s announcement of His destruction of Gog & Magog in Ezekiel 38 which he, according to the Church historians Socrates and Theodoret, declared to have been fulfilled in the Hunnic leader Rua’s (precursor of Attila [434–453]) death, struck by lightning, and the extinction of his troops by a plague and fire from heaven.<sup>14</sup> Here we find a people identified as Gog & Magog and an eschatological interpretation of their actions and fate – Alexander’s rampart, however, is nowhere in sight.<sup>15</sup>

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9 Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 20,11, by van Donzel/Schmidt (cf. fn. 7), p. 13, n. 27 wrongly considered “an exception”.

10 Jerome: *In Ez. 38 – Commentariorum in Hiezechielem libri XIV*, ed. Franciscus [= François] Glorie (CCSL 75) Turnholti 1964, p. 525; he ascribes this equation to “Judaei et nostri judaizantes”.

11 Jerome: *Ep.* 77,8; see also Kinzig: “Jewish and ‘Judaizing’ Eschatologies” (cf. fn. 5, *ibid.*).

12 Cp. the somewhat garbled representation of Jerome’s statements in van Donzel/Schmidt (cf. fn. 7), p. 13, with nn. 25–26.

13 Theodoret: *Comm. in Ez.*, in: MPG 81, 1217. Since he explicitly rejects “Ἰουδαϊκοὶ μύθοι” about the future coming of Gog & Magog this passage, not unlike Jerome’s quoted above (cf. fn. 10), may be indicative of such eschatological expectations within the more popular, non-intellectual spheres of Byzantine society.

14 Cf. E[dward] A[rthur] Thompson: *The Huns* (The Peoples of Europe), Oxford 1999 (earlier eds. Oxford 1996; *A history of Attila and the Huns*, Oxford 1948; 1975) pp. 79–81; Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen: *The World of the Huns. Studies in their History and Culture*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1973, pp. 91–93; Wolfram Brandes: “Gog, Magog und die Hunnen: Anmerkungen zur eschatologischen ‚Ethnographie‘ der Völkerwanderungszeit,” in: *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100*, ed. Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner and Richard Payne, Farnham/Burlington, VT 2012, pp. 477–498.

15 Similarly ‘incomplete’ are references in other patristic works – see Commodian’s *Carmen de duobus populis* (*Carmen apologeticum*) 807 (800) ff., in: *Commodiani Carmina*, ed. Iosephus (= Joseph) Martin (CCSL 128), Turnholti 1960, pp. 102 ff. (the invasion of the Goths as an eschatological event but no mention of Gog & Magog nor Alexander’s wall); Ambrose: *De fide* 16,137–8, in: *De fide [ad Gratianum] – Über den Glauben [an Gratian]*, ed., transl. Christoph Marksches (Fontes Christiani 47), 3 vols., Turnhout 2005, vol. 2, pp. 346–9 (equation of the Goths with Gog, as verbatim quoted and rejected by Jerome [cf. fn. 10]), no reference to Alexander nor a wall). Quodvultdeus: *Dimidium temporis in signis Antichristi* 22, in *Livre des promesses et des prédictions de Dieu*, ed., transl. René

In his commentary on *Revelation*, written, according to Eugenia Constantinou, in 611, Andrew of Caesarea associates *Revelation* 16,12 with Gog & Magog and the Antichrist (from the tribe of Dan) and locates both evil forces in the East, beyond the Euphrates, in Scythia and Persia – an interpretation most probably prompted by the Persian conquests since 603. In his interpretation of *Revelation* 20, 7–8, however, he rejects all equations of Gog & Magog with any particular people(s) while stressing the eschatological, as opposed to a historical, meaning of the verses. Yet again the Gates of the North are not mentioned at all.<sup>16</sup>

In short, there are numerous references to Alexander's erection of the Gates of the North, to Gog & Magog and their presumptive ethnic identity (Sythians, Alans, Huns, Goths etc.<sup>17</sup>) as well as to their future, eschatological role. However, a combination of these three elements, a narrative that would 1) identify Gog & Magog with a particular ethnic group and 2) with the peoples excluded by Alexander's gates and 3) would do so in view of the eschatological depredation foreseen by Ezekiel (and / or Jeremiah), appears nowhere in Late Antique Jewish and Christian literatures.<sup>18</sup>

It was only in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and only beyond the Greek-Aramaic cultural divide, that such a combination came into existence. Syriac-speaking Christians had barely heard of the *Revelation of St John*, with its location of Gog & Magog in the four corners of the world, before the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a text that even then never received the credit of a

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Braun (Sources Chrétiennes 101–102), 2 vols., Paris 1964, vol. 2, pp. 634–635 (Gog & Magog = Goths and Moors or Getae and Massagetae, no mention of Alexander nor a wall); *Chronicon Paschale*, ed., transl. Ludovicus Dindorfius (= Ludwig Dindorf), Bonnæ 1832, vol. 1, p. 46, vol. 2, p. 98 = in: MPG 92, col. 117–118, 367–368 (Magog, son of Japhet, progenitor of the Aquitanians, others say of the Goths, Sarmatians and Scythians; no mention of Alexander nor a wall). For the Rabbinic traditions about Gog & Magog see Johann Maier: "Zu ethnographisch-geographischen Überlieferungen über Jafetiten (Gen 10,2–4) im rabbinischen Judentum," in idem: *Studien zur jüdischen Bibel und ihrer Geschichte* (Studia Judaica 28), Berlin 2004, pp. 177–218.

**16** Andrew of Caesarea: *Comm. in Apocalypsin* 51; 63, ed. Josef Schmid: *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*. vol. 1: *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia* (Münchener theologische Studien, Ergänzungsband 1), 2 vols., München 1955, pp. 173–174, 221–227; transl. Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou: *Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse in the ancient Church of the East: Studies and Translation*, Ph. diss., Quebec 2008, vol. 2, pp. 168; 206–209. For the dating of the text see *ibid.*, pp. 4–10.

**17** For an overview of the many attempts at an ethnographic identification of Gog & Magog in late antique literatures also see Anderson: *Alexander's Gate* (cf. fn. 4), pp. 8–14.

**18** Frequently it has been assumed that a fusion of these three elements must in fact have been known – see e.g. Anderson: *Alexander's Gate* (cf. n. 4), p. 19; Pfister: *Alexander der Große* (cf. n. 4), p. 30; Hannes Möhring: *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit. Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkung einer tausendjährigen Weissagung* (Mittelalter-Forschungen 3), Stuttgart 2000, p. 44. This assumption, however, also has been rejected from as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on – see e.g. Arturo Graf: *Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del Medio Evo*, vol. 2: *Con un'appendice sulla leggenda di Gog e Magog*, Torino 1883, p. 517–524; Barry Phillips: "[review of] A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate...*," in: *Speculum* 8 (1933) p. 84–85; Axel Klopprogge: *Ursprung und Ausprägung des abendländischen Mongolenbildes im 13. Jahrhundert. Ein Versuch zur Ideengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Asiatische Forschungen 122), Wiesbaden 1993, pp. 39–50.



the main vehicle for the insertion of Alexander into the sacred history of the Christian [and, it should be added: to some degree also of the Islamic and Jewish] world[s].”<sup>25</sup> This tale then is one of the many traditions, widely neglected by historians, that the Greek and Latin speaking Christian, as well as the Muslim and, although to a lesser degree, even the Jewish world, owe to Syriac Christianity. – It is the question as to what the historical circumstances and what the purposes were that motivated the emergence of this Syriac story, which the remaining pages of this essay are being devoted to.

The Byzantine world of the first decades of the seventh century was marked by a ubiquitous sense of crisis. In 602 the Constantinopolitan throne had been seized by the centurion Phocas, killing his predecessor Maurice (539–602) and his sons. The usurper’s reign had all the features of an utter tyranny that could only be overcome by another usurpation, committed in 610 by Heraclius, son of the exarch of Carthage, Heraclius the elder.<sup>26</sup>

In the meantime the Persian-Sasanid archenemy in the person of the *šāhān-šāh* Xusrō II. Parwēz (“Victor,” 590 – 628) had launched a massive campaign of conquest against the Christian empire that was to evolve into the most effective – and, as it was to turn out, the last – venture of its kind in the long history of military trials of strength between the two superpowers.<sup>27</sup> The more serious the troubles grew which Byzantium faced, the stronger *hope* gained ground among the marginalized and oppressed minorities of Jews and non-Chalcedonian Christians in the eastern provinces, that the ‘Roman’ domination would soon come to its well-deserved end.<sup>28</sup>

Jews even took up arms and sided with the Persians who, after their conquest of Jerusalem in 614, left them in control of the Holy City, where those combatants and their supporters installed an autonomous government headed by a messianic leader who reactivated the cultic service (provisional though it might have been) at the site

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25 Stoneman: *Alexander the Great* (cf. fn. 4), p. 174.

26 For a general overview of the historical events of the period see David Michael Olster: *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium*, Amsterdam 1993; John F. Haldon: *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge <sup>2</sup>1997, here pp. 35–42; Geoffrey Greatrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu: *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part II ad 363 – 630. A Narrative Sourcebook*, London/New York 2002, here: pp. 182–184; Walter E[mil] Kaegi [Jr.]: *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge/New York 2003, here: pp. 37–57; Beate Dignas and Engelbert Winter: *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity. Neighbours and Rivals*, Cambridge/New York 2007, here pp. 44–45.

27 James Howard-Johnston: “Heraclius’ Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622 – 630., in: *War in History* 6 (1999),” pp. 1 – 44, here 1 – 3; Greatrex / Lieu: *The Roman Eastern Frontier* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 183–190; Kaegi: *Heraclius* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 58–73; Dignas / Winter: *Rome and Persia* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 115–117.

28 For a comprehensive reconstruction of these expectations see Lutz Greisiger: *Messias · Endkaiser · Antichrist. Politische Apokalyptik unter Juden und Christen des Nahen Ostens am Vorabend der arabischen Eroberung* (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 21), Wiesbaden 2014.

of the former Temple.<sup>29</sup> Syriac Christians, although not as actively and wholeheartedly supporting the Persian conquest as their Jewish fellow countrymen, certainly welcomed the expulsion of the Byzantine overlords.<sup>30</sup> The invaders' carrying off the relic of the Holy Cross and deporting Jerusalem's (predominantly Melkite) Christian population were regarded, especially by Monophysites, as divine punishments for the imperial oppression supported by an illegitimate church organization in the name of a heretic dogma.<sup>31</sup>

When Persian armies in 615, and again 11 years later (together with allied Avar forces), even showed up on the shore of the Bosphorus, just opposite Constantinople and clearly visible by her citizens, it became undeniable that the empire was on the verge of doom.<sup>32</sup> This in turn could not but sound the alarm bells of the apocalyptic

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**29** M[ichael] Avi-Yonah: *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule. A Political History of Palestine from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest*, Oxford 1976, repr. New York/Jerusalem 1984, pp. 257–268. See also: Elliott S. Horowitz: “The Vengeance of the Jews was Stronger than Their Avarice.” *Modern Historians and the Persian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 4 (1998), pp. 1–39; idem: *Reckless Rites. Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence*, Princeton, NJ 2006, pp. 211–2; 228–247. Yuri [Petrov] Stoyanov: *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross. The Sasanian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614 and Byzantine Ideology of Anti-Persian Warfare* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 819 – Veröffentlichungen zur Iranistik 61), Wien 2011, pp. 21, 46, 50–54.

**30** For the growing anti-imperial sentiments among the Near Eastern non-Chalcedonian Christian populations in the preceding centuries, see e.g. W[illiam] H[ugh] C[lifford] Frend: *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, Cambridge 1979, repr. 2008; Philip Wood: “We have no King but Christ.” *Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400–585)*, Oxford 2011.

**31** *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon* [vol. 2: *Chronicon anonymum*] *ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* 83–90, ed. I[oaannes = Jean] B[aptista = Baptiste] Chabot (CSCO, Ser. 3: Scr. Syri, 14) 2 vols., Paris 1920/Lovani 1937, repr. (CSCO 354, Scr. Syri 154), Louvain 1974, vol. 1, pp. 211–2, vol. 2, 176–177; transl. Andrew [Nicholas] Palmer: *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Translated Texts for Historians 15), Liverpool 1993, pp. 125–126 (§§ 20–21); Michael the Syrian: *Chron.* 10,25, in: *Chronique de Michel le Syrien Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche* (1166–1199), ed., transl. J[ean] B[aptiste] Chabot, 4 vols., Paris 1899–1910, repr. 1963, vol. 4, pp. 389–392; vol. 2, pp. 377–381; Bar Hebraeus: *Hist. Eccl.*, in: *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Syriacum*, ed. Paul Bedjan, Paris 1890, pp. 263–267; *History of the Coptic Patriarchs*, ed., transl. Basil Thomas Alfred Evetts: *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* (PO, vol. 1,2; 1,4; 5,1; 10,5 [= no. 2; 4; 21; 50]), 4 vols., Paris/Turnhout 1907–1913, repr. 1948, 1959, 2003, vol. 1, p. 481; see also Frend: *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (cf. fn. 30) pp. 335–337; Robert G. Hoyland: *Seeing Islam as Others saw it. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13), Princeton, NJ 1997, pp. 177 with n. 14; Bernard Flusin: *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols., Paris 1992, vol. 2, pp. 112–118; Greatrex/Lieu (cf. fn. 26) p. 299, fn. 31.

**32** Clive Foss: “The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity,” in: *English Historical Review* 90 (1975), pp. 721–747 (= in id.: *History and Archaeology of Byzantine Asia Minor*, Aldershot 1990, no. 1); Flusin: *Saint Anastase* (cf. fn. 31), vol. 2, pp. 83–93; J[ames] D. Howard-Johnston: “The Siege of Constantinople in 626,” in: *Constantinople and its Hinterland. Papers from the Twenty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, ed. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron



cally tempered contemporaries: was the Roman Empire in decline that spelled no less than history drawing to a close. For Jews and most Christians alike Rome was the last of the four empires which were assigned to ruling the world over the course of history, according to the conventional reading of the prophecies found in the biblical *Book of Daniel*.<sup>33</sup>

Wars, plagues, famines and all sorts of natural disasters, the hardships of the Last Days ahead, Near Eastern Jews and Christians clearly perceived their near future above all as one of redemption through the takeover of the Messiah or the returning Christ. Under this prospect they were all too ready to see the different agents at work in their present whom tradition expected for the final stages of the world as they knew it. On the side of the forces of evil these actors naturally included Gog & Magog and it comes as no surprise that Near Eastern Jews and Christians were alertly scanning the current events for those Barbarian hordes to appear on the scene. What, however, was it that may have possibly prompted them to draw a connection between these events and occurrences in the bygone times of Alexander the Great?

By 628 Heraclius had actually gained a sweeping victory against the pagan enemy. Xusrō was dethroned and murdered by a group of conspirators wherupon his son and successor Kavād II. (reigned 628) immediately surrendered and accepted the peace terms dictated by the Byzantines.<sup>34</sup> Imperial propaganda had long been at

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(Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies Publications 3), Aldershot 1995, pp. 131–142; Howard-Johnston: “Heraclius’ Persian Campaigns” (cf. fn. 27), pp. 19–22; Greatrex/Lieu (cf. fn. 26), pp. 193–195, 205–6; Kaegi: *Heraclius* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 83–86, 132–141.

**33** Gerhard Podskalsky: *Byzantinische Reicheschatologie. Die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Großreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem tausendjährigen Friedensreiche (Apok. 20). Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, Reihe der philosophischen Fakultät 9), München 1972; Johann Maier: “Die Vorstellung von den Weltreichen in der frühen hebräischen Dichtung des Mittelalters,” in: *Freundesgabe für Bernhard Poll*, ed. Herbert Lepper, (Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins 84/85, [1977/78]), vol. 1, pp. 181–200; Klaus Koch: *Das Buch Daniel* (Erträge der Forschung 144), Darmstadt 1980, pp. 182–184; Günter Stemberger: *Die römische Herrschaft im Urteil der Juden* (Erträge der Forschung 195), Darmstadt 1983, pp. 12–15; David Flusser: “The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel,” in: *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 148–175 (= in idem: *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 317–344); Uwe Glessmer: “Die ‘Vier Reiche’ aus Daniel in der targumischen Literatur,” in: *The book of Daniel. Composition and Reception*, ed. John [Joseph] Collins, Peter W. Flint and Cameron VanEpps (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83 – Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature 2), Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001, pp. 468–489; Wout [= Wouter] Jac[obus = Jacques] van Bekkum: “Four Kingdoms Will Rule: Echoes of Apocalypticism and Political Reality in Late Antiquity and Medieval Judaism,” in: *Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, ed. Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (Millennium-Studien – Millennium Studies 16), Berlin/New York 2008, pp. 101–118.

**34** Haldon: *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 45–48; Howard-Johnston: “Heraclius’ Persian Campaigns” (cf. fn. 27), pp. 5–6, 14–27; Greatrex/Lieu: *The Roman Eastern Frontier* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 198–227; Kaegi: *Heraclius* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 111–181; Dignas/Winter: *Rome and Persia* (cf. fn. 26), pp. 45–47, 148–151.

pains to counter the apocalyptic agitation not only by triumphalist rhetoric but by a full-blown *new-age* ideology as most comprehensively voiced by Heraclius' court panegyrist George of Pisidia: Not only was the danger averted by an overwhelming victory of the Christian army, not only had the empire carried out its duty as the katechontic force and withheld the destructive powers, but Heraclius had acted as the "world's saviour (κοσμορύστης)" who had ushered in a cosmic sabbath, equivalent to the seventh day of the creation week and had brought about "a new life, a new world and a new creation."<sup>35</sup> In short, as Gerrit Reinink has put it: "Apocalyptic eschatology which predicted the end of the Roman empire was supplanted by imperial ideology using eschatological imagery in order to typify the auspicious new beginning of the empire."<sup>36</sup> This vision was underpinned by Heraclius' religious policy, or, at least by the propagandistic representation of this policy: There is a wealth of sources that contain a narrative, obviously circulated by Constantinople, which purported that Heraclius had not just won a war but in fact had at the same stroke converted the Persian Pagan empire to Christianity.<sup>37</sup> The emperor's efforts to overcome the sectarian splits between Chalcedonians, Monophysites and Nestorians and to unify Christendom under the newly invented dogma of *Monenergism* (later *Monotheletism*) temporarily looked decidedly promising.<sup>38</sup> And, shortly after the war, he even made an attempt to convert the Jews, first, it seems, by trying to garner sympathies from them, later by issuing a decree ordering all his Jewish subjects to accept baptism.<sup>39</sup> All these measures couldn't but give the impression that substantial

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35 Mary Whitby: "A New Image for a New Age: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius," in: *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a colloquium held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, ed. E[dward] Dąbrowa, Kraków 1994, pp. 197–225; idem: "Defender of the Cross: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius and his Deputies," in: *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. idem (Mnemosyne. Bibliotheca Classica Batava 183), Leiden/Boston/Köln 1998, pp. 247–273; Gerrit J[an] Reinink: "Heraclius, the New Alexander. Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius," in: *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. idem, Bernard H[endrikus] Stolte (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 2), Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA 2002, pp. 81–94, there: 83–84. See also James [D.] Howard-Johnston: *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford 2011, pp. 16–35.

36 Ibid., p. 84. Stoyanov: *Defenders and Enemies of the Cross* (cf. fn. 29), pp. 55–6, 65–68.

37 Alexander Markus Schilling: *Die Anbetung der Magier und die Taufe der Sāsāniden. Zur Geistesgeschichte des iranischen Christentums in der Spätantike* (CSCO 621, Subsidia 120), Lovanii 2008, pp. 284–298. See also: Cyril Mango: "Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse Sassanide. II: Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la Vraie Croix" in: *TM* 9 (1985), pp. 105–118.

38 Friedhelm Winkelmann: *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit* (BBS 6), Frankfurt am Main 2001; Cyril Hovorun: *Will, Action, and Freedom. Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (The Medieval Mediterranean 77), Leiden/Boston 2008.

39 Maximus Confessor, *ep.* 8, in: "La fin inédite d'une lettre de Saint Maxime: un baptême forcé de Juifs et de Samaritains à Carthage en 632," ed. Robert Devreesse, in: *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 17 (1937), pp. 25–35; "St. Maximus and the Forced Baptism at Carthage in 632," ed., transl. Joshua Starr, in: *BNGJ* 16 (1940), pp. 192–196; cf. Carl Laga: "Judaism and Jews in Maximus Confessor's Works. Theoretical Controversy and Practical Attitude," in: *Byzantinoslavica* 51 (1990), pp. 177–



changes in the overall fabric of the world were underway. The imperial propaganda spared no effort to convince the public that these changes (although traditionally largely associated with the eschaton) would lead to the better, to a long Golden Age of the Christian empire preceding the return of Christ.

In the *Legend's* description of Alexander's war against the Persians he is personally led by God; the preparations for the war are accompanied by prayers and ritual acts like the burning of incense. His soldiers use the battle cry: "God come to our aid (*Alāhā tā l-'ūdṛānān*)!"<sup>40</sup> God's leadership likewise was a motif particularly emphasized by the propagandistic representation of Heraclius's 'holy war of liberation' and his soldiers went to battle shouting "God help the Romans (*Deus adiuta Romanis*)!"<sup>41</sup>, as attested by emperor Maurice's war manual *Strategikon*<sup>42</sup> and by a coin introduced in 615 that featured the same slogan as a legend on its reverse.<sup>43</sup> Besides a number of additional motifs that reveal the typological parallels the author implicitly draws between the two kings, the most obvious of these parallels was that Heraclius was the first of the Graeco-Roman monarchs since Alexander who had actually overcome the Persian Empire after almost a millennium. Just like imperial propaganda did with Heraclius's war, the author of the *Legend* presents Alexander's campaign against the Persians as having been won through divine intervention.<sup>43</sup> Thus one of the most striking anachronisms of the medieval Alexander traditions arose: the

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188; *Doctrina Jacobi* 1,2 in: "Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati," ed. transl. Vincent Déroche, in: *TM* 11 (1991), pp. 47–229; Jacob of Edessa: *Chron.*, in: *Chronica minora*, ed. Ignatius [= Ignazio] Guidi, transl. E[rnest]-W[alter] Brooks (CSCO, Ser. 3: Scriptorum Syri 4), 2 vols., Paris/Lipsiae 1903, vol. 1, p. 327; vol. 2, p. 251; Michael the Syrian: *Chron.* 11,4, ed., transl. Chabot (cf. fn. 31), vol. 4, p. 413; vol. 2, p. 414; Ps.-Fredegar 4,65, in: *Quellen zur Geschichte des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts*, ed., transl. Andreas Kusternig (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 4a), Darmstadt 1982; *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, ed. transl. Basil Thomas Alfred Evetts (PO 1,2; 1,4; 5,1; 10,5 [=nos. 2, 4, 21, 50]), Paris/Turnhout 1907–1913, repr. 1948, 1959, 2003, vol. 1, p. 492f. [228f.]. Cf. Gilbert Dagron / Vincent Déroche: "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'orient du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in: *TM* 11 (1991), pp. 17–45; Stefan Esders: "Herakleios, Dagobert und die 'beschnittenen Völker'. Die Umwälzungen des Mittelmeerraums im 7. Jahrhundert in der Chronik des sog. Fredegar", in: *Jenseits der Grenzen. Beiträge zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Andreas Goltz, Hartmut Leppin and Heinrich Schlange-Schöningh (Millennium-Studien 25), Berlin 2009, pp. 239–311. See also Greisiger: *Messias · Endkaiser · Antichrist* (cf. fn. 28), chpt. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *AL*, ed. transl. Budge (cf. fn 20), p. 273; 157.

<sup>41</sup> Maurice: *Strategikon* 12,B,16, in: *Das Stratēgikon des Maurikios*, ed. George T[homas] Dennis, transl. Ernst Gamillscheg (CFHB, Ser. Vindobonensis 17), Wien 1981, pp. 442–443.

<sup>42</sup> *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 2: *Phocas to Theodosius III: 602–717*, pt. 1: *Phocas and Heraclius (602–641)*, ed. Philip Grierson and Alfred R[aymond] Bellinger (Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues), Washington, DC 1968, repr. 1993, p. 270, no. 61.2; Panayotis Yannopoulos: *L'hexagramme. Un monnayage byzantin en argent du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Publications d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie de l'Université Catholique de Louvain 11 – Numismatica Lovaniensia 3), Louvain-La-Neuve 1978, pp. 13–14, 20–21, 114–143; Reinink: "Alexander the Great" (cf. fn 22), pp. 155–156; Kaegi: *Heraclius* (cf. fn. 26), p. 90.

<sup>43</sup> Reinink: "Heraclius" (cf. fn. 35), p. 81; idem: "Alexander the Great" (cf. fn 22), pp. 155–156.

tale of the *Christian* (and similarly, in another branch of these traditions: the *Muslim*) King Alexander.

The story that concerns us here is preceding that of the final victorious battle. When the conqueror is leading his troops northwards, through Armenia, Azerbaijan and beyond, he arrives at a huge mountain ridge traversable only by a narrow pass or canyon by which the “Huns (*Hūnāyē*),” barbarians ruled by *Āgōg* and *Māgōg* and 13 other kings, from time to time invade the civilized world, pillaging and ravaging the Roman and Persian lands and massacring their inhabitants.<sup>44</sup> The *Alexander Poem* calls these peoples even less unequivocally “*Āgōgites* and *Māgōgites* (*d-bēt Āgōg w-d-bēt Māgōg*).”<sup>45</sup> The people on this side of the mountains barely have any means to counter their attacks “for they are fiercer than all the kings in their wars.”<sup>46</sup>

To put an end to their misdeeds Alexander orders the gap between the mountains be closed with a wall and huge gates made of bronze and iron and the structure be coated with a magical substance, making it resistant to any attempt at destruction with tools or fire. Marvelling at his own edifice Alexander then has an inscription engraved in it, part of which reads as follows:

... and again I have written and made known and prophesied that it shall come to pass, at the conclusion of nine hundred and forty years another king when the world shall come to an end by the command of God the ruler of creation [sic]. Created things shall anger God and sin shall increase, and wrath shall reign, and the sins of mankind shall mount up and shall cover the heavens ... And the Lord will gather together the kings and their hosts which are within this mountain and they shall ... come with their spears and swords, and shall stand behind the gate, and shall look up to the heavens, and shall call upon the name of the Lord, saying: O Lord, open to us this gate! And the Lord shall send His sign from heaven and a voice shall call on this gate, and it shall be destroyed and fall at the beck of the Lord, and it shall not be opened by the key which I have made for it. And a troop shall go through this gate ... And when the Huns have gone forth, as God has commanded, the kingdoms of the Huns and the Persians ... shall fall upon one another and the earth shall melt through the blood and dung of men. Then the kingdom of the Greeks shall move itself, and shall come and take a hammer of iron in its right hand and a hammer of brass in its left, and ... will smite the hammers upon the other, and as iron which is melted by fire and as brass which boils in the flame, so shall the power of the kingdoms melt away before the might of the kingdom of the Greeks which is that of the Romans. And the kingdoms of the Huns and of the Persians shall be desolated the one by the other ... And my kingdom, which is called that of the house of Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian shall go forth and destroy the earth and the ends of the heavens; and there shall not be found any among the nations and tongues who dwell in the world that shall stand before the Romans.

Following this prophecy inscribed at the Gates of the North, its alleged author, lest anybody doubt his predictions, quotes, to substantiate them, *Jeremiah* 1,14, the verse

<sup>44</sup> *AL*, ed., transl. Budge (cf. fn 20), pp. 263–265; 150–153; *passim*.

<sup>45</sup> *AP*, ed. transl. Reinink (cf. fn. 26) *I* 239; *II* 283; *III* 289, *passim*.

<sup>46</sup> *AL*, ed., übers. Budge, (cf. fn 20), pp. 265; 151 f.; *AP*, ed. transl. Reinink (cf. fn. 26) *I* 246–248; *II* 290–292; *III* 296–298.

immediately following the abovementioned vision of the “boiling bowl”: *From the north disaster will come at all who live in the country.*<sup>47</sup>

Now, at first glance, the story told by the author of the *Alexander Legend* is perfectly in accordance with what imperial propaganda had to say about the world-historical mission of Heraclius. Accordingly, Reinink characterizes it as “a work of highly propagandistic character” by “a fervent supporter of the emperor,”<sup>48</sup> whom he presented – in the guise of his typological predecessor – as a divinely guided, pious redeemer king. But what dealings had Heraclius with Āgōgītes and Māgōgītes, with Gog & Magog?

The date of the northern barbarians’ invasion, as given in the inscription, the year 940, is that of the Seleucid Era most common in Christian Syria; it equals the year 628/9 of the Christian era,<sup>49</sup> the year after the start of Heraclius’ final offensive against Sasanid Persia. He chose a route from the north, from the regions just south of the Caucasus. For several years he had been negotiating an alliance with a king from north of the mountains who, in Byzantine sources, bears the name Ziebel (*Ζιεβήλ*), in Chinese ones *T’ong Yabǧu Qaǧan*, *T’ong* being a proper name and *Yabǧu Qaǧan* his title, meaning vice Khan, ruler of the Western Gök-Turkic empire (618–628).<sup>50</sup> Now the “King of the North,” as he referred to himself, crossed the Caucasus with a large army, numbering, according to the chronicler Theophanes, 40.000 troops, to join Heraclius’s forces. – This troop buildup may well have been the decisive advantage of the Byzantines; recently James Howard-Johnston supposed that it was actually the Turks who won the war.<sup>51</sup>

That the northern barbarians are identified as “Huns” relates Alexander’s alleged prophecy to another one that seems to have been known to Syrian Christians: a prediction of the invasion of the “Huns” in the year 826 as it is included in the Mac-

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47 *AL*, ed. transl. Budge (cf. fn. 20), pp. 268–271, 154–5.

48 Reinink: “Alexander the Great” (cf. fn. 22), p. 81.

49 For the calendrical calculations see Richard A[nthony] Parker, Waldo H[erman] Dubberstein: *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. – A.D. 75* (Brown University studies 19), Providence, RI 1956, repr. 1961, 1969; Palmer: *The Seventh Century* (cf. fn. 31), pp. xxxiii–lviii, here: xxxviii.

50 Nicephorus: *Hist.*, in: *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short history*, ed., transl. Cyril Mango (CFHB, Ser. Washingtoniensis 13 – *Dumbarton Oaks Texts* 10), Washington, DC 1990, pp. 54–55; Theophanes: *Chron.*, in: *Theophanis chronographia*, ed. Carl [= Carolus] de Boor, 2 vols., Lipsiae 1883–1885, repr. in 1 vol., Hildesheim 1963, 1980., p. 316; *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History ad 284–813*, transl. Cyril Mango / Roger Scott, Oxford 1997, p. 447; cf. Constantine Zuckerman: “The Khazars and Byzantium – The First Encounter,” in: *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives. Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium Hosted by the Ben Zvi Institute*, ed. Peter B. Golden / Denis Sinor (Handbook of Oriental Studies, sect. 8: Central Asia 17), Leiden/Boston 2007, pp. 399–432, here: 412–432.

51 Howard-Johnston: “Heraclius’ Persian Campaigns” (cf. fn. 27).

edonian's inscription as well.<sup>52</sup> The Seleucid year is equivalent to 614/5 CE, when in fact the Sabirs, a Hunnic people waged a large-scale raid south of the Caucasus.<sup>53</sup> The designation "Huns" obviously served the contemporaries as a generic term to refer to northern nomadic peoples who were of the habit of raiding the lands south of the Caucasus.

We have ample evidence that during the years of their negotiations and alliance with the Byzantines the Gök-Turks repeatedly ventured sanguinary raids on their own account, while even their involvement in regular Byzantine campaigns, among them the capture of Tbilisi, left the affected population stricken with terror.<sup>54</sup> Many of these peoples were Christians living in the Persian empire: Armenians, Georgians, Albanians and others. So, reports about the events are highly likely to have spread over the Near Eastern Christian communities at considerable speed. One eye-witness whose account has been inserted in the Armenian chronicle of Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, conventionally entitled *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, describes the Turk's invasion of Čolay, i. e. Derbent:

Like waves in the sea, the Turks fell on the town of Čolay and destroyed it completely. Seeing the terrible threat posed by this vile, ugly, horde of attackers, with their slanting and lidless eyes, and their flowing hair like that of women, the inhabitants were seized by terror. Especially terrifying were the archers, who were skillful and powerful, and rained arrows down like hail on them. And when they (the attackers) saw them, they, like savage wolves, shamelessly threw themselves on the people and mercilessly cut them down in the streets and squares of the town ... They did not even take pity on the children who hugged their slaughtered mothers, and sucked the blood from their breasts instead of milk. Like a flash in the pan they broke into the city through one gate and rushed out of it through another, leaving the rest to birds and beasts.<sup>55</sup>

There were only two passes through the Caucasian barrier both of which were believed to be the locale of Alexander's erection of the Gates of the North. Earlier tra-

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<sup>52</sup> *AL*, ed., transl. Budge (cf. fn 20), p. 268, 154. The prophecy of an invasion of the Huns, as ascribed to the stylite Abraham, a contemporary of John of Ephesus (c. 507 – c. 588), and contained in the latter's vita of the holy man in his *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (ed., transl. E[er]nest W[alter] Brooks, in: PO 17, Paris 1923, p. 78, 80–82; cf. 56: A. lived "before our time and in our time") almost certainly refers to that very same tradition.

<sup>53</sup> Nöldeke: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* (cf. fn. 21), p. 31. Cf. Gyula Moravcsik: *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 1: *Die byzantinischen Quellen der Geschichte der Türkvölker* (BBA, Bd. 10). Berlin, <sup>2</sup>1958, pp. 67–69.

<sup>54</sup> Movsēs Dasxuranc'i 2,14, in: *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, transl. C[h]arles J[ames] F[r]ank Dowsett (London Oriental Series 8), London/New York/Toronto 1961, pp. 94–95. For an unraveling of Movsēs's somewhat confused sources cf. Constantine Zuckerman: "The Khazars and Byzantium – The First Encounter," in: *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives. Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium Hosted by the Ben Zvi Institute*, ed. Peter B. Golden, Denis Sinor (Handbook of Oriental Studies, sect. 8: Central Asia 17), Leiden/Boston 2007, pp. 399–432, here 405–410.

<sup>55</sup> Movsēs Dasxuranc'i 2,11, transl. Dowsett (cf. fn. 54), pp. 81–82.

ditions had ascribed the story to the Gorge of Darial, the only opening in the mountain ridge about half way between the Black and the Caspian Seas. The second passage which allowed for breaking through the alpine obstruction was the narrow littoral between the western shore of the Caspian Sea and the eastern slopes of the Caucasus, since the 6<sup>th</sup> century overlooked by the Sasanid fortress of Derbent, whose Persian, Arabic and Turkish names illustrate its significance: *Darband* – “Barred Gate”, *Bāb al-Abwāb* – “Gate of Gates” and *Demirkapı* – “Iron Gate.”<sup>56</sup>

Two narratives, contained in sources as remote from one another in time and space as the above-quoted 10<sup>th</sup> century Armenian historical work of Movsēs Dasxuranc’i and the Latin Frankish chronicle of Pseudo-Fredeggar, attest to the wide dissemination of the news of the event:

At this time he (Heraclius) unified among his reign all the lands of the Romans and gathered the army to help him break through the great Caucasus mountain, that blocked the countries of the north-east and open the Gates of Čoļay (i. e. Derbent) to let numerous barbarian tribes in, with their means to defeat the arrogant Xusrō.<sup>57</sup>

Heraclius gathered ... from all the provinces of his empire, a great multitude of soldiers and sent an embassy to the Caspian Gate that the Macedonian Alexander once had had erected on the Caspian Sea, made of Bronze and tightly locked, on account of the [ongoing] inundation (*inundatio*) of most savage peoples who were dwelling beyond the ridge of the Caucasus. These very gates had Heraclius now opened and through them a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers and auxiliary forces payed with gold, poured in to fight the Saracens.<sup>58</sup>

Pseudo-Fredeggar’s version is marked by a peculiar anachronism or confusion: here it is not the Sasanids but the Saracens, the Arabs, against whom Heraclius mobilizes his barbarian allies. Now, the Arabs in fact were to accomplish, less than a decade later, what the Persians hadn’t succeeded to do: they ended the ‘Roman’ domination in the region and expelled Heraclius and his troops.<sup>59</sup> – Whatever the cause for this intriguing replacement of one actor with another, there can hardly be a doubt that we are dealing with one and the same narrative which demonstrates that the contemporaries were convinced that Heraclius had had Alexander’s Gates opened and let in barbarian warriors to help him fight the Persians. We have seen the terror spread by the Turks among the South Caucasians and both Movsēs Dasxuranc’i and Pseudo-Fredeggar use metaphors of waves, streaming and flooding to describe the overwhelming force of the invasion. It certainly hasn’t come by mere chance that Alexander’s inscription in the Syriac *Legend* quotes *Jeremiah* with his picture of the bowl pouring out a flood of boiling liquid towards the south. Interestingly this

<sup>56</sup> Anderson: *Alexander’s Gate* (cf. fn. 4), pp. 152 – 163; Erich Kettenhofen: “Darband,” in: *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. 7, pp. 13 – 19.

<sup>57</sup> Movsēs Dasxuranc’i 2,12, transl. Dowsett (cf. fn 54), pp. 86 – 87.

<sup>58</sup> Ps.-Fredeggar, ed. Kusternig (cf. fn. 39), 66.

<sup>59</sup> Walter E[mil] Kaegi: *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, Cambridge, New York 1992; idem: *Heraclius* (cf. n. 26), pp. 229 – 299.

prophecy had never before – obvious though the connection may seem – been applied to the eschatological invasion of Gog & Magog (the *loci classici* had always been *Ezekiel* and *Revelation*). It is the *Legend* that, as we have seen, unequivocally identifies the “Huns,” i.e. the Gök-Turks, with Gog and Magog. Yet Alexander’s prophecy culminates in the prediction of the triumph of the ‘Roman’ empire, not its demise, which seems to avert any eschatological implications.

A closer look at Alexander’s inscription, however, reveals several inconsistencies. After giving the date 940 AG, i.e. 628/29, the text corruptly continues: “another king when the world shall come to an end by the command of God the ruler of creation.” – The predicate which would inform us just what that ‘future’ king would do at the end of time, is missing. According to what we know, from Movsēs Dasxuranc’i and Pseudo-Fredegar, about how the contemporaries conceived of Heraclius’s alliance with the Turks, we may assume that the missing predicate in the Syrian author’s *vorlage* originally simply stated that that future king would *open* Alexander’s gates. This throws light on a second suspicious passage where the text states that those gates would be “destroyed ... at the beck of the Lord, and ... shall not be opened by the key which I (Alexander) have made for it.” This detail of the Gates having been locked by a key is again one of the many innovations to be found in the two Syriac Alexander texts.<sup>60</sup> And it appears here only to be revoked at the same breath – which can only mean that a story about that king opening the Gates of the North with the key Alexander had made for it actually was in circulation and the only reason it appears in our text is that the author, according to his pro-Byzantine agenda, tried to exculpate Heraclius from the charge of having unlocked Alexander’s gates releasing Gog & Magog.<sup>61</sup> We come across a third suspicious passage where the text says that “the kingdom of the Greeks [and Romans] shall move itself ... and ... will smite the [two] hammers upon the other,” resulting in the destruction of the kingdom of the Huns (i.e. Gog & Magog) and that of the Persians, to defeat and destroy each other. – Altogether these observations lead to the conclusion that the author – or the *redactor* of all the extant manuscripts’ *prototype* – was equally at pains as he was overchallenged by the task to erase from the text of his *vorlage* any trace of

<sup>60</sup> The motif reoccurs in Muslim traditions; see the 9th century *Kitâb al-masâlik wa’l-mamâlik (Liber viarum et regnorum) auctore Abu’l-Kâsim Obaidallah ibn Abdallah Ibn Khordâdbeh et excerpta e Kitâb al-Kharâdj auctore Kodâma ibn Dja’far*, ed., transl. M[ichael] J[an] de Goeje (Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum 6), Lugduni Batavorum 1889, repr. 1967, p. 166, 128; cf. Nöldeke: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* (cf. fn. 21), p. 33; Charles Edward Wilson: “The Wall of Alexander Against Gog and Magog and the Expedition Sent out To find it by the Khaliph Wathiq, in 842 A.D.” in: [Friedrich] Hirth *Anniversary Volume*, ed. Bruno Schindler (Asia Major, Introductory Vol.), London 1922, pp. 575–612, here 593–595; Anderson: *Alexander’s Gate* (cf. fn. 4), p. 95; van Donzel/Schmidt: *Gog and Magog* (cf. fn. 7), pp. 102, 133, 157, 161.

<sup>61</sup> A similar narrative is to be found in Ps.-Ephrem Syrus’s also contemporary *Mēmra about the End*, 5 (169–228) where it is God who opens the Gates: *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syers Hymnen de nativitate (epiphania)*, ed., transl. Edmund Beck (CSCO 186–7 / Scr. Syri 82–3), 2 vols., Louvain 1959, repr. 1975, vol. 1, pp. 63–4, vol. 2, pp. 84–6.



the emperor – or, the empire – being involved in the break-out of Gog & Magog. Thus he gives an unintended testimony that that was exactly what some of his fellow countrymen and co-religionists told each other about the circumstances of Heraclius' defeat of the Persians. The Roman Empire had got involved with, if not Satan or the Antichrist, at any rate with the disruptive peoples of Gog & Magog, thereby provoking the advent of the endtime and, by implication, spelling its own doom.

This diagnosis brings us to a last, if far from less momentous, innovation that looms in this realized-eschatology vision of the events of 628/9: The fourth and last world empire that the prophet Daniel had foreseen had actually been founded by Alexander the Great and thus comprised the 'Greek', Roman and Byzantine empires – an idea that was to appear, just as the Gog & Magog narrative – again and in a somewhat more elaborated and extended version in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*<sup>62</sup> whose Syriac original was composed roughly 60 years later and which, by way of its little younger Greek and Latin adaptations<sup>63</sup>, was to substantially influence medieval Byzantine and western eschatology. The notion of Alexander having founded the fourth empire rooted in the traditional Syriac exegesis of the four empires schedule of the *Book of Daniel*. The Peshitta text of Daniel 7, verses 4–7, describing a vision of four beasts rising from the sea, bears headlines that read: *malkūtā d-Bāblyē* – “Kingdom of the Babylonians,” *malkūtā d-Madāyē* – “Kingdom of the Medes,” *malkūtā d-Parsāyē* – “Kingdom of the Persians” and *malkūtā d-Yaunāyē* – “Kingdom of the Greeks.”<sup>64</sup> Thus for Syriac Christians the Bible itself had once and for all determined the four empires to be *historical* realities of a bygone age.<sup>65</sup> Hence the only way to ‘catch up’ with the standard exegesis of all other denominations, including Judaism, without renouncing the Word of God, for them was to integrate the fourth kingdom of their Bible, that of the ‘Greeks’, with the Roman-Byzantine empire and to declare the two (or three) one and the same fourth empire – the “kingdom of the Greeks which is that of the Romans” – as the *Alexander Legend* (as we have seen) and, in a somewhat more elaborated form, the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* do.<sup>66</sup>

In the eyes of Syriac Christians this fourth empire was, as attested by the clumsily veiled hints in the *Alexander Legend* and the greater narrative framework of *Pseudo-Methodius*, about to collapse and, thus, history was soon to come to an end and

<sup>62</sup> *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, ed., transl. Gerrit J[an] Reinink (CSCO 540–541, Scr. Syri 220–221), 2 vols., Lovanii, 1993.

<sup>63</sup> *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, ed. W[illem] J[ohan] Aerts, G[eorgius] A[moldus] A[ntonius] Kortekaas (CSCO 569–570, Subsidia 97–98), 2 vols., Lovanii, 1998.

<sup>64</sup> *Vetus Testamentum Syriace iuxta Syrorum versionem – The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version* vol. 3,4: *Dodekapropheton – Daniel-Bel-Draco*, ed. Konrad Dirk Jenner, Arie van der Kooij, Lugduni Batavorum – Leiden 1973, pp. 27–28.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Richard A. Taylor: *The Peshitta of Daniel* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute Leiden 7), Leiden/New York/Köln 1994, pp. 192–193, 200–201.

<sup>66</sup> *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, ed., transl. Reinink, 8,2; 9,1–9.

Christ to return. The integrated Gog & Magog tale originated as part of a larger counter-discourse within Near Eastern Christian communities, that was directed against the triumphalist Byzantine propaganda in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century.

## Abbreviations

AL	Alexander Legend
AP	Alexander Poem
BBS	Berliner byzantinistische Studien
BNGJ	Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CFHB	Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
MPG	[Jaques]-P[aul] Migne (ed.): Patrologia Graeca
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
TM	Travaux et Mémoires du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament







## **II Unbekannte Völker / Unknown Peoples**



Gregor Werner

## Travelling towards the peoples of the Endtime: C de Bridia as religious re-interpretation of Carpini

In 1245, shortly after the Mongols invaded Latin Europe, several papal envoys travelled to Asia and brought back information which they formed into reports. Besides the travel reports by the Franciscans John of Plano Carpini and Benedict of Poland, we have an adaptation by one C de Bridia who, as far as we can tell, did not travel himself but knew about the travelers' experiences. This essay is based in large parts on my doctoral thesis,<sup>1</sup> in which I followed the question in how far Carpini<sup>2</sup> and the text of Benedict of Poland,<sup>3</sup> as well as the text which is known by the author name of C de Bridia,<sup>4</sup> are interconnected mainly concerning the aspect of perception of the Mongolians as foreign enemies. In doing so, I have extracted some strong hints that let us see C de Bridia's text in a completely new light. There are many hypotheses about what the C de Bridia text might be: a copy, a modern fake, a mix of Carpini and Benedict of Poland, even a missing part of Benedict of Poland's account. Has he (if his really is a medieval text) copied an existing text, or a pre-edition, maybe combined information he already had, with things he heard from Carpini after the latter's return from Mongolia telling of his adventures whenever the party stopped on its way to the Curia?

In the following essay, I will show that C de Bridia's text can be seen as an original medieval text in its own right, a literary work as well as an informative text, which probably was produced shortly after Carpini's version. Its goal was not faking originality, which had a different meaning in the middle ages anyway, but reinterpreting the information, i. e. Carpini's and Benedict of Poland's essay in an eschatological way. C de Bridia uses existing information, even sometimes copies whole passages. The importance however lies in the parts in which he interprets and re-evaluates Carpini's information in a fundamentally different and new way. Therefore, we can now conclude with some good reason that we have an additional medieval text, a source of information about how the Mongolians have been seen in respect to their religious meaning for the time. The most interesting fact, however, is that

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1 Werner, G.: Die militärische Macht der Mongolen in den Berichten der Carpinimission: Die Unterschiede in der Darstellung bei Carpini und C de Bridia, Dissertation, Fernuniversität in Hagen. [http://deposit.fernuni-hagen.de/2779/1/Dissertation\\_Gregor\\_Werner.pdf](http://deposit.fernuni-hagen.de/2779/1/Dissertation_Gregor_Werner.pdf) (2012-02-18).

2 Latin text from Menesto, E. (ed.): Giovanni di Pian di Carpine: Storia dei Mongoli, Spoleto 1989. Here always quoted as: Carpini + Book + Chapter.

3 Latin text available in: Wyngaert, A. v. d. (ed.): Relatio Fr. Benedicti Poloni; in: Sinica Franciscana I, Quaracchi – Florenz 1929, p. 135 – 143.

4 Önerfors, A. (Hrsg.): Hystoria Tartarorum C de Bridia Monachi, Berlin 1967. Here quoted as: C de Bridia + Chapter

it is so closely connected to Carpini's text, which is – using the same basis of information – at the same time so different in its assessment of this new knowledge.

One can see that the texts around Carpini's travel – Carpini's own work, the work of C de Bridia and the report under the name of Benedict of Poland – pursue multiple objectives in varying degrees. On the one hand they want to be an ethnographic message to the Europeans, of course according to the standards of the time. Secondly, and this counts especially for Carpini's text in no small part, they seem to be partially detailed descriptions of what had been experienced and seen or heard and collected (in C de Bridia's case) of the terror which the Europeans felt about the Mongols. They also want to provide, as accurately as possible, military applications, strategic analysis and to discuss how to apply it. Especially Carpini's work pursues this goal, while virtually none of this is noticed in Benedict of Poland's account and C de Bridia in contrast seems to have its very own impetus.

A sceptical approach to the rapporteurs and the texts is required. Each of them has set his own target. It is therefore particularly important to always keep in mind that not only factual information, let alone public entertainment, is the goal of these texts. It is often quite clear that the respective authors wanted to take influence on the perception of the Mongolians and to elicit certain reactions in the audience.

The question of authenticity shall not be discussed in depth here. However, it seems relatively clear that it cannot be proven that C de Bridia's text is a modern forgery.<sup>5</sup> The fact, also mentioned by Schmieder, that many phrases and information would simply be too crude to assume a modern forger, who at other places then however obviously had a magnificent insight into medieval conditions, may sufficiently exclude the probability of a modern forgery.<sup>6</sup> I am assuming that his text is at least a document from an earlier period. It surely is no simple copy of Carpini's text. I definitely agree with Schmieder's statement that the text in many places seems to be a reproduction of Carpini's words.<sup>7</sup> But to describe it simply as a version of the Carpini-Original would be wrong. Sinor sees C de Bridia's text as an "original", although it shows many verbal echoes of Carpini and the report of Benedict of Poland, which seem to be his main sources.<sup>8</sup> Painter holds it to be the "missing" part of a broader report originally by Benedictus Polonus.<sup>9</sup> Although the content in many parts is al-

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<sup>5</sup> Morgan doesn't see any good reason to doubt the authenticity of C de Bridia's work. See Morgan: *The Mongols*, Malden 2007, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> See Schmieder, F. (ed.): *Johannes von Plano Carpini: Kunde von den Mongolen, 1245 – 1247*, Sigmaringen 1997, footnote 58 p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> See Schmieder: *Carpini*, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> See Sinor, D.: *Mongol and Turkic words in the Latin Versions of John of Plano Carpini's Journey to the Mongols (1245 – 1247)*, p. 538 – 539, in: Sinor: *Inner Asia and its contacts with Medieval Europe*, London 1977.

<sup>9</sup> See Painter, G.: *The Vinland map and the Tartar Relation*, New Haven 1995, p. 42. De Rachewiltz discusses if Benedict of Poland could be C de Bridia's main source. See de Rachewiltz, I.: *Papal envoys to the Great Khans*, London 1971, p. 91. The passed down text is said to have been written by around 1440, even though the original version is assumed to be around 200 years older (around

most identical to Carpini's, it differs in tone and language. Theoretically, it could therefore be, as has also been suggested, a reverse translation from another language into Latin. Anyway, the text is as a whole so much altered in its structure, shortened in some passages and expanded elsewhere, that a simple copy of Carpini's work or a copy of one of his lectures seems hardly imaginable. In addition, the work shows great motif similarities to the works of Rogerius and Thomas of Spalato. Under certain circumstances, we may even assume further sources from Eastern Europe now unknown. If it originally has been a copy of Carpini, this connection changed when extensive interventions in the text took place. Since the question of authorship is unclear, one can only rely on the text itself:

To the most reverend father Friar Boguslaus, minister of the Minorite friars, who live in Bohemia and Poland, Friar C de Bridia, lowest among the Minorites, affirms his filial obedience and as much owed as devoted submission.<sup>10</sup>

For fact or fiction a certain brother C de Bridia is the author. C de Bridia, as the alleged author of the essay, now claims to be writing this text on behalf of a certain Pater Boguslaus. Again, this is nothing as unusual that it should raise doubt about the text's authenticity. The next sentence, however, raises a real problem:

In obedience to your authority, although the task is beyond the powers of my talent, I have briefly set down in writing what I have understood/seen of the Tartars together with the venerable friars of our order, namely Friar John, legate of the Apostolic See to all foreign nations (i. e. outside of Christendom), but especially the horrible/damned Tartars, and his companions Friar Benedict of Poland and Friar Ceslaus of Bohemia (...)<sup>11</sup>

He does not claim that he has found out this information himself. If we take the "vidi" as the original wording, we can, with Painter, fill in "et" to correct the grammar. This, however, according to Painter, does not mean that he had accompanied

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1247). See Painter: *The Vinland Map*, p. VI and p. 24. Also see: Sinor: *Mongol and Turkic words*, p. 538. Jackson supports the idea, that it is an originally medieval work written with information of Benedict of Poland's work, which actually would fit with the statements made by the texts. See Jackson, P.: *The Mongols and the West*, Harlow 2005, p. 88.

**10** C de Bridia 1. *R(e)uerentissimo patri, fratri Boguslao ministro fratrum minorum in Boemia et Polonia degencium, frater C. de Bridia inter minores minimus filialis obediencie subieccionem tam debitam quam deuotam!*

**11** C de Bridia 1. *Vestre paternitati quamuis supra vires ingenij mei obaudiens que [vidi] de Tartaris intellexi cum venerabilibus fratribus nostri ordinis, fratre videlicet Iohanne sedis apostolice legato ad omnes externas naciones, precipue tamen ad Tartaros ꝥacorosꝥ, et fratre Benedicto Polono et fratre Ceslao Boemo socijs eius, breuiter in scripto posui (...)*

The word "cacoros" has been discussed for some time. I assume it could either come from the Greek "kakos" for bad, or have a relation to the Latin word "cacare", which would then be a vulgar way to refer to the "shit" (i. e. damned) Tartars. However it could also be stated that we have a double writing here, i. e. Tartars was intended, but was written in a wrong way and then written a second time. Other possibilities seem fair as well.

the travelers, but merely that he had met and maybe talked to the monks. The word “intellexi” with the meaning of “bring in experience” is then only logical and consistent with the fact that the travelers on their way back often halted, many times reported and even read from the half-finished reports to the eager audience. Önnersfors deleted “vidi” and thus opts for a version that is consistent with the historical facts, namely that according to current knowledge, a C de Bridia was not part of the party.<sup>12</sup>

C de Bridia’s intentions are different from Carpini’s. While Carpini significantly aims at the transmission of facts for the defense and at steering, subtly as it may be, efforts in the readers, C de Bridia seems to show more stereotypical judgments about the foreigners and their different culture. The words in C de Bridia’s introduction contain valuable information about his intentions:

(...) and I have tried to avoid boredom for the reader, so that your devotion in hearing this, which knows how to extract useful knowledge on earthly matters from the marvelous and so much hidden judgments of the Almighty God, which now at the end of times, when the redemption of the saints draws near, already get clear, may rise to His praise and love as well.<sup>13</sup>

The emphasis is to maintain the interest of the public, while providing useful information. He writes with a perspective different from Carpini’s, who had also in mind to provide information for a defense against a renewed Mongol attack. So one can assume that the stronger emphasis on religious references, which seem less pronounced in Carpini, shows C de Bridia’s own attitude, as well as the true goal of his work. This is clearly visible in his presentation of miracles as proof of God’s omnipotence and the assumption that the end of time is near.<sup>14</sup> The prophecies of the time indicated for many authors the approach of the end of times and thus also brought up the idea of the end time nations Gog and Magog and the Antichrist by the year 1260.<sup>15</sup> While Carpini largely relates propaganda and steers readers to this world’s reality to make Europe ready for an effective defense against the Mongols, C de Bridia has other requirements and goals. He depicts the Mongols far more negatively and makes use of the topos of hellish beings and Tartarus dwellers. For him, unlike Carpini (and others), the magnetic mountain from medieval geographic knowledge, widely used in literary works, is the place where the trapped Jews would break out, who thus may herald the end of time, while Carpini searches for

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**12** Jackson thinks it possible that C de Bridia was one of the anonymous companions in Carpini’s party who were left behind in the camps of Batu. This idea could solve all controversies around the author, but is only speculation. See Jackson: *The Mongols and the West*, p. 88.

**13** C de Bridia 1. (...) *cauens fastidium lectorum et ut uestra hec audiens deuocio, que de terrenicis nouit utilia elicere ex mirabili[li]bus dei omnipotentis iudicij tam occultis, que in fine iam clarescunt seculorum, in quo appropinquat sanctorum redempcio, exurgat in laudem eius pariter et amorem.*

**14** The difference between miracles and reality is however a modern idea. Wonders were reality!

**15** See Schmieder, F.: *Nota sectam maometicam atterendam a Tartaris et Christianis, The Mongols as non-believing apocalyptic friends around the year 1260*; in: *Journal of millennial studies* (1998), 1,1, p. 2. <http://www.mille.org/publications/summer98/fschmieder.pdf> (2012-02-29).



more worldly and naturalistic reasons behind this story. This is of some importance, as both authors had the same cultural background and therefore both knew the “Alexander tradition” and would have been able to use biblical references in the same way. Such differences thus are strong evidence for the different intentions of these two authors. Many of the reporting sequences found in C de Bridia and Carpini are often quite similar. Passages which appear in Carpini’s strategic and analytical part can only be found in C de Bridia in narrative form or shortly reported, never, however, in a deeply analytical form as in Carpini. One can assume that both remain close to the actual information in the reporting sections, whereas Carpini then works out the strategically important facts again in a theoretical part.

C de Bridia, however, does not seek to drive the audience to action, as it is the case with Carpini, but rather seems to want to show that God is punishing the Christians, but that they will prevail and don’t have to fear extinction. Carpini is aware of the actual danger and acts by giving sound advice to repel the enemy. C de Bridia on the other hand cares more about embedding representations of God’s will and salvation in history than about strategic analysis. This is particularly evident in one place, where C de Bridia refers to certain religious texts for more information about war; unlike Carpini, who strives for complete analysis:

How to fight the Tartars can be seen in the different histories of the Maccabean kings, where it is described that bowmen stand in front of the army and various traps are laid out for the enemy.<sup>16</sup>

Biblical passages<sup>17</sup> shall give advice on warfare. The legitimacy of the Maccabees is employed to give advice for a defense, which is a way of handling things completely differently from Carpini’s impetus. Religious references permeate C de Bridia’s work and biblical passages serve as evidence. The whole text breathes the knowledge of divine influence in the world.

We can call upon Klopprogge’s distinction between texts of non-travelers and travel-related reporting.<sup>18</sup> He sees Carpini as a traveler departing from the scope of religious justifications for events who begins to argue logically and causally. However, a distinction between reality and fiction, realistic description and incorrect view is absolutely impermissible, according to Klopprogge, because in those days miracles

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<sup>16</sup> C de Bridia 61. *Qualiter autem Tartaris sit occurrendum satis intellegi potest ex diuersis regum Machabeorum hystorijs, ubi et precedentes sagittarij exercitum et insidie hostibus diuersi mode posite describuntur.*

<sup>17</sup> “The Maccabean kings” can only mean the first two books of the Maccabees, which were available in the medieval Vulgata. They talk about Jewish history, rebellions and God’s actions and assistance. Of special interest are the references to Alexander the Great, who is shown as an unjust and unstoppable conqueror, who wanted to conquer all the world, bringing great misery. See Macc 1. <http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=20> (2012-02-17).

<sup>18</sup> See Klopprogge, A.: *Ursprung und Ausprägung des abendländischen Mongolenbildes im 13. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1993, p. 202 – 207.

were regarded as reality. Understanding Carpini to be a realistic writer or researcher, while speaking of others as thoughtless wonder-story tellers, would thus simply be inappropriate.

I think that this approach of analyzing eschatological distinctions is applicable to the previously described differences between the statements and intentions of Carpini and C de Bridia. In this case, C de Bridia would be – even considering his often almost literal echoes of Carpini – an eschatological interpretation of Carpini: The religious answer to his work that examines the justification for the onslaught of the Mongols and the possibilities of stronger defenses in relation to God's plan, that vehemently defends the idea of the Mongols as a divine punishment and recommends reading the Book of the Maccabees, which is only logical considering the eschatological perspective. Nevertheless, it should not be ignored that Carpini sometimes approaches eschatological explanations as well and, though far less often, hopes for God's intervention in worldly matters. That this only happens without intention, as Klopprogge assumes, seems unlikely. It rather shows Carpini's natural affiliation to the thinking of his time and order.

However, we also must not omit the different ways of reception of real travelers and non-traveling rapporteurs. C de Bridia, as a non-traveled recipient of Carpini, reacted in a different way on the now second hand information he got from his sources. He conveys this information, because he expected certain things and where he could not find them (in sufficient detail) supplemented or interpreted them into the information according to his own knowledge, in a very different way than a real traveler would have done and in this situation maybe much more like Carpini's audience.

Several significant passages highlight quite clearly differing attitudes in both texts: Unlike Carpini C de Bridia has hope for peace. And here he differs strikingly from his source. He sees the disunity of the Mongols as a protection for many years.

Additionally there is great disunity among them, which can give the Christians, if it continues, many years to recover from the Tartars.<sup>19</sup>

This statement stands in stark contradiction to Carpini's statement:

They will come in order to fight continually for eighteen years; the time for their encampment is set.<sup>20</sup>

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**19** C de Bridia 30. *Insuper inter eos est discordia magna, que si processum habuerit, christiani poterunt per plures annos a Tataris respirare.*

**20** Carpini VIII 4. *Venient autem pugnaturi continue decem et octo annis; tempus est eis assignatum procedendi.*

Already before the Mongols' great western campaign some reports warn of their arrival. Among which is Frater Julianus, who tells about their wish to conquer Rome and all the countries beyond. See Göck-enjan, H. (ed.): Frater Julianus, p. 107, in: Der Mongolensturm. Berichte von Augenzeugen und Zeitgenossen 1235–1250, Graz/ Wien/ Köln 1985, p. 93–125. Original text in: Dörrle, H. (ed.): Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen: Die Missionsreisen des Fr. Julian OP ins Uralgebiet

In this short sentence more likely fear than neutral reporting seems to resonate. The urgency is clear: The Mongols would soon be back and then the West had to be ready for battle or would face destruction. According to Carpini's understanding only one power is able to prevent the advance of the Mongols and the elimination of the Christian faith: God. For him, in consistency with medieval thinking, this power is a reality that has already intervened once. But would it do so again? Thus the Christians must prepare for the worst. No direct divine action would stop the Mongols, seems his train of thought.

All this is fixed and true, if not God in his grace stops them as he did, when they came to Hungary and Poland. For they had to proceed for 30 years but then their emperor had been killed by poison and therefore they refrained from fighting until now. But they will begin to prepare for battle again soon, because again an emperor has been crowned.<sup>21</sup>

Carpini is giving a rational justification for the withdrawal of the Mongols. But the death of the previous Great Khan is traced back not only to luck or a simple historical event, but caused explicitly by divine action. God intervening in history, so to speak, initiates a poisoning to save the Western world. C de Bridia reinforced this statement by attributing the same Ögödei Khan the appropriate punishment in hell.

Batu however, who was in Hungary, returned to Comania at once, when he heard of the death of Ögedei Khan, who died poisoned by his sister, and is buried with his riches in hell.<sup>22</sup>

In a few places Carpini is guiding his readers, though much less frequently than C de Bridia, using different stereotypes, such as trickery, treachery and many more.

For they fight more with treachery than courage.<sup>23</sup>

It is a well-known fact that ambushes were one of many means of warfare and were applied by Europeans as well. But here this tactic used by all warring parties is

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(1234/35) und nach Rußland (1237) und der Bericht des Erzbischofs Peter über die Tartaren, Göttingen 1956, p. 165–182. For further sources see also Göckenjan: Brief eines ungarischen Bischofs, p. 279.

**21** Carpini VIII 5. *Hec omnia firma sunt et vera, nisi Dominus aliquod impedimentum pro sua gratia faciat eis, sicut fecit quando venerunt in Hungariam et Poloniam. Debebant enim procedere pugnando triginta annis, sed interfectus fuit tunc imperator eorum veneno, et propter hoc quieverunt a preliis usque nunc. Sed modo, quia positus est imperator de novo, iterum ad pugnam se incipient preparare.*

**22** C de Bridia 30. *Bati uero in Hungaria existens percepta morte Occoday can, qui impocionatus perijt a sorore et sepultus est cum diuite in inferno, statim redijt in Comaniam.*

**23** Carpini VIII 9. (...) *plus enim fraudulentia quam fortitudine pugnant.*

In the letter to the pope the Hungarians describe the Mongols' strategems as even worse than their attacks. Original version in: Schneider, F. (Hrsg.): Ein Schreiben der Ungarn an die Kurie aus der letzten Zeit des Tartareneinfalls [2. Februar 1242]; in: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung XXXVI (1915/16), p. 668–670.

shown negatively. The Christian soldier, in this view, appears morally superior to the pagan opponents, because he fights honestly. For the reader bravery would be found on the part of Westerners. So, treacherous cowardice is the corresponding attribute of the Mongols, even if their effectiveness and combat power is fully acknowledged. Thomas of Spalato describes the Mongols as operating outside of restraint like animals. He compares their army to locusts, using a biblical way of showing mass. Furthermore he emphasizes their lack of sympathy for anything be it living or dead, and evokes the image of them drinking human blood like wild beasts. They even did not care about spoils, but only about slaughter.<sup>24</sup>

Deception, traps and ambushes are considered objectionable, if they are used by the pagan enemies only. Although Carpini describes various tactics and strategies of the neutrally analyzed Mongols, it seems that he could not disengage himself completely from his Western perspective. He wants the Europeans to prepare a defense in order to keep them from being careless and to show that one cannot just apply the usual European tactics to those unknown opponents. He chooses words that are otherwise rather found in C de Bridia, but still far from the statements, which appear in Thomas of Spalato. C de Bridia repeatedly emphasizes that the Tartars are devious and cannot be trusted. This trait is condensed into a stereotype that can be broken only with difficulty. But if they were as devious and disloyal as Carpini said then how to explain that he as a Christian-occidental ambassador ever had the opportunity to report so many things? This can be understood only considering the Mongols' aim of intimidating opponents. Possibly he is aware of such stereotypical images and uses them to guide the reader toward his goal. He writes like that because he knows that his audience thinks and expects such.

He tells the ruling elite that they will be eliminated.<sup>25</sup> His aim is to inspire decision makers in the audience to swift and resolute action. And C de Bridia follows him here, though his overall goal is a different one: not providing a defense manual, but a religious interpretation of Carpini's text.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, Carpini as a typical western medieval writer and monk, is blessed with the certainty of divine chosenness of the Western Christian nations. However, he does not formulate explicitly the image of the end time troops of hell. He cannot do that anymore after having revealed so many facts that show a normal people

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<sup>24</sup> See Göckenjan, H. (ed.): Thomas von Spalato. Geschichte der Bischöfe von Salona und Spalato vom hl. Domnius bis auf Rogerius († 1266), p. 244/ 245, in: Göckenjan: Der Mongolensturm. Berichte von Augenzeugen und Zeitgenossen 1235 – 1250, Graz/ Wien/ Köln 1985, p. 225 – 270. Original text: "Thomas archidiaconus Spalatensis: Historia Salonitanorum pontificum atque Spalatensium a. S. Domino usque ad Rogerium (1266)", in: Racki, F. (ed.): Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium. Vol. XXVI. Scriptores, Vol. III., Zagreb 1894.

<sup>25</sup> That is only partially true, as in China the Mongols use the existing structures and work together with the existing elites. The most extreme rage and destruction may be applicable more to the realm of Khwarezm.

<sup>26</sup> See C de Bridia 24.

among others. His own thinking is probably already opened so far that a return to stereotypes would seem strange. But underneath it all these positions still seem to be visible: on the one side the good Christians, the bad pagans on the other side.

And additionally it is dishonorable, that Christians submit to them, because of their atrocities, because worship of God is being annihilated, and because the soul will perish and the body is being afflicted tremendously.<sup>27</sup>

Worse than anything else is not so much the submission itself, but the damage for Christianity and the worship of God. Christian souls would be lost and eternal life would be in danger. Here the fight against the pagans is associated with the struggle for the homeland and one's own survival. And to clarify again, Carpini puts the perfidy of the Mongols into a picture, which is used in C de Bridia as well.

At first they flatter, but afterwards they torture and harm like a scorpion.<sup>28</sup>

C de Bridia copied here:

At first they promise a lot of great things, but in the end they commit limitless cruelties in an inhumane fashion. Their promises are like a scorpion, who may flatter with his face, but then suddenly stings with the stinger in his tail.<sup>29</sup>

A striking difference between both authors are also the (non-) existing prophecies. In C de Bridia one can identify at least two clearly prophetic utterances which are added to trigger a specific response with the audience, while Carpini has nothing comparable in his work.

They come, however, for 18 years without rest to fight, and they are unstoppable because they revere no powerful lord, no emperor and no kings, and even though they know that they will necessarily be killed by the Christians sooner or later, but don't know the day or the country, in which God has decided for this to happen, so that God the vengeful is taking vengeance for the blood of the unavenged all of a sudden.<sup>30</sup>

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**27** Carpini VIII 3. (...) *tum quia indignum est ut christiani subdantur eisdem, propter abominaciones eorum, et quia in nichilum redigitus cultus Dei, et anime pereunt, et corpora ultra quam credi possit multimode affligitur (...)*

**28** Carpini VIII 3. (...) *in principio quidem sunt blandi, sed postea ut scorpio cruciant et affligunt;*

**29** C de Bridia 53. *Sunt enim multa bona in principio promittentes sed ad ultimum infinitas crudelitates inhumaniter excercentes. Eorum namque promissio est ut scorpio, qui licet facie blandiri uideatur percutit tamen subito caude aculeo venenoso.*

**30** C de Bridia 33. *Veniunt autem xviii annis continue pugnaturi, nec apreciantur, qui[n] nec potentem nec imperatorem neque reges <reuerentur>, et quamuis sciant quod debeant interfici medio tempore <a> christianis, nec tamen diem neque terram in qua hoc deus disposuerit fieri, ut ex insperato sanguinem inultorum ulciscatur deus ulcionum.*

On the one hand the inevitability of the enemy's advance, on the other hand, quite typical for his agenda, the secure salvation of all Christians by divine power. Much more than Carpini, C de Bridia sees and emphasizes divine intervention in the world. He makes clear that nothing can stop the Mongols apart from divine action, as happened before in Eastern Europe. Both see God's work in history as fact, but differ in their assessment of the future. Whereas Carpini hopes for renewed divine aid, C de Bridia is certain of this help. The prophecy, given by the Mongols themselves, in C de Bridia's text, is thus built on a contradiction. The attackers move forward, even though they know that they shall once be punished by God's revenge for the spilled blood of the Christians. He tells the audience in this way clearly the fragility of the Mongols' advance and their power. Ultimately, the Christians, with God's help, are destined to win. The fact that the Mongols know of their own demise will have supported the idea of prophetic words even more. The very different impetus of C de Bridia becomes obvious: He eschatologizes Carpini's text rather than copying him and his intentions. Factual information steering readers toward an increased military preparedness is not the thrust of his work. It shows God's saving intervention in history in times of great distress.

Writing on the regulations and laws of Genghis Khan, C de Bridia inserts a reference to an alleged prophecy, aiming again in the same direction. Again, there is a prophecy that was ostensibly intended for the Mongols, but which is, in the context of C de Bridia's book, intended for readers and listeners of his text. And again he formulates a kind of meta-level, a double mirrored perspective. He lets the Mongols have knowledge about events that affect them in connection with the Christians.

It has also been prophesized to them that in the end they necessarily will be killed in the land of the Christians, and that the few survivors will adopt the law of the country in which their fathers are killed in different ways.<sup>31</sup>

The Mongols allegedly know that they will all be killed by the end of their long campaign of conquest in a Christian country. That, in reverse, means for the audience: We, the Christians, will triumph over the invaders. The attackers will be slain and the few survivors will then, according to C de Bridia, become Christians. This brings back the general hope for worldwide mission, which would then lead ultimately to a complete Christianization of the world and is seen a necessary precondition for the Second Coming of Christ. Thus the attack of the Mongols and their predicted demise can be seen as another of God's actions in the history of salvation by preparing the chance of proselytizing pagans. This may, despite all the fear and helplessness, probably have been quite a comforting thought for the audience. Far more clearly than Carpini, C de Bridia stresses God's certain intervention for the salvation of Christianity in this world, not just the hope for it. Indirectly, however, he seems to reduce the

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<sup>31</sup> C de Bridia 41. *Prophetatum est eciam eis, quod ad ultimum debent omnes interfici in terra christianorum, pauci tamen residui tenebunt legem terre, in qua patres eorum diuersis mortibus occidentur.*

urgency with which Carpini sees his journey and the collection of defense information.

In the sources we find two (assumed) main reasons for the expansionist policy of the Mongol rulers. Firstly, an insatiable greed for the goods of others is being attributed to the Mongols. Secondly, in several places a divine origin or forefatherly order is assumed as the driving force of this strange people. One aims to moral criticism, the other implies a kind of master plan. Genghis Khan as the forefather of the Mongol Empire is introduced as follows in Carpini's report:

In the land of Yeka Mongal there was a man named Genghis. That one began to be a mighty hunter before God, because he learnt to rob people and seize booty. He also went to other countries and didn't let go of whoever he could capture and win over. He also won over people of his own tribe, who followed him as their leader to any misdeed.<sup>32</sup>

This is a rather negative perception of the founder of the Mongol Empire. Carpini shows him as a deceiver, who ensnares the other members of his tribe, and it gets even worse. The Mongolian greed for other countries is, in the person of Genghis Khan, present at the beginning of their rule. He is the reason and the representative character at the same time, who embodies the Mongol will for expansion. The biblical quotation, difficult to recognize for modern readers, has certainly been understood easily by Carpini's contemporaries: He talks about Nimrod, who was considered the prototype of a despot. Such words are a far stronger devaluation than it seems at first glance.

There is a corresponding passage in C de Bridia, but Genghis Khan appears in a much clearer negative way. With extremely pejorative words he describes the beginning of the Mongols' rise as a nation based on insanity and robbery.

In this country lived a man of noble birth but cruel character named Genghis, from whom the Tartars took their origin. With the help of a few of his men he began to plunder. Finally, after having become more cruel, he began to secretly capture men and bind them under the control of his iniquity. When he had brought together thirty followers he burst into open madness, and then subdued to his command all of his native country, that is Moal.<sup>33</sup>

Here we see quite a different assessment of the same events. Both authors describe the initial conquests and subjugation of the other steppe peoples. But whereas Gen-

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<sup>32</sup> Carpini V 3. *In terra Yeka Mongal fuit quidam qui vocabatur Chingis. Iste incepit esse robustus venator coram Domino, didicit enim homines furari, capere predam. Ibat autem ad alias terras, et quoscumque poterat capere et sibi associare non dimittebat. Homines autem sue gentis ad se inclinavit, qui tanquam ducem ipsum sequebantur ad omnia malefacta.*

<sup>33</sup> C de Bridia 3. *Erat autem in ea vir quidam nobilis quidem genere sed moribus crudelis, nomine Cingis, a quo et principium Tartari habuerunt. Hic cum paucis hominibus suis cepit spolia exercere. Tandem crudelior effectus homines furtim capiebat et in sue iniquitatis dominio adiungebat. Cumque triginta satellites sibi coaceruasset, prorumpens in uesaniam publicam totam terram sue natiuitatis, scilicet Moal, sue dominacioni per omnia subiugauit.*



ghis Khan is still characterized indirectly by Carpini as a “mighty hunter before the Lord”, who takes prey and commits misdeeds, C de Bridia explains much longer and clearer and embellishes the story. Other contemporary authors however, like the Hungarian Dominican traveler friar Julian, don’t seem to have a generally negative attitude. When describing how the mighty ruler Gurgutam is fighting the Tatars to avenge the wrongdoings against his sister, and later punishes an unjust ruler (identified, if at all possible, as the Shah of Kwarezm) for his misdeeds, Genghis Khan is shown in a very different light.<sup>34</sup> He presents a Genghis Khan, who is later apparently spoiled by success. For the emperor Frederick II and the English Benedictine monk Matthew Paris (who did not make the journey), it is clear that – no matter if divine punishment and mission for God or Mongol lust for power – they are a danger because of their wish to rule alone and their ability to do so because of their power and number.<sup>35</sup> The Russian Novgorod Chronicle agrees with this tenor and sees the Mongols as a divine punishment. On the Chinese side, however, Genghis Khan is seen quite differently, although I cannot generalize here. The Meng-ta Pei-lu, an early Chinese account about the Mongols, speaks of him as brave, generous, engaging, religious and dutiful.<sup>36</sup>

The differences in these views show that various approaches were quite possible. Therefore we can conclude that the authors wrote consciously and decidedly the way they did. It is not ruled out that in stories told by members of conquered peoples and prisoners in Mongolia, which the travelers had perhaps heard, Genghis Khan was partially described negatively, but probably negative ratings are often based on the preferences of those who heard and then conveyed them to Europe.

Comparison shows that there was scope for review. Genghis Khan is described almost positively when Carpini writes about the weak but still rapacious sons of the king of the Naiman people, who grow completely out of control, so that Genghis Khan attacks and eventually subdues them. Genghis Khan almost seems to be an enforcer of order and stability.

After he had gone the way of all flesh, his sons followed him in his position; but they were young and naïve, and didn’t know how to lead people, but were divided and at odds with each other; therefore Genghis had been able to ascend so much in the meantime, but nevertheless they began to attack the aforesaid countries, killed men, women and children and took their possessions as booty.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Göckenjan: Frater Julianus, p. 101 – 103.

<sup>35</sup> Grandauer, G. (transl.): Auszüge aus der größeren Chronik des Matthäus von Paris, Leipzig 1941, p. 114.

<sup>36</sup> See Olbricht, P. (ed.): Meng-ta Pei-lu und Hei-ta Shih-lüeh, Chinesische Gesandtenberichte über die frühen Mongolen, 1221 und 1237, Wiesbaden 1980, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> Carpini V 4. *Quo debitum universe carnis exsolvente, filii eius successerunt loco illius; sed iuvenes erant et stulti, et populum nesciebant tenere, sed ab invicem divisi erant et scissi; unde medio tempore Chingis predictus erat taliter exaltatus, nihilominus tamen faciebant insultum in terras superius anno-*



C de Bridia evaluates the situation, again, in a completely different way. The battle with the Naiman leads back to the lust for power of Genghis Khan, which does not subside before he snatches away the power from the helpless children.

Having heard of this, Genghis began to crave the kingdom of the children, and having rallied an army began to invade the realm of the Naiman.<sup>38</sup>

All in all, C de Bridia writes in more detail when it comes to Genghis Khan's initial conquests, because he is embellishing his text, often with a negative tilt. The criticism is directed against the nomads, who care only about conquest: the steppe warrior as the one who stands outside of human manners familiar to medieval Europeans and does not follow basic Christian concepts in dealings between nations, which were, according to the perspective of the time, probably common. Wherever Carpini got his information from, he must have had a more reliable source than C de Bridia who could only get third-hand knowledge about the early history of the Mongols. For C de Bridia it is therefore more likely to embellish his account, while such a tendency is not apparent in Carpini. This does not mean that Carpini automatically guarantees us objectively and historically correct (from today's perspective) facts on the history of the Mongols. It is, however, clear that he presented his information pushing the reader less frequently and less strictly to certain stereotypical standards. It seems apparent that Carpini is rather interested in the sharing of knowledge he could learn himself, and the careful guidance of his readers. C de Bridia, however, more deliberately and usually far more clearly, favors a particularly religious reading and therefore seems to actively change the perspective of Carpini's text. I do not think that his different way of saying things simply has to be attributed to the fact that he had a less experienced perspective and a narrowed view compared to someone who traveled and saw the Mongolians. This may certainly be a crucial point, but evidence seems to forebode a conscious interpretation.

What I hope to have shown in this paper is the high probability of the theory that C de Bridia's text is an eschatological reinterpretation of Carpini's account, and probably not because a different audience should be addressed. According to the notion of the time, the eschatological interpretation is absolutely valid and talks facts, as Carpini's work does too. Thus, one could almost speculate that C de Bridia's work has been understood as a complement to Carpini's report, although this of course must remain speculation.

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*tatas, viros et mulieres et pueros occidebant et capiebant predam eorum.*

Schmieder is assuming here the story written by the victor. See Schmieder: Carpini, note 67 p. 132.

**38** C de Bridia 7. *Quo audito Cingis cepit aspirare ad regnum puerorum et collecto exercitu cepit invadere regnum Naymanorum.*



Petra Waffner

# Die Völker der Endzeit im französischen *Livre de Sidrac* (13. Jh.)

## Einleitung

Im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert erlebte das Genre der eschatologischen Texte im Westen der Christenheit einen Aufschwung. Gründe hierfür waren die immer größer werdende bekannte Welt, das Eindringen fremder Völker in Europa, die Unsicherheit der Kreuzzüge und nicht zuletzt die zunehmende Entfremdung von den christlichen Brüdern, den Griechen. Als Folge setzten Schüler des heute bekanntesten Propheten des 13. Jahrhunderts, Joachim von Fiore, das Erscheinen des Antichrists nach intensiven Berechnungen auf das Jahr 1260 fest.

Es bedurfte demnach in dieser Zeit der genauen Klärung für die Zeitgenossen, woran das Ende der diesseitigen Welt ersichtlich werden konnte; wie politische Ereignisse im Sinne der herannahenden Endzeit gedeutet werden sollten. Dazu griff man auf die im Christentum seit langer Zeit vorhandene Tradition von Szenarien, zu denen das Auftauchen neuer Völker gehört. Solche Einbrüche des Unbekannten boten sich als Ankündigung der Endzeit an, erregten sie doch Angst und Unsicherheit und waren sie doch mit klaren apokalyptischen Konnotationen besetzt.

Ein Beispiel für prophetischen Umgang und Deutung dieses Einbruchs des Unbekannten in die eigene Welt zeigt der sogenannte *Livre de Sidrac*. Dieses eigentlich enzyklopädische Werk aus dem 13. Jahrhundert enthält einige Prophezeiungen, die sich um solche Ereignisse drehen.

## Die Quelle

Der *Livre de Sidrac*<sup>1</sup> trägt in den meisten Handschriften den Untertitel *la fontaine de toutes sciences* und verweist damit auf seinen enzyklopädischen Charakter. Der uns unbekannt Autor wählt die Form eines Lehrdialogs, welcher sich zwischen dem vorchristlichen Philosophen Sidrac und einem heidnischen König mit Namen Boctus entwickelt haben soll. Die Antworten des Weisen auf die Fragen des Königs sollen das gesamte Wissen der damaligen Zeit vermitteln, wobei das Ziel die Bekehrung des

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<sup>1</sup> Der erste Versuch einer Edition des *Livre* erfolgte vor etwas mehr als zehn Jahren. Ruhe, Ernstpeter, *Sydrac le philosophe. Le livre de la fontaine de toutes sciences*. Edition des enzyklopädischen Lehrdialogs aus dem XIII. Jahrhundert. Wiesbaden 2000. Als Basishandschrift legte Ruhe London, British Museum 17914 zugrunde, die 1227 Fragen und Antworten enthält. Da die einzelnen Handschriften sehr unterschiedlich gestaltet sind, wird im Folgenden nur wenn nötig auf einzelne Handschriften zurückgegriffen. Die folgenden hier angegebenen Abschnitte basieren auf der Edition Ruhes.

Königs zum rechten Glauben ist. Durch zwei Prologe und einen Epilog wird der Katalog von Fragen und Antworten narrativ gerahmt. Im ersten Prolog wird die suggerierte Rezeptionsgeschichte des Textes von der ersten Aufzeichnung, welche auf Veranlassung des Königs Boctus selbst erfolgt sein soll, bis zur Zusammenführung der Fragen mit dem Prolog im Jahre 1243 wiedergegeben.<sup>2</sup>

Diese Datierung des Textes, welche im Übrigen im gesamten Werk die einzige Jahresangabe bleibt, kann nicht als real angesehen werden, da sich in den eschatologischen Prophezeiungen des *Sidrac* historische Ereignisse bis zumindest in das Jahr 1260<sup>3</sup> erkennen lassen. Ein Desiderat der Forschung wäre also auch zu klären, warum diese explizite aber fälschliche Nennung einer konkreten Datierung überhaupt erfolgt.

Ebenso sind auch der Entstehungsort des *Livre de Sidrac*, wie auch sein Autor bislang nicht bekannt. Schon im Übergang zum 20. Jahrhundert hatte der französische Historiker Charles-Victor Langlois wichtige Argumente für eine östliche Provenienz des Textes angeführt und darauf verwiesen, der Autor könne „un clerc du patriarcat d’Antioche“ gewesen sein, der den Text im Zuge des ersten Konzils in Lyon im Auftrag seines Dienstherrn nach Frankreich verbracht haben könne.<sup>4</sup> Auch betonte Langlois, dass der Verfasser des *Sidrac* offensichtlich genaue Kenntnis des Heiligen Landes,<sup>5</sup> wie auch der dortigen erzählerischen Traditionen besitze. Den einzelnen Hinweisen Langlois’ ist dabei genauer leider nie nachgegangen worden. Lieber bezog man sich auf die Frage nach dem möglichen Autor und vermutete diesen im regionalen Umkreis des provenzalischen Lyons.<sup>6</sup>

Der Philosoph Sidrac, der sich als direkter Nachfahre des Noah Sohnes Japhet bezeichnet, schildert dem König alle Ereignisse, die von der Geburt Jesu Christi bis zu seiner Auferstehung geschehen, wie auch die Abläufe und Geschehnisse der Welt bis zum Herrannahen des Jüngsten Gerichtes. Da die Figur des Sidrac vom Autor des Textes in vorchristliche Zeit gesetzt wird, prophezeit der Weise diese Ereignisse.

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<sup>2</sup> Aufgrund seiner Wichtigkeit wird er von mehreren Herrschern angefordert und übersetzt. So z. B. von Friedrich II. Der Sinn dieser, natürlich fiktiven, Rezeptionsgeschichte liegt dabei darin, dem Text, wie auch dem Propheten Sidrac, eine hohe Autorität zu verschaffen.

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. Schmieder, Felicitas, Der mongolische Augenblick in der Weltgeschichte, oder: Als Europa aus der Wiege wuchs, in: Produktive Kulturkonflikte hg. von Schmieder, Felicitas, Berlin 2005, S. 63–73, hier S. 69. Langlois geht sogar davon aus, dass der Text nach 1268 verfasst sein müsse. Vgl. Langlois, Charles-Victor, La vie en France au moyen âge. Bd. III. La connaissance de la nature et du monde. Paris 1911, S. 197f.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. Langlois, S. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. ebd. Genau wie lateinisch-orientalische Chroniken benenne der *Sidrac* den Fluss Aigue Froide als Grenze zwischen den Tartaren und Sarazenen. S. hierzu auch Schmieder, Felicitas, Christians, Jews, Muslims – and Mongols. Fitting a foreign people into the Western Christian apocalyptic scenario, in: Medieval Encounters, 12 (2006), S. 274–295, hier S. 286.

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. Wins, Beate, „Le Livre de Sidrac“ – Stand der Forschung und neue Ergebnisse. In: Brunner, Horst (Hg.): Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit. Bedingungen, Typen, Publikum, Sprache. Wiesbaden 1993, S. 36–52, hier S. 39f.

Durch ein geschicktes Spiel mit den Zeitebenen werden diese *ex-eventu* Prophezeiungen erst möglich. Dem damaligen und dem heutigen Publikum des *Livre* ist das Geschehen bekannt. Auf der Textebene sind die Prophezeiungen in sich stringent und chronologisch nachvollziehbar. Doch die durch den Aufbau des Textes beim Publikum ausgelösten Assoziationen ermöglichen dem Autor eine Einflussnahme auf die Denkweise der Rezipienten. So können sowohl bereits bekannte Gruppen und Völker, wie auch neu aufkommende (wie im *Sidrac* die Mongolen), in das apokalyptische Geschehen einbezogen werden.

Diese *vaticinatio ex eventu* können damit den Propheten als legitim ausweisen. Sie verleihen ihm höchste Autorität, wenn er weiter über Sachverhalte spricht, die für das Publikum im letzten Drittel des 13. Jahrhunderts tatsächlich neu sind.

Das Corpus der Fragen kann dabei in einigen Handschriften bis zu 1227 Abschnitte umfassen,<sup>7</sup> wovon nur 72 als eschatologisch gelten können. Von diesen finden sich 43, die in sich geschlossen das Zeitenende thematisieren, am Ende des Textes. Auf diese soll im Folgenden näher eingegangen werden.

## Die Endzeitprophezeiungen des *Sidrac*

Untersucht man den Verlauf der Endzeit in der Quelle genauer, so stellt sich heraus, dass diese Abschnitte zumeist einen stereotypen Charakter haben, d. h. es lassen sich genauere Abläufe, die historisch zu verorten wären, nicht nachweisen. Es findet sich für diese sehr allgemein gehaltenen Aussagen zum Verlauf der Endzeit für den *Sidrac* eine eindeutige Quelle. Dies ist der ebenfalls französisch geschriebene *Lucidaire*. Monika Türk hat bereits vor etwas mehr als zehn Jahren die Parallelen zwischen diesen beiden Texten untersucht und festgestellt, dass der *Sidrac* bei mehr als 250 seiner Fragen, diese teils wörtlich aus dem *Lucidaire* übernimmt.<sup>8</sup>

Gleiches gilt allerdings nicht für fünf der genannten Prophezeiungen. Die hier teilweise sehr ausführlich gestalteten Antworten enthalten Personennamen, Ortsnamen wie auch die Nennung einzelner Gruppen und Völker, die im direkten Zusammenhang mit dem Herannahen des Jüngsten Gericht stehen sollen. Diese Art der Gestaltung findet sich, sieht man einmal von dem dem Text vorangestellten ersten Prolog ab, ansonsten nirgends im *Sidrac*. Es ist daher davon auszugehen, dass der Autor auf diese endzeitlichen Textteile ein gesondertes Gewicht gelegt hat. Eine ältere Quelle, auf die der Autor des *Sidrac* für diese Passagen zurückgegriffen haben könnte

<sup>7</sup> Wobei die meisten Handschriften unterschiedliche Fragezahlen aufweisen. S. zum Beispiel Paris, Bibliothèque nationale [BNF], franc. 1157 = 665; BNF, franc. 1160 = 615; BNF, franc. 1161 = 509 und Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 593 enthält 1208 Fragen und Antworten.

<sup>8</sup> Vgl. Türk, Monika, ‚Lucidaire de grant sapientie‘. Untersuchung und Edition der altfranzösischen Übersetzung 1 des ‚Elucidarium‘ von Honorius Augustodunensis, Tübingen 2000, S. 191. Monika Türk gibt ebenso eine genaue Auflistung dieser Parallelen. S. hierzu ebd., S. 203 f.

hat sich bisher noch nicht gefunden. So ist zunächst davon auszugehen, dass diese einen besondere Stellung im *Livre de Sidrac* einnehmen.

Das Ende aller Zeiten wird im *Sidrac* in die Zeit der vermutlichen Entstehungszeit des Textes, also um das Jahr 1260 gelegt. Die geschilderten historischen Ereignisse, die im *Sidrac* als Beginn der Endzeit gesehen werden, sind zumeist verschlüsselt wiedergegeben. Allgemeine Angaben werden, so sie denn vom Schreiber als erklärungsbedürftig angesehen wurden durch Zusätze ergänzt. Beispiele hierfür sind Euaesfroides für *Grant flun*, Babilonie für *Trabaf* oder pape für *Pere de la maison dou filz de dieu*. Diese Angaben werden in den Handschriften auf verschiedene Art eingeflochten.<sup>9</sup>

So decodieren diese Zusätze die nicht klar erkennbaren Teile der Prophezeiungen und interpretieren diese auch. Deutlich wird dies z. B. bei der oben erwähnten Angabe eines ‚großen Flusses‘, die dann durch die namentliche Nennung Euaesfroides (oder Aiguefroide)<sup>10</sup> sich regional verorten lässt.

## Beispiel für ein Schriftbild

Die genaue Untersuchung, ob diese Handhabung in den einzelnen Handschriften stets erfolgt, oder ob und wie sich die Einschübe im Laufe der Rezeptionsgeschichte des Textes ggf. verändern, steht hierbei noch aus. Derzeit sind ca. 40 Handschriften des *Livre de Sidrac* bekannt. Der Verlauf der Rezeptionsgeschichte im Zusammenhang mit den jeweiligen zeitlichen und regionalen Kontexten muss dabei noch genauer untersucht werden.

Beginnend mit dem Abschnitt 1145<sup>11</sup> wird zunächst das Schicksal Jerusalems, nach dem Tod des Sohn Gottes geschildert.

‚Sieben Mal‘, so heißt es, muss die Stadt Gottes ‚gegeben‘ werden. Nach der Herrschaft der Juden, so der *Sidrac*, sind es zunächst die griechischen Christen, die Jerusalem in ihren Besitz nehmen. Diese lehnen sich aber gegen Gott auf:

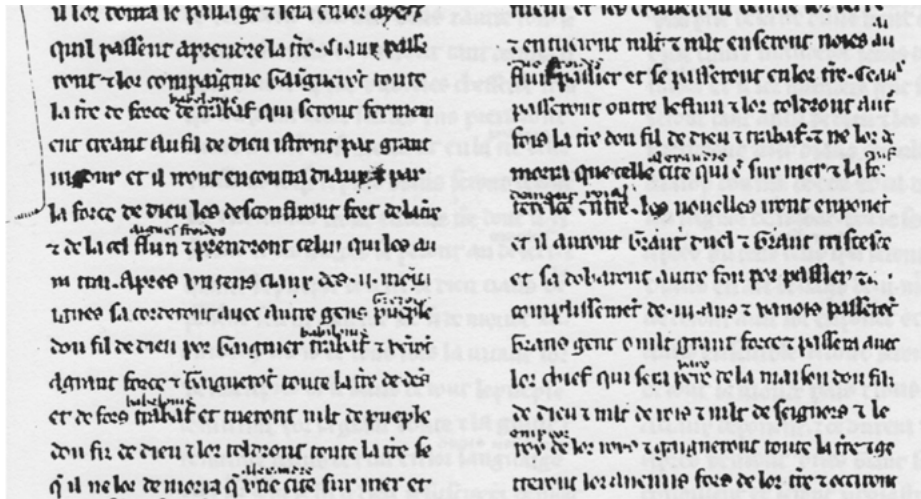
Après la gaaingneront le pueple du fils de Dieu, Crestiens grés, li quel seront premier converti en lui [...] Ceste gent par leur puissance et par leur richece s'enorgueilliront envers Dieu, [...].<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> So stehen sie in der Handschrift Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale franc.1160 zwischen den Zeilen. In der aus dem 15. Jahrhundert stammenden und damit ein Jahrhundert jüngerer Version Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale franc. 1094 hingegen sind die Zusätze in die Zeile aufgenommen.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. hierzu Kapitel 2.

<sup>11</sup> Bei allen bislang gesichteten Handschriften des *Livre de Sidrac* wird den einzelnen Fragen und Antworten eine durchnummerierte Auflistung vorangestellt. Da, wie bereits erwähnt, die Handschriften sehr unterschiedliche Fragezahlen aufweisen, wird hier zur besseren Orientierung der Edition Ernest-peter Ruhes gefolgt. Vgl. Fußnote 1.

<sup>12</sup> Abschnitt 1154. Ruhe, S. 404.



Le Livre de Sidrac le phylosophe, lequel s'apelle le livre de la Fontaine de toutes sciences, Manuscrits Bibliothèque Nationale franc 1160 fol. 109 [Ausschnitt]. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90588124/f111/11.05.2012>

Der Zusatz *grés*, also die Griechen, steht hier wiederum interlinear [s. oben]. Dies bedeutet, dass die Kopierer der Handschrift diese Unterscheidung interpretatorisch herausheben wollten. Es ist eben nicht die gesamte Christenheit, die sich gegen Gott wendet, sondern nur die Christen der Ostkirche.

Der Autor des *Sidrac* möchte hier offenbar seinen Lesern ein bestimmtes Bild der Griechen übermitteln. Der Abfall dieser von Gott und damit ihre Schuld an der Teilung der Christenheit, wird hier unterstrichen. Die Strafe Gottes gegen die Griechen, so der Autor des *Sidrac* weiter, vollzieht sich durch die Geburt Mohammeds.

Auch hier treibt der Autor wiederum sein typisches Spiel mit der Zeit,<sup>13</sup> welches durch den Charakter der *ex-eventu* Prophezeiungen erst möglich wird. Dem zeitgenössischen Leser wird vor Augen geführt, dass die Schuld der Griechen an der Kirchenspaltung schon in früherer Zeit durch deren Abtrünnigkeit erfolgte. Eine Einigung war auch in der Zeit des zeitgenössischen Publikums nicht erfolgt,<sup>14</sup> sodass die Prophezeiung mit ihrer negativen Konnotation der Griechen auch das Gefühl der Legitimation der eigenen Abneigung hervorgerufen haben wird.

<sup>13</sup> Vgl. hier Kapitel 2.

<sup>14</sup> Wobei aufgrund der mangelnden Erkenntnisse zur Entstehungszeit des *Livre de Sidrac* nicht eingeschätzt werden kann, ob die Ergebnisse des II. Konzils von Lyon (1274), auf dem eine Einigung der Kirchen angestrebt wurde, dem Autor bereits bekannt waren.

[...] Et Dieu pour euls<sup>15</sup> destruire fera naistre un homme de Berie de la plus orde gent du monde, Mahommet; et leur touldront la terre tote et les bouteront en .i. canton due monde, Romenie, [...].

Le roy demande: Quel homme sera celui qui naistra de Berie qui a si grant gent toudra la seigneurie?

Syderac respont: Sera un povre homme et de laide façon, pasteur de chameaus. Et sera amonnestés du deables que il se face prophete.<sup>16</sup>

Damit ist das erste Volk, welches den Ablauf des apokalyptischen Geschehens initiiert, ein christliches.

Mohammed wird als ‚*pasteur de chameaux*‘ bezeichnet; eine Umschreibung, die den Zeitgenossen in ihrer Konnotation hinlänglich bekannt war. Der Kamelhirte ist das kontrapunktisch negativ besetzte Gegenstück zu Jesus als Schafhirte und so ist Mohammed in dieser Konnotation den Zeitgenossen als ‚Gegen-Christus‘ erkennbar.

Als weiterer Gegensatz zu Christus, dem Sohn Gottes, ist Mohammed vom Teufel erschaffen. Er gibt seinem Volk ein schlechtes Gesetz und gewinnt die Erde durch das Schwert. 700 Jahre, welche gleichgesetzt sind mit der Herrschaft von 40 Kalifen, wird er herrschen.

Bevor dieser endgültige Sieg gegen die Anhänger Mohammeds erfolgen kann, gewinnen ‚die aus dem Westen‘ *cil du Ponnant* [hier also die Franken] Jerusalem zurück, demnach 1099. Der erneute Verlust der Stadt durch Saladin (1187) wird von Sidrac ebenfalls erwähnt. Er wird als König der Levante bezeichnet, der Name Saladin wird in den Handschriften wiederum zusätzlich gegeben.

Obwohl der *Livre* den Ablauf des Geschehens bis zum Eintreten des Jüngsten Gerichts, soweit dies für uns anhand tatsächlicher Geschehnisse nachvollziehbar ist, ansonsten in chronologischer Reihenfolge wiedergibt, folgt hier zunächst ein Einschub, der auf das Ende der Herrschaft Mohammeds und seiner Anhänger vorgreift. Diese werden zu Leibeigenen des Volk Gottes. Zu gleicher Zeit solle dann ein anderes Volk auftauchen, noch ungläubiger als jene, die Tartaren.<sup>17</sup> Diese Bezeichnung ist die zeitgenössische für die Mongolen. Die Herrschaft dieses Volkes wird sich von Spanien bis nach Indien und Syrien ausweiten.

In den folgenden Prophezeiungen tauchen die Tartaren als Mitspieler für das Kommen des Jüngsten Gerichts mehrfach auf. Der *Sidrac* gibt dabei einen erkennbaren Verweis auf die Eroberung Bagdads durch die Mongolen im Jahr 1258, die mit der Ermordung des Kalifen einhergeht:

<sup>15</sup> Gemeint sind hier die griechischen Christen, die sich aufgrund ihrer Macht und ihres Reichtums, so wird gesagt, gegen Gott gewandt hatten.

<sup>16</sup> Abschnitt 1145. Ruhe, S. 404.

<sup>17</sup> Hier wie im Folgenden wird diese zeitgenössische Bezeichnung für die Mongolen, welche sich von *tartaros* (die aus der Hölle stammen) ableitet immer dann verwandt, wenn es sich um deren Erwähnung im Text handelt.



Adonc après d'un grant temps istront unne orde gent d'entre deus montaignes, Tartars, et guaaingneront tout le Levant de celle orde gent et tueront leur chief, Califfe, l'acomplissement des quarante chiés, et tendront tot le Levant.<sup>18</sup>

Die Tartaren werden im *Sidrac* stets als das Volk ‚der zwei Berge‘ beschrieben, wobei auch hier wieder die Bezeichnung *tartars* in den einzelnen Handschriften als Zusatz gegeben wird. Der Autor des *Sidrac* übernimmt hier einen, seinen zeitgenössischen Lesern längst bekannten Topos. ‚Zwischen den zwei Bergen‘ verweist auf die Alexanderlegende, darauf, dass der Herrscher die apokalyptischen Völker Gog und Magog mittels eines Tores hinter einer Gebirgskette einschliesst. Erst wenn diese, mit Gottes Hilfe, die Tore durchbrechen, wird die Endzeit beginnen.<sup>19</sup> Die Tartaren selbst geben in einem Bericht um das Jahr 1242 an, dass sie aus einer Region hinter Bergen stammen.<sup>20</sup>

Anders allerdings als die vermutliche Vorlage, die Alexanderlegende setzt der Autor des *Sidrac* die Mongolen ohne qualifizierenden Kommentar in Bezug zur Endzeit. Wo die Alexanderlegende die Völker Gog und Magog als nahezu unberechenbare invasierende Völker beschreibt, die unter großer Grausamkeit ihren Kampf eröffnen und durchführen, unterlässt der *Sidrac* jegliche nähere Charakterisierung. Dies kann zum einen durch die vermutliche Entstehungszeit des Textes um 1260 erklärt werden. Der als ebenso bedrohlich wie uneinschätzbar geltende Vormarsch der Mongolen liegt fast zwanzig Jahre zurück. Eine Gefahr stellen diese zwar immer noch dar; immerhin rücken sie in das Heilige Land vor, doch offensichtlich hält der Autor des *Sidrac* für seine Leser ein Angebot zur Änderung der Sichtweise parat, wie in den folgenden Passagen des Textes ersichtlich wird. Es ist davon auszugehen, dass der Text hier den Vorschlag zu einer neuen Haltung gegen die ursprünglichen Feinde propagiert. Dies wird umso plausibler, wenn man die zeitliche und räumliche Nähe des Textes zum II. Konzil von Lyon im Jahre 1274 berücksichtigt, auf dem eine Delegation der Mongolen eingeladen war und diese ein Bündnisangebot unterbreiteten.

Allerdings muss erwähnt werden, dass die Einschätzung der Mongolen im *Sidrac* durchaus entgegen anderer Eindrücke der Zeit steht. So stellt 1260 Papst Alexander IV. das fremde Volk noch als große Gefahr für die Christenheit dar.<sup>21</sup> Der *Sidrac* nimmt hier demnach eine dem Papst entgegenstehende Stellung zu den Tartaren ein. So wird er seiner Rolle als Prophet, der die Obrigkeit kritisieren und ermahnen darf, gerecht. Diese Haltung könnte andererseits aber auch die These von der östlichen Provenienz der Quelle unterstreichen. So sind es die orientalischen Christen, die bereits seit

<sup>18</sup> Abschnitt 1148. Ruhe, S. 405.

<sup>19</sup> Zum Motiv des Mauerbaus Alexanders' vgl. Schmidt, Andrea B., Die „Brüste des Nordens“ und Alexanders Mauer gegen Gog und Magog, in: Brandes, Wolfram und Schmieder, Felicitas (Hgg.), Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen. Berlin, 2008, S. 89–99.

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. Schmieder, 2006, S. 279f.

<sup>21</sup> Vgl. Schmieder, Felicitas. Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert, Sigmaringen 1994, S. 89.

längerer Zeit dafür eintreten, die Mongolen als mögliche Verbündete im Kampf gegen die Sarazenen zu sehen.<sup>22</sup>

In den folgenden Abschnitten (1149–1152) verlangsamt der Text seine Geschwindigkeit, geht detaillierter auf einzelne Geschehnisse ein. Der *Sidrac* nähert sich in diesen seiner eigenen Entstehungszeit und damit verlässt der Prophet den sichereren Bereich der *ex-eventu* Prophezeiungen. Was nun folgt sind somit tatsächlich politisch historische Einschätzungen; nicht wie es war, sondern, wie der Prophet sich die mögliche weitere Entwicklung vorstellt. Sein Ziel ist es dabei, den Leser für seine Einschätzung von kommenden Ereignissen zu überzeugen.

## Die Tartaren: Helfer oder Gegner?

Zunächst werden die aus dem Westen, die Franzosen, mit großer Streitmacht kommen, um die Stadt des Herrn zu erobern; allerdings erfolglos. Nach einer kurzen Zeit überqueren diese wieder das Meer und erobern das ganze Land.

Et un d'euls tendra la terre devers ceuls qui istront d'entre les deus montaingnes, Tartars, que entre lui et euls n'aura que un grant flun, Eauesfroides, qui vient d'Orient; et demandera unne gentillg dame de Trahabaf, Babiloine, pour moillier. Celui qui sera seigneur de la terre ne li vuoudra mie donner celle dame, celui aura grant despit et penssera de la terre trahir et demandera dire a ceuls des deus montaingnes, Tartars, que il leur dorra le passage et sera en lor aide et qu'il passent por prendre la terre par force; cil passeront, et il seront en lor compaignie et gaaigneront toute la terre par force et Trabaf. Cil qui la seront fermement creant au Fils de Dieu istront par vigor et iront a l'encontre d'euls, et par la force dieu les desconfiront et feront mettre fors de la terre et outre cel flun, et prendront celi qui les aura trahis.<sup>23</sup>

Wie auch im vorherigen Abschnitt, der die Eroberung Bagdads durch die Tartaren schildert, werden diese auch hier als Helfer der Christenheit (oder zumindest eines Teiles) geschildert. Zunächst erscheint es dabei – bedenkt man, dass es vornehmlich um den Kreuzzugsgedanken geht – eher seltsam, dass hier das eigentliche Kampfgeschehen in den Hintergrund rückt.

Denn stattdessen stellt der Autor des *Sidrac* hier das Verlangen einer nicht näher bezeichneten Person nach einer Frau aus Babylon in den Vordergrund, welches zu weiteren Kampfeshandlungen – dies offensichtlich mit Hilfe der Tartaren – führt. Der Text belässt es hierbei allerdings bei dieser kurz gehaltenen Anspielung, so dass es fraglich ist, ob hier eine tatsächlich während der Kreuzzüge vollzogene Begebenheit wiedergegeben wird, oder es sich um einen Topos handelt, der bislang noch nicht weiter entschlüsselt wurde.

In der folgenden Prophezeiung wird die Entwicklung bis zum ‚kämpferischsten Tag der Welt‘ dargelegt:

<sup>22</sup> Ebd., S. 82f. sowie S. 271.

<sup>23</sup> Abschnitt 1149. Ruhe, S. 405f.

Aprés .i. temps cil des .ij. montaignes s'accorderont avec autres gens, Grezois, pueple du Filz Dieu, por gaaignier Trabaf, et venront a grant compaignie et gaaigneront toute la terre et dedens et defors. Et tueront moult du pueple du Filz Dieu, et lor toudront toute la terre, si qu'il ne lor demorra que une cité, Alixandre, sor mer et une forterece, Trach de Mont Real, et la tendront .i. grant temps, et seront moult riches en la cité du Filz Dieu.<sup>24</sup>

Die westlichen Christen – so scheint es – haben nun zwei Feinde und müssen sich aufteilen.

Et cele grant assemblee de gent s'assembleront en .ij. parties et se partiront: l'une partie ira a cels qui ayderont a ceaus des .ij. montaignes, et lor toudront une grant partie de lor terre; l'autre partie venra a leur gent qui tendront la cité sur mere, et iront contre lor ennemis, [...].<sup>25</sup>

Ein Teil der Kreuzzugsgruppe geht demnach gegen die Byzantiner und die Tartaren vor, wohingegen weitere, die eigenen – westlichen Christen – beim Kampf gegen die eigentlichen sarazenischen Feinde in Alexandria unterstützen.

So zeigt sich, dass die Haltung zu den Mongolen, die im *Sidrac* eingenommen wird durchaus ambivalent ist. Aufgrund des Bündnisses zwischen den Griechen und denen der zwei Berge muss sich der Kampf der Christen nun aufteilen und wird dadurch schwächer. Der *Sidrac* nimmt hier eine klare politische Position ein; die wahren an Gott gläubigen Christen sind die des Westens – die Franken, wie es mehrfach heißt –, die Byzantiner hingegen stehen nun dem Ziel der Rückeroberung des Heiligen Landes entgegen.

Doch bleibt dieser erste Versuch ohne Erfolg. Die Christen werden zurückgeschlagen und es bleibt ihnen nichts als Alexandria und die Festung Crac de Mont Real. Nach drei Jahren und sechs Monaten kommen die aus dem Westen wieder und der Papst, viele Könige und der Kaiser werden bei ihnen sein. Nach dreizehn Monaten, an einem Sonntag, treffen sie sich. „*Le pere de la maison du Filz Dieu ira devant son pueple o une crois et lor commanera a ferir u non de Dieu. Et il feront a els et les descomfront malement.*“<sup>26</sup> Hier anschließend folgt die Schilderung des ‚kämpferischen Tag der Welt‘.

## ***la plus batailleuse jornee du monde* und die Bedeutung des dürren Baumes**

Die Feinde werden sechsundzwanzig Tage in ein Land gejagt, wo es dürre Bäume gibt und werden dort fünf Monate bekämpft. Die aus dem Westen treffen sich bei einem

<sup>24</sup> Abschnitt 1150. Ruhe, S. 406.

<sup>25</sup> Ebd.

<sup>26</sup> Ebd.

verdorrten Baum, dort hält der Papst eine Predigt, woraufhin der Baum Blüten und Blätter wirft.

Die in diesen letzten Abschnitten erfolgte Betonung auf genaue Zeitabstände zwischen den einzelnen Geschehnissen macht deutlich, dass die Schilderung des Philosophen Sidrac hier ihren Höhepunkt erreicht. Der Verlauf dieser letzten Schlachten ist es, der die eigentliche Endzeit beginnen lässt.

Der wichtigste Aspekt dabei ist die Predigt des Papstes am ‚dürren Baum‘.

## Exkurs: Die Legende vom dürren Baum und ihre Umdeutung im *Sidrac*

Die Anfänge der Legende vom dürren Baum liegen im Osten.<sup>27</sup> Einige Quellen verknüpfen ihn mit dem letzten Herrscher, dem Friedenskaiser. Dieser soll, unmittelbar vor dem Jüngsten Gericht, seinen Schild und Krone an dem dürren Baum niederlegen, woraufhin der Baum wieder beginnt zu blühen. Die Lokalisierung des dürren Baumes findet dabei unterschiedliche Angaben in den Quellen; er wird allerdings häufig in die Nähe zum Heiligen Grab gesetzt.<sup>28</sup> Die erstmalige Erwähnung dieser Verknüpfung erfolgt im Pseudo-Methodius aus dem 7. Jahrhundert. Hier heißt es:

Et cum apparuerit filius perditionis, ascendit rex Romanorum sursum in Golgatha, in quo confixum est lignum sanctae crucis. In quo loco pro nobis Dominus mortem sustenuit, et tollit rex coronam de capite suo et ponet eam super crucem, et expandit manus suas in caelum et tradit regnum christianorum Deo et patri et adsumetur crux in caelum simul cum coronam regis. [...] Et cumque exaltabitur crux in celum sursum, etiam tradet continuo spiritum suum Romanorum rex.

Bei Pseudo-Methodius ist es demnach das Kreuzesholz, an welchem der letzte römische Herrscher seine Insignien ablegt und damit das Jüngste Gericht einleitet. Die Verbindung zwischen dem Kreuz und dem paradiesischen Baum des Lebens (welchen der wiedererblühte dürre Baum symbolisiert) ist hingegen bereits älter und findet sich zuerst im 4. Jahrhundert.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. Peuckert, W.E., Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, II, Sp. 505 – 513 (s.v. „dürre Baum). Wolfram Brandes sieht den Ursprung in der *letzten Vision Daniels* und verweist ebenso auf die *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*. Vgl. Brandes, Wolfram, Konstantinopels Fall im Jahre 1204 und ‚apokalyptische‘ Prophetien, in: van Bekkum, Wout Jac. u. a. (Hgg.), *Syriac polemics. Studies in Honour of Gerit Jan Reinink*, Leuven u. a. 2007, S. 239 – 259, hier S. 257 f.

<sup>28</sup> Zur Diskussion um seine Lokalisierung vgl. Möhring, Hannes, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit. Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkung einer tausendjährigen Weissagung*, Stuttgart 2000 (Mittelalter-Forschungen 3), S. 258 f.

<sup>29</sup> Vgl. Parry, Ken, *Images in the Church of the East: The Evidence from Central Asia and China*, in: Coakley, J.F. and Parry, K. (Hgg.), *The Church of the East*, (Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 78:3), Manchester 1996, S. 143 – 162, hier S. 154. Weitere Informationen zu dieser Parallele, vgl. Prasser Viktoria, *Die Sage von der Zukunftsschlacht am Baum*, (Germanische Studien 224), Berlin 1940, S. 160 ff.

Das Motiv der Niederlegung der Insignien lässt dabei eine Deutung in zwei Richtungen zu. Zum einen gilt diese als Verzicht der weltlichen Herrschaft zugunsten der göttlichen,<sup>30</sup> andererseits ist es aber auch möglich diesen Akt als christliche Eroberung eines fernen und ehemals heidnischen Gebietes zu sehen. Diese Deutung hat den Vorteil, dass sie das Motiv der endgültigen Konvertierung der gesamten Menschheit einschließt, die dem Jüngsten Gericht vorhergehen muss und ist damit eng mit apokalyptischen Vorstellungen verbunden.

Unterstützt wird diese Interpretation, wenn man bedenkt, dass im 14. Jahrhundert in einer Weiterentwicklung des Motivs der Baum in das Zentrum von Tábriz, der Hauptstadt des persischen Mongolenreiches, gesetzt wird. Hier steht er unter starker Bewachung, da gesagt wird, dass der machtvolle Herrscher, der den Baum für sich ‚erobert‘, die Herrschaft über die gesamte Welt erlangt.<sup>31</sup> Diese Einschätzung von der Bedeutung des Baumes unterstreicht daher die zweite Deutung des Motivs von der endgültigen Herrschaftsübernahme in einem fernen paganen Land.

Ein weiterer Aspekt der Legende vom dürren Baum ist deren Verknüpfung mit der Endzeitschlacht. In der griechischen Daniel-Apokalypse aus dem 13. Jahrhundert heißt es hierzu:

[...]und er wird schlagen die Ismaeliten, Äthiopier, Franken, Tataren und jedes Geschlecht. Und die Ismaeliten wird er in drei (Teile) teilen. Den ersten Teil wird er mit dem Schwert schlagen, den zweiten wird er taufen, und den dritten wird er mit großem Grimm bis zum Monodendros verfolgen.<sup>32</sup>

Ein Teil der Feinde wird demnach bis zum dürren Baum (dem Monodendros) verfolgt werden. Ähnlich also, wie es auch der *Sidrac* anführt. Ebenso findet sich, wenn auch sehr ungenau, die Dreiteilung der Gegner:

Les uns penront autre chemin et se metront en lor terre de coi le plus d’els seront de cele terre; et les autres iront en cell terre dont il issirent, et les autres se perderont ou desert.<sup>33</sup>

Der *Sidrac* nimmt dann das Motiv des dürren Baumes wieder auf, wobei der Autor den Schauplatz der Schlacht, wie auch die Lokalisierung des Baumes damit scheinbar östlich von Bagdad legt. In seiner Schilderung wird das Motiv des Baumes allerdings anders verwandt:

Et quand cil d’Occident seront a l’arbre sec, si demorront la .ij. mois, et tot jors lor vendra la vitaille après, et le salu de tout le pueple comunal por la grant doute et por la grant cremeur qu’il auront

<sup>30</sup> Vgl. Prasser, Viktoria, Die Sage von der Zukunftsschlacht am Baum, (Germanische Studien 224), Berlin 1940, S. 184.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. Schmieder (2005), S. 70.

<sup>32</sup> Schmoltdt, Hans, Die Schrift „vom jungen Daniel“ und „Daniels letzte Vision“. Herausgabe und Interpretation zweier apokalyptischer Texte, Hamburg 1972, S. 135 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Abschnitt 1150. Ruhe, S. 407.

d'els se dira on lor langage: 'Deus vous sault.' Et tel jor comme le Fils Dieu resuscitera, le jor de Pasques, de mort a vie, le peres de la meson Dieu, Papes, fera sacrifice au Filz Dieu a cel arbre sec; et at tele hore qu'il le fera, l'arbre reverdira et getera feuilles et flors. Adonc sauront il que la grace du Filz de Dieu sera descendue sur euls, et ce sera a els senefiance qu'il auront revenchiee la honte et l'ennui que cil firent a Dieu qu'il ocistrent.<sup>34</sup>

Kein Herrscher legt hier demnach seine Insignien am dürren Baum nieder. Die Rolle der oben erwähnten Großen, „[...]mout de rois et mout de seignores et le roy de lor rois, emperor [...]“,<sup>35</sup> ist der des Papstes untergeordnet. Bezeichnend ist vor allem auch, dass die weltlichen Herrscher bis hin zum Kaiser keine namentlichen Zusätze enthalten. Bedenkt man, dass vorher Karl der Große namentlich mehrfach genannt wird und seine Rolle für die christliche Rückeroberung besonders betont wird, so erscheint dies zunächst verwunderlich.

Der Autor des Textes übernimmt demnach ein bekanntes Motiv, welches zumindest im Osten bereits bekannt war, und interpretiert dieses für seine Zwecke um. Für ihn ist das direkte Herannahen des Jüngsten Gerichts, welches mit der Erwartung einer Friedenszeit und endgültigen Erlösung verbunden ist, unmittelbar verknüpft mit der vollständigen Christianisierung der Völker durch die lateinische Kirche. Und noch deutlicher: nicht durch die kämpferischen Maßnahmen der christlich-weltlichen Großen wird die Endzeit vollzogen, sondern letztlich durch die Wiederaufnahme der elementaren Predigt des Wortes Gottes. Es ist somit das direkte göttliche Wunder, welches die fremden Heiden des Ostens zum christlichen Glauben führt.

Der *Sidrac* nimmt hier eine Bedeutungsverschiebung dieses Motivs vor, die bislang nur in späteren Quellen gefunden wurde.<sup>36</sup>

## Das letzte Volk der Endzeit im *Sidrac*

Zunächst erfolgt noch eine eingeschobene Frage des König Boctus nach der Anzahl der ‚dürren Bäume‘. In seiner Antwort spricht Sidrac von zwei Bäumen, die so mächtig sind, dass mehrere Männer diese nicht umfassen können und, die so dicht an der Wüste lägen, dass sie kaum eine Stunde ohne Sonne wären. Es wurde bereits darauf hingewiesen, dass die Doppelung des ‚dürren Baumes‘ eine typische Vervielfachung dieser Prophezeiung sei,<sup>37</sup> doch vielmehr ist anzumerken, dass durch die erweiterten Aussagen hier, der *Sidrac* wiederum einen Fokus auf den Topos legt, indem er diesen mit großen Volumen und damit Macht besetzt. Diese Wirkmächtigkeit wird dann zu Beginn der nächsten Prophezeiung nochmals unterstrichen; indem in der Nähe des Baumes/der Bäume Menschen angesiedelt werden, die diesen bewachen sollen. Diese letzte der dermaßen individuell gestalteten Prophezeiungen, 1152, berichtet nun vom

<sup>34</sup> Ebd.

<sup>35</sup> Ebd., S. 406.

<sup>36</sup> Hannes Möhring sieht ähnliche Aspekte erst für das 14. und 15. Jh. Vgl. Möhring, S. 260.

<sup>37</sup> Vgl. Schmieder (1994), S. 270, Fußnote 378.

Aufbruch derer des Westens nach Indien. Sie erobern das Land eines Volkes, welches als Nubier bezeichnet wird. Mit Hilfe derer von den zwei Bergen werden sie die besiegen, ‚die gegen sie sind‘.

Aprés venra une grant gent moult desconnoissant, et seront ydolastres et feront moult de mal au pueple, Crestiens, du Fils Dieu, et gaaigneront la terre jusques a cel meemes flun. Dont assembleront .iij. nascions du pueple du Filz Dieu et iront a l'encontre d'els et les metront a neent. Et ce quil demorra d'els si se convertiront a la foi du Fils Dieu.<sup>38</sup>

Der *Sidrac* setzt demnach ein weiteres, nicht näher benanntes, Volk ein. Erst wenn dieses sich zum rechten Glauben bekehren lässt, kann der eigentliche Beginn der Endzeit, also das Auftauchen des Antichrists, erfolgen.

Es seien dies die Zeichen der Ankunft des falschen Propheten, welcher folgend als geboren in Babylon, von einer schlechten Frau, charakterisiert wird. Dieser Abschnitt und die darauf folgenden, die den konkreten Ablauf des Jüngsten Gerichts schildern, sind wiederum dem *Lucidaire* entnommen.

## Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse

Durch das Auftauchen dieses letzten, nicht näher benannten Volkes scheint der Autor des *Sidrac* den Beginn der Endzeit weiter in die Zukunft zu legen. Die Ungenauigkeit der Schilderung in diesem Teil des Textes kann ein Zeichen dafür sein, dass, wenn man mit den konkret von Sidrac geschilderten Ereignissen in seinem Sinne umgehe, ausreichend Zeit verbliebe, die Endzeit handhabbar zu gestalten. Noch konkreter: folgt man den Handlungsvorschlägen, den Sichtweisen des Autors, dann nimmt dies dem Ende der Zeiten den Schrecken. Hierzu sollte nochmals auf die einzelnen Aussagen zu den Endzeitvölkern im *Sidrac* geschaut werden.

Der *Sidrac* nimmt zunächst Stellung zur Rolle der griechischen Christen zur kirchlichen Spaltung; die positive Wendung hin zur Endzeit kann nur durch die Haltung und Taten der westlichen Christen erfolgen. Die byzantinischen Christen hingegen lösen durch ihren Abfall von Gott diesen Prozess erst aus. Der eingefügte Verweis auf das Heiratsbegehren eines westlichen Herrschers, welches mit militärischer Hilfe der Tartaren offenbar gelöst wird, hat im *Sidrac* für die Sammlung der kämpferischen Kräfte eine retardierende Wirkung, wie wir gesehen haben.

Wie ist nun die Rolle der Mongolen in diesem Text zu deuten. Der Einfluss dieser auf die Endzeit entspricht nicht der westlichen Haltung der Zeit zu diesem Volk. Der *Sidrac* scheint eine neue Sichtweise anzubieten und unterlässt dabei sämtliche negativen Charakterisierungen im Hinblick auf die Rolle dieses Volkes auf die Endzeit. Die Schilderungen des *Sidrac* zu den Mongolen sind dabei individuell gestaltet, ihr

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<sup>38</sup> Abschnitt 1152. Ruhe, S. 408.

möglicher Einfluss auf die Endzeit ist für den Autor des Textes von eschatologischer Relevanz.

Anders als die Aspekte, die sich um das weitere Endzeitvolk, die Sarazenen, drehen. Zwar sind diese durch ihre Kampfeshandlungen und Eroberungen ursprünglich der primäre Gegner, doch die Schilderung im *Sidrac* verbleibt hier in der Wiedergabe der historischen Ereignisse, die dem Leser durch die Kenntnis der Kreuzzüge bekannt sind. Eine eschatologische Deutung der Sarazenen erfolgt nicht.

Abschließend soll nochmals der Blick auf die mögliche Provenienz des *Livre de Sidrac* gerichtet werden. Es wurden einige Ansätze zusammengetragen, die die These, der *Sidrac* stamme ursprünglich aus dem christlichen Osten, unterstützen sollten. Zum einen – wie eben erwähnt – ist dies die positivere Haltung zur Rolle der Mongolen, bei der ein Zusammenschluss mit diesem bislang als bedrohlich empfundenen Volk zumindest möglich erscheint.

Zum Anderen ist vor allem die neue Definition des Motiv des dürren Baumes, die so zu dieser Zeit des 13. Jahrhunderts bislang nirgends bekannt ist, ein Indiz für einen östlichen Ursprung des *Sidrac*. Sicherlich kann hier noch längst kein abschließendes Urteil gefällt werden, doch die Nutzung und Weiterentwicklung von bereits bekannten Topoi, die vermutlich in einem uns noch unbekanntem intensiven Austausch zwischen dem Osten und dem Westen bestanden haben könnte, verdient für den *Livre de Sidrac* einer genaueren Untersuchung.



Felicitas Schmieder

# Gogs und Magogs ‚natürliche Milde‘? Die Mongolen als Endzeitvölker im Wandel von Wissen und Wünschen

Im Jahre 1241 fielen die Mongolen, angeführt von einem Enkel des Činggis Khan, an zwei Stellen über lateineuropäische Länder her, besiegten christliche Heere bei Liegnitz in Schlesien und bei Mohi in der ungarischen Theiss-Ebene. Zwar zogen sie bald wieder ab, doch nicht ohne das Land verwüstet und unzählige Menschen getötet, Angst und Schrecken verbreitet zu haben.<sup>1</sup> Eigentlich waren sie so überraschend gar nicht gekommen – schon einige Jahre lang hatte es Nachrichten über verheerende Schlachten im Osten gegeben, 1240 war Kiev gefallen – und auch aus dem Heiligen Land waren schon Gerüchte nach Europa gedrungen über ein mächtiges Vordringen aus Asien. Doch da waren ihre Gegner Ungläubige gewesen oder Christen, die eine falsche Konfession hatten, kurz Leute, die es nicht besser verdienten. Nun aber hatte es die rechtgläubigen Christen getroffen, hatten diese den Angreifern aus der Steppe offenbar nichts entgegenzusetzen gehabt. Schon früher hatte mancher darüber spekuliert, wer denn dieses fremde Volk sei, das da so machtvoll und anscheinend vorher ungekannt aufgetaucht war. Jetzt aber mussten Antworten her, und ganz Europa schrie nach ihnen. Es wurden eine ganze Reihe vorgeschlagen – darunter auch solche, die sich Gedanken über den Namen des Volkes machten, denn die Mongolen sind in dieser Zeit fast immer unter dem Namen der Tartaren verzeichnet (und dieser Name erinnerte an den Tartaros, die Hölle). Einige der Antworten überlebten die zahllosen neuen Informationen, die im Laufe der Zeit über die Mongolen eintrafen.<sup>2</sup> Eine davon soll im Folgenden über die Jahrzehnte verfolgt werden: Wie sie Antwort bleiben konnte, obgleich sie nicht mehr zu den gewandelten Umständen zu passen schien – und was aus ihr wurde, als sie sich an diese Umstände anpasste.

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1 Eine intensive Untersuchung sämtlicher frühen Wahrnehmungen der Mongolen durch die Lateineuropäer lieferte, nach wie vor unersetzt, Gian Andri Bezzola (Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht (1220–70). Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Völkerbegegnung, Bern–München 1974). Zur Bedeutung der Geschehnissen im Rahmen der mongolischen Geschichte vgl. Michael Weiers, Geschichte der Mongolen, Stuttgart 2004.

2 Zum Weiterleben der Antworten, zu Gewichtungen und Gewichtsverlagerungen im Laufe der aus den „Mongolensturm“ folgenden gut zwei Jahrhunderte Felicitas Schmieder, Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert, Sigmaringen 1994, und auch Peter Jackson, The Mongols and the West 1221–1410, Harlow 2005.

Bevor wir uns jedoch der fraglichen Antwort und ihrer Geschichte nähern, muss eine grundsätzliche Differenz zu unserem heutigen Weltbild vorausgeschickt werden: Wir würden heute, wenn wir (sagen wir: im Weltall) Lebewesen begegnen, die wir noch nie zuvor gesehen haben, diese zu erforschen versuchen und als bis dahin noch nie gesehenes, neues Phänomen zu beschreiben. Die mittelalterlichen Lateineuropäer hingegen waren überzeugt, daß Gottes gesamte Schöpfung in der Bibel und der antiken Überlieferung bis hin zu den Schriften der Kirchenväter bereits beschrieben war – daß man nur scheinbar Neuem begegnen konnte, das es dann mit Altbekanntem zu identifizieren galt. Wenn also ein scheinbar unbekanntes Volk auftauchte, musste es in der Überlieferung wiedergefunden werden.

Neben anderen Möglichkeiten gab es da die besonders gut verborgenen (und in diesem Band allgegenwärtigen) Völker Gog und Magog. Sie würden, so wußte man, einst am Ende der Zeiten Antichrist zu Hilfe eilen bei seinem Werk, die Welt zu zerstören – bevor dem von Christus selbst bei seiner Rückkehr auf die Erde ein Ende gemacht würde. Was über sie zu wissen war, stammte aus einem Konglomerat alt- und neutestamentlicher Erzählungen, die mit Überlieferungen aus der griechischen Antike zusammengefügt waren eine Verquickung von Überlieferungen, die jetzt selbstverständlich war, während Lutz Greisiger in diesem Band in ihre Anfänge zurückgreift). Es war ein Wissen, dessen Kern über die Grenzen von Religionen und Konfessionen hinweg in weiten Teilen der alten Welt verbreitet war – und das im 13. Jahrhundert auch jedem im lateinischen Westen bekannt war, der ein wenig höhere Bildung genossen hatte, war es doch zusammengefasst in der *Historia Scholastica* des Petrus Comestor (12. Jh.), einer kommentierten Nacherzählung der biblischen Heilsgeschichte.<sup>3</sup> Einst waren zehn Stämme der Juden vom Glauben der Väter abgefallen und waren zur Strafe verschleppt worden (2. Könige 15, 29; 1. Chron. 5,26). Als Alexander der Große – der ja bis ans Ende der Welt gelangt sein sollte – im Norden auf sie traf, war er über ihre Unreinheit und Wildheit so entsetzt, daß er sie mit Gottes Hilfe hinter eisernen Toren in den Kaspischen Bergen einschloss. Die Völker aber, die Alexander eingeschlossen hatte, waren – das wußte man aus der sog. Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius aus dem 7. Jahrhundert,<sup>4</sup> ihrer Einarbeitung in die biblische Lehre durch Petrus Comestor, und

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<sup>3</sup> Petrus Comestor, „*Historia Scholastica*,“ ed. J. F. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 198 (Paris 1855), col. 1049–1722, here 1498.

<sup>4</sup> Ps.-Methodius 5, 26: „*Revelationes*,“ ed. Ernst Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*. Pseudomethodius, Adso und die Tiburtinische Sibylle (Halle/Saale, 1898); *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen, ed. W. J. Aerts und G.A.A. Kortekaas, 2 vol. (Leuven, 1998). – Der vorliegende Band vereint zahlreiche Aufsätze, die zu unterschiedlichen Zeitpunkten und aus unterschiedlichen kulturellen Perspektiven die Entwicklung der Legenden um die Endzeitvölker Gog und Magog aufgreifen – nicht zuletzt auch die jüdische Perspektive, die anders als die anderen Hoffnung in jüdische Gog und Magog setzten. Die orientalistisch-christliche Perspektive hat schon im ersten „Endzeiten“-Band Andrea Schmidt behandelt (*Die „Brüste des Nordens“ und Alexanders Tor gegen Gog und Magog*, in: *Endzeiten*. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen, hg. von Wolfram Brandes und Felicitas Schmieder, Berlin 2008 (Millennium-Studien 16), 89–99. Für Inhalt und Entwicklung der Legende darüber hinaus immer noch

der Popularisierung in der *Historia de Preliis Alexandri Magni* bis ins 13. Jahrhundert<sup>5</sup> – niemand anderes als die Endzeitvölker Gog und Magog, von denen Hezekiel im alten (Ez. 38 – 39) und Johannes im Neuen Testament (Off. 20) gesprochen hatten. Nahte der jüngste Tag, so würde es ihnen gelingen, diese Eisernen Tore zu durchbrechen.

Wenn nun ein wildes Volk (mit fremdartiger, nomadischer Lebensweise) aus dem Nordosten kam, das alles zerstörte und ein Blutbad nach dem anderen anrichtete, dann lag die Theorie nahe, daß es sich um Gog und Magog handeln könnte, die ihre Tore durchbrochen hatten. Der Chronist Thomas von Split, am dalmatinischen Rande des hart getroffenen ungarischen Reiches berichtend, weiß, daß angesichts der Tarenten „gelehrte Männer die alten Schriften durchforscht und vor allem aus den Prophezeiungen des Märtyrers Methodius [das ist Pseudo-Methodius] ermittelt [haben], daß sie jene Völker seien, die vor der Ankunft des Antichrist kommen müssten“.<sup>6</sup> Das wäre dann eine Nachricht wert, zumal es eine Prophezeiung des süditalienischen Abts Joachim von Fiore († 1202) gab,<sup>7</sup> die auf ein Kommen des Antichrist um 1260 zu deuten schien – also passte auch das.

Um allerdings sicher zu sein, mussten weitere Informationen her. Einer, der eifrig jede Information sammelte, deren er habhaft werden konnte, war der englische Benediktinermönch Matthäus Parisiensis, der im Kloster Saint Albans nur wenig nördlich von London und dem englischen Königshof eng verbunden, lebte. Dies öffnete ihm beste Informationsmöglichkeiten, und so verfügen wir heute über eine bemerkenswerte Sammlung von Augenzeugenberichten und Deutungsversuchen, auch des Matthäus selbst.

Einer der Berichte, die Matthäus Parisiensis sammelte, stammt von einem ungarischen Bischof, der um 1242, also kurz nach Einfall und Rückzug der Mongolen, in Ungarn Kriegsgefangene aus dem mongolischen Heer verhört hatte. Die Fragen, die er ihnen gestellt hatte und mit Hilfe derer er sie zu identifizieren hoffte, folgten bereits einer Theorie, zumindest in der Version, die uns verschriftlicht vorliegt, und entsprechend kommentierte er die Antworten.<sup>8</sup> „Ich fragte sie, wo ihr Land sei. Sie sagten,

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nützlich: Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations*, Cambridge/Mass. 1932; and for further developments Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews. Antisemitism in an apocalyptic age 1200 – 1600*, Leiden 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Die „mongolische Interpretation“ der *Historia de preliis* in deren Version J3: *Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni*, Rezension J<sub>3</sub>, ed. Karl Steffens (Meisenheim/Glan, 1975); Synoptische Edition der Rezensionen des Leo Archipresbyter und der interpolierten Fassungen J<sub>1</sub>, J<sub>2</sub>, J<sub>3</sub> (Buch I und II), ed. Hermann-Josef Bergmeister (Meisenheim/Glan, 1975); cf. Quilichinus von Spoleto, *Historia Alexandri Magni* nebst dem Text der Zwickauer Hs. der *Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni* – Rezension J<sub>3</sub>, ed. Wolfgang Kirsch (Skopje, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas von Split (de Spalato), gegen 1250, *Historia Pontificum Salonitanorum et Spalatinorum*, ed. MGH SS XXIX S. 568 – 598, hier 591 Z.42/4.

<sup>7</sup> Zu Joachims Leben und Werk vgl. Gian Luca Potestà, *Il tempo dell'Apocalisse. Vita di Gioacchino da Fiore*, Mailand 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Matthaeus Parisiensis, Chronica Maiora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, 7 Bde., London 1872 – 1883 (*Scriptores rerum Britannicarum. Rolls Series. 57, 1 – 7*), VI, 75/6, ad a. 1242; cf. das Interview auch in

es läge hinter einigen Bergen und nahe bei einem Volk, das Gog genannt würde – und ich glaube, dieses Volk ist Gog und Magog „ – mehr war für die mittelalterlichen Leser ganz überflüssig hinzuzufügen. Der Bischof hatte das Verhör sehr sorgfältig und konsequent geführt: „Ich fragte sie, wie sie die Berge überwunden hätten, hinter denen sie gelebt hatten. Sie antworteten, daß ihre Vorfahren mehr als 300 Jahre gearbeitet hätten und Bäume gefällt und Steine zerschlagen hätten, um herauszukommen, bevor es ihnen schließlich gelang.“ Und der Bischof fand noch mehr überzeugende Beweise: „Ich fragte sie, ob sie irgendwelche Unterschiede machten bei dem, was sie essen. Sie sagten nein: Sie essen Frösche, Schlangen, Hunde und alles Lebendige ohne Unterschied“ – wieder etwas, das auf unreine Völker, auf Gog und Magog deuten konnte. Mehr noch: Die eingeschlossenen Völker waren ja nichts anderes als die zehn verlorenen Stämme der Juden: „Ich fragte sie nach ihrem Glauben, und um es kurz zu machen, sie glauben an gar nichts. Aber dennoch haben sie die Schriftzeichen der Juden, und sie begannen, sie zu erlernen, als sie ausgingen, um alle Welt zu erobern – denn sie glauben, daß sie alle Welt erobern werden – und sie hatten niemals eine eigene Schrift. Ich fragte sie, wer sie diese Schriftzeichen gelehrt hätte. Sie antworteten, daß das bleiche Männer waren, die viel fasteten und lange Gewänder trugen und niemanden angriffen [vermutlich sind uighurische buddhistische Mönche beschrieben]. Und weil sie mir viele Details über diese Männer erzählt haben“ – das heißt: weil der Bischof immer wieder nachfragte, um immer mehr zu hören, das seine Spekulationen bestätigen könnte – „Details, die mit dem Aberglauben der Pharisäer und Sadduzäer übereinstimmen, glaube ich, daß sie Pharisäer und Sadduzäer sind.“ Natürlich wussten die Tartaren nichts über den jüdischen Glauben und konnten kein Hebräisch sprechen, wie Matthäus Parisiensis eigenständig kommentierend hinzufügt – doch waren die verlorenen Judenstämme nicht eben deshalb bestraft worden, weil sie Bräuche und Rituale verdorben hatten? Noch um 1300 sollte der Dominikaner Ricold von Monte Croce diese Argumentation aufgreifen: Ihn erinnerte der von den Tartaren selbst bevorzugte Name *Mogoli* an *Magogoli* – andererseits seien die Mongolen den Juden in Religion, Aussehen und Sitten ganz unähnlich, so daß eine Lösung offenbleiben müsse.<sup>9</sup>

Auch Matthäus Parisiensis war unsicher geblieben, und die Gog und Magog-Identifikation war auch nur eine von mehreren vorgeschlagenen Antworten. So einfach gab man sich im 13. Jahrhundert nicht mehr zufrieden – man hatte das systematische

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den *Annales de Waverley*, ed. in Henry Richards Luard (Ed.), *Annales monastici* II, London 1865 (*Scriptores rerum Britannicarum. Rolls Series*.36,2) ad a. 1242, 324. Interpretation dieses Textes im Zusammenhang mit anderen vornehmlich eschatologischen Deutungen Felicitas Schmieder, *Christians, Jews, Muslims – and Mongols. Fitting a Foreign People into the Western Christian Apocalyptic Szenario*, in: *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006) S. 274 – 295.

<sup>9</sup> Ricold von Montecroce. *Itinerarium*, c.X S.118, ed. Johann Karl M.Laurent, *Peregrinatores Medii aevi quattuor*, Leipzig <sup>2</sup>1873, 103 – 141.

wissenschaftliche Fragen gelernt, und man war im Begriff, eigene Forschung immer mehr über die einfachen Antworten der Tradition zu stellen.<sup>10</sup>

Unsereiner würde vielleicht anmerken: Wenn Jahr um Jahr und dann auch noch Jahrzehnt um Jahrzehnt ins Land gingen, ohne daß die Welt unterging, müsste doch der Beweis erbracht gewesen sein, daß die Identifikation ein Irrtum war. In der Tat gab es solche Stimmen auch damals schon. Andererseits war die Frage nach dem bevorstehenden Weltende in der mittelalterlichen Christenheit von zentralerer Bedeutung als bei uns heute – bei uns sind es eher randständige eschatologisch gestimmte Gruppen, die um die jüngste Jahrtausendwende Berechnungen anstellten und in „9–11“ das Werk Antichrists erkannten, die Prophezeiungen des Nostradamus deuten und aus dem vermeintlichen „Ende“ des Maya-Kalenders das Ende der Welt ablasen. Damals aber: Wer wollte mit Gott rechten, wenn längere Zeit ins Land ging als erwartet – stand doch Gott über aller Zeit und sollte der Mensch sich ohnehin die Mahnung zu Herzen nehmen, das das Ende zwar gewiß, der Tag jedoch und die Stunde ungewiß seien (so die sog. Synoptische oder Kleine Apokalypse Mt 24, 36, Mk 13, 32).

Sicher ist: Offensichtlich verstummte unter den Gelehrten die Frage der Identifikation mit Gog und Magog noch lange nicht. Sicher ist aber auch: Zunehmend setzte sich dem Verdacht gefährlicher Irrlehre aus, wer zu intensiv versuchte, den Zeitpunkt des Weltendes doch zu berechnen.<sup>11</sup> Einer derer, die sich hier auf gefährliches Pflaster wagten, war der Franziskaner Roger Bacon, der in den 1260er Jahren in Oxford forderte, die Region im Osten, wo die Kaspischen Berge lägen, näher zu erforschen, um herauszufinden, was es mit dem Aufbruch der Mongolen im Zusammenhang mit dem bevorstehenden Weltende denn nun auf sich habe. Allein die Tatsache, daß sie hinter Bergen aufgebrochen seien, mache die Tartaren jedenfalls noch nicht zu Gog und Magog: Es seien aus „jenen Gegenden“ schon häufiger Völker hervorgebrochen, „und deshalb reicht der Auszug der Tartaren nicht aus, um die Zeit der Ankunft des Anti-

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**10** Johannes Fried, Auf der Suche nach der Wirklichkeit. Die Mongolen und die abendländische Erfahrungswissenschaft im 13. Jahrhundert, in: HZ 243 (1986) 287–332; vgl. Schmieder, Den Alten den Glauben zu entziehen, wie Anm. 28.

**11** Vgl. dazu nur den weiter unten zu Wort kommenden Oxforder Theologen Heinrich von Harclay, der 1313 beim Angriff auf einen spezifischen Gegner (Arnald von Villanova und Schriften wie dessen *De tempore adventus antichristi*) die Endzeitberechner generell aufs Korn nimmt (*Utrum astrologi vel quicumque calculatores possint probare 2 m adventum Christi*, ed. Pelster, wie Anm. 15) und ihre Argumentation grundsätzlich disqualifiziert: „Jene Meinung ist häretisch, wie auch alle anderen, die versuchen, den sicheren Zeitpunkt der Ankunft Christi zu bestimmen (asserere)“ (S. 59/60). Man kann es gar nicht wissen (S. 69); die angeblichen Propheten, die behaupten, es zu können, sind Lügner: „Ich glaube, wenn der ‚Magister‘ [Arnald v. Villanova] im vorhergesagten Jahr 1356 lebte und sähe, daß jenes [Prophezeite] sich nicht erfüllt hätte, würde er eine neue Jahresberechnung erfinden...“ (S. 68). Vgl. B.Hirsch-Reich, Heinrichs v. Harclays Polemik gegen die Berechnung der zweiten Ankunft Christi, in: *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 20 (1953) 144–149. – Mit seiner Vermutung liegt Heinrich ganz richtig: Immer wieder werden im Spätmittelalter und auch danach vorhergesagte Endjahre wieder hinausgeschoben, ohne daß die Versuche dadurch weniger geworden wären.

christ zu bestimmen, sondern anderes ist erforderlich.“<sup>12</sup> Ähnlich distanziert hatte sich kurz vorher auch sein Ordensbruder Alexander Minorita in einem Kommentar zur Johannes-Apokalypse geäußert: Aus jenen Gegenden am Kaspischen Meer, wo Gog und Magog eingeschlossen sind, kamen schon viele Völker.<sup>13</sup> Schon deshalb suchten auch viele Asienreisenden nach Gog und Magog bzw. versuchten, die vorgeschlagene Gleichsetzung der Tartaren mit diesen Völkern zu überprüfen oder zu verifizieren. Wenigstens für einige unter ihnen kam eine Identität nicht mehr in Frage: Hatte es doch die Tartaren, so der weit- und tatsächlich zu den Mongolen gereiste Marco Polo um 1300, zu jener Zeit, als Alexander die Völker einschloß, noch gar nicht gegeben.<sup>14</sup>

Während Roger Bacon zwar die Identifikation der Mongolen mit Gog und Magog anzweifelte, aber der Sache auf den Grund gehen wollte, um Näheres über das Weltende zu erfahren, sah ein knappes halbes Jahrhundert später ebenfalls in Oxford Heinrich von Harclay ganz klar und stand vor allem in der Frage der Weltendebe-rechnung ganz auf der anderen Seite: Er wandte sich gegen jeden Versuch, überhaupt die Endzeit zu berechnen, denn das sei nicht möglich und höchstens Ketzerei. Was solche Zeichendeutungen überhaupt wert seien, zeige sich schon daran, daß sie immer wieder – und immer wieder falsch – vorgenommen und durch die Zeit überholt würden. Denn oft sei behauptet worden, die Tartaren hätten die Tore Alexanders durchbrochen und damit das Ende der Welt angekündigt. Aber das habe – und hier schließt Heinrich an Einwände schon Roger Bacons und Alexander Minoritas an – vor siebenhundert Jahren schon Isidor von Sevilla von den „Hunnen, die bald Ungarn genannt wurden, behauptet, und auch bei denen traf es nicht zu, obwohl sie doch bis Frankreich vorgedrungen und also viel mächtiger waren, als die Tartaren es heute

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**12** Roger Bacon, *Opus maius ad Clementem papam*, ed. John Henry Bridges, 3 vols. Oxford 1897–1900, II S. 234 bzw. 235; vgl. <http://www.archive.org/stream/opusmajusrogerb00bridgoog#page/n10/mode/2up>. – Zu Rogers hochsystematischem Vorgehen in Sachen geographische Verortung generell vgl. Patrick Gautier Dalché, *Perfecta doctrina locorum: lieu et espace géographique selon Roger Bacon*, in: Suarez-Nani, Tiziana/Rohde, Martin (Hg.), *Représentations et conceptions de l'espace dans la culture médiévale / Repräsentationsformen und Konzentionen des Raums in der Kultur des Mittelalters*, Freiburg/CH 2001 (Scrinium Friburgense. 30), 9–43.

**13** Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, ed. Alois Wachtel, Weimar 1955 (MGH QGG. 1), S. 451. Er nennt die Mongolen hier gar nicht und hält es generell mit Augustinus, der die Identifikation mit tatsächlich in der Barbarica lebenden Völkern vermeiden will: *De civitate dei* XX, 11. – Zu Alexanders Apokalypse-Kommentar Sabine Schmolinsky, *Der Apokalypsenkommentar des Alexander Minorita. Zur frühen Rezeption Joachims von Fiore in Deutschland*, Hannover 1991 (MGH StuT. 3); auch dies., *Ordensprophetie nach Joachim von Fiore? Franziskaner und Dominikaner im Apokalypsenkommentar des Alexander Minorita*, in: Jan A. Aertsen / Andreas Speer (Hg.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, Berlin – New York 2000, 321–332.

**14** Marco Polo, *Milione – Le divisament dou monde XXIII (22) S. 16/7(25) = franco-ital.* ed. Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, Florenz 1928 (franco-ital./italienisch (toskanisch) ed. Gabriella Ronchi, Mailand 1982). Deutsche Übersetzung *Il Milione – Die Wunder der Welt*, Übersetzung aus altfranzösischen und lateinischen Quellen und Nachwort von Elise Guignard, Zürich <sup>3</sup>1984, S. 32.

sind“.<sup>15</sup> Heinrich gehörte damit einer Richtung an, die „Deeschatologisierung“ (so unsere Bezeichnung im Zuge der Tagung) betrieb: Gegen das Zeichendeuten auf konkrete Ereignisse hin, gegen eine explizite Naherwartung des Weltendes redeten solche Stimmen einer eher moralischen oder einer allegorischen Lesung der eschatologischen Äußerungen Christi und anderer das Wort. Alternativ holte man durch typologisch-allegorische Identifikation z. B. Antichrists diesen in die eigene Gesellschaft hinein, gab ihm damit aber eher Verweischarakter auf die Tatsache, daß das Ende grundsätzlich zu erwarten sei – so wie im Sinne des Apostels Paulus das Ende immer kommen konnte, ob nun mit Vorzeichen oder ohne<sup>16</sup> –, als daß sie das Ende tatsächlich ankündigen wollten. Beides allerdings bezeichnet Haltungen, die uns fast mehr noch als die konkret-lebensweltlichen Zeichendeutungen zeigen kann, wie stark die letzteren diskutiert wurden (die jedoch zugleich nicht verwechselt werden darf mit skeptischer Einstellung der biblischen Offenbarung als solcher gegenüber).<sup>17</sup>

Im Rahmen des biblisch vorgegebenen war man alles andere als naiv oder leichtgläubig. Gelehrte wie Roger Bacon riefen zur Forschung auf und die Asienreisenden achteten darauf, ob etwas dran sei an den Legenden. Ein wichtiges Ergebnis dieser Forschungsreisen zu den Mongolen war, daß man sich von der ganz realpolitischen Existenz eines Weltreiches überzeugen konnte, das die feste Absicht hatte, sich den Rest der Welt auch noch zu unterwerfen – dafür aber, das sollte die folgende Zeit zeigen, nicht mehr die Kraft hatte und sich sogar zeitweise in Westeuropa nach Verbündeten umsah, um im Vorderen Orient weiterzuerobern. Konsequenz aus dieser Konstellation, die forschende und reisende Lateineuropäer einem stagnierenden Großreich gegenüber treten ließ, waren jahrzehntelange enge Kontakte, waren Kennenlernen und ein Zurechtrücken des inzwischen nicht mehr fremden Volkes, das zwar ungläubig, brutal, grausam, offensiv und vieles andere mehr war, aber kaum in der Lage, als Vernichter in den letzten Tagen der Welt aufzutreten.<sup>18</sup>

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**15** Heinrich von Harclay: Die Quaestio des H. über die zweite Ankunft Christi und die Erwartung des baldigen Weltendes zu Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts, ed. Franz Pelster, in: *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 1 (1951) 25–82, hier S. 73. – Zu dieser frühen und traditionsstiftenden nomadischen Identifikation der Endzeitvölker Wolfram Brandes, Gog, Magog und die Hunnen. Anmerkungen zur eschatologischen „Ethnographie“ der Völkerwanderungszeit, in: *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, hg. von Walter Pohl / Clemens Gantner / Richard Payne, im Druck Aldershot 2012.

**16** Dazu, daß 1. Thess. 5, 2–3 diskutiert wurde, Alexander Patschovsky (Ed.), Eine Antichrist-Auslegung zu Lev. 24, 10–14: Das Werk Joachims von Fiore?, in: *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 67 (2011) 544–591, hier 547.

**17** Vgl. zu solchen Zügen der apokalyptisch-exegetischen Literatur in diesem Band Anke Holdenried und auch James Palmer.

**18** Die Entwicklung der diplomatischen Kontakte zwischen Mongolen und den Päpsten sowie verschiedenen lateineuropäischen Herrschern, und weiterhin des europäischen Blicks vgl. Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden*, wie Anm. 2, Kapitel III, 2 (Gesandtenaustausch in Anhang I S. 328–335).



Man sollte meinen, daß damit auch die gedankliche Verbindung zwischen den Mongolen und Gog und Magog zu den Akten gelegt worden wäre. Doch was bei den Akten liegt, bleibt verfügbar – die Nähe zu Gog und Magog, in die die Mongolen einmal gerückt worden waren, blieb in Erinnerung. Bestimmte Züge der mongolischen Geschichte hielten die Identifikation am Leben, obgleich die Mongolen gar nicht mehr als so schrecklich empfunden wurden. Das führte zu einer geradezu paradoxen Umkehrung der Beweislast: Nicht mehr den Mongolen musste nachgewiesen werden, daß sie die Endzeitvölker waren, sondern erklärt werden musste, weshalb Gog und Magog plötzlich so relativ harmlos schienen. Eine wichtige Episode war hier der Aufbruch hinter Bergen: Zumindest wenn man sie danach fragte, haben die Mongolen wohl nicht nur dem oben zitierten ungarischen Bischof bestätigt, daß sie hinter Bergen aufgebrochen seien – und jene europäischen Reisenden, die das mongolische Kerngebiet erreichten, wussten ebenfalls, daß man dafür den Altai überwinden musste. Der Bericht über den Aufbruch hinter Bergen, das Durchbrechen von Bergen ist allgegenwärtig, wenn europäische Weltchroniken die mongolische Frühgeschichte einfügen, oft nur ganz nebenbei, manchmal aber eben auch in einer Weise kommentiert, die zeigt, daß die Assoziation der von Alexander dem Großen eingeschlossenen Völker Gog und Magog immer noch allzeit im Hintergrund stand.

So schrieb um 1330 der oberitalienische Chronist Jacopo d'Acqui in seinem „Imago Mundi“ (Bild der Welt) über die Anfänge der Tartaren: „... sie befanden sich nämlich in einem riesigen, von Bergen abgeschlossenen Gebiet, in alter Zeit auf wunderbare Weise eingeschlossen vom großen makedonischen König [also Alexander] ... Und von dort brachen zu jener Zeit [zu Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts] einige hervor und einige blieben zurück. Jene aber, die ... herauskamen, nennt man Tartaren ... Die andere, größte Menge blieb dort zurück, weil es ihnen besser geht und sie fester eingeschlossen sind ... Zur Zeit des Antichristen aber, der unter ihnen geboren werden wird, werden sie, so heißt es, alle von dort ausbrechen.“ Die herausgekommenen Tartaren teilten zunächst die typischen Eigenschaften der eingeschlossenen Völker, doch weiter Jacopo: „Es ist wahr, daß sie, als sie zuerst aus den Bergen hervorkamen, alle Tiere aßen, doch bald nur noch gute und reine, weil sie in vielem ihre schändlichen Sitten, nach denen sie in den Bergen lebten, verbessert haben, und sie sind [nun] ganz normale Menschen.“<sup>19</sup> Jacopo ist damit eine Doppelung gelungen: Er bringt die Mongolen mit Gog und Magog in Verbindung, trennt sie aber zugleich von ihnen.

Anders der Franziskaner-Chronist Johannes Elemosina, der etwa zur selben Zeit, in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 14. Jahrhunderts, die Notwendigkeit sah, die gelehrte Identifikation der Zeit zwei Generationen früher mit jenen Mongolen zu vereinbaren, bei denen seine Ordensbrüder mit ihnen selbst zufolge großem Erfolg christliche

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<sup>19</sup> Jacopo d'Acqui (Chronik geschrieben bis 1330), *Chronica ymagine mundi*, ab OC – 1290, ed. in: Gustavo Avogadro (Ed.), *Monumenta Historiae Patriae V = Scriptores III*, Turin 1840, 1357 – 1626, hier Sp. 1558.



Mission üben:<sup>20</sup> Anfang des 13. Jahrhunderts brachen demnach die Tartaren aus den Indischen Bergen (und das heißt: aus dem Osten der Welt) „zur Entvölkerung anderer Gegenden auf. Von ihnen sagte man, dass sie jene Völker Gog und Magog seien, wie der Apokalypse-Kommentar bekräftigt. Und nachdem die Tartaren zahlreiche Reiche der Völker der Inder, Armenier, Turkomanen, Perser, Türken, Sarazenen und andere Völker unterworfen hatten, wurden sie, weil ihnen durch Gottes Voraussicht eine gewisse natürliche Milde eingegeben war, so von ihrem Zorn und ihrer Wildheit gewandelt und zur Güte bekehrt, dass sie die ihnen unterworfenen Völker mit Liebe und Höflichkeit zu regieren und zu fördern begannen.“<sup>21</sup>

Anders als die Gelehrten, die analytisch klare Fragen stellten und in scholastischer Manier nur ein klares Ja oder ein klares Nein als Antwort akzeptieren wollten, konnten Chronisten offenbar so sehr auf ihr Wissen von historischer Wandelbarkeit blicken, daß sie die Ausgangsbedingungen – Gog und Magog sind nun einmal die Endzeitvölker, die den Jüngsten Tag einläuten – aus den Augen verloren. Während nämlich Jacopo d’Acqui offensichtlich im Sinne dieser Bedingungen aus den Wandlungen der Mongolen schloß, daß sie, obzwar hinter Bergen eingeschlossen gewesen und ausgebrochen, doch nicht die Endzeitvölker waren, trennte Johannes Elemosina nicht so sauber. Er zitiert die Identifikation der Mongolen mit Gog und Magog, um anschließend ihre Wandlung zu demonstrieren. Er sagt nicht explizit, daß die Identifikation falsch war – ja, er deutet das nicht einmal an. Ob er die Identifikation nur offen ließ oder aufrechterhielt, ist also mangels expliziter Äußerung dazu nicht zu entscheiden. Aber er wäre gerade in seiner italienischen Heimat nicht allein damit gewesen, Gog und Magog ihrer endzeitlichen Bedeutung entkleidet und sie zu ganz normalen Völkern „herabgestuft“ zu haben.

Um die Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts berichtete der Florentiner Chronist Giovanni Villani wie selbstverständlich: „Im Jahre 1202 verließen die Tartaren die Berge von Gog und Magog, lateinisch *monti di Belgen* genannt; sie waren, wie man sagt, Nachkommen jener Stämme Israels, die der große Alexander wegen ihres schrecklichen Lebens in diese Berge einschloß.“<sup>22</sup> Und zur selben Zeit dichtete der Florentiner Poet Fazio degli Uberti: „In jener Zeit kamen Gog und Magog, die Alexander eingeschlossen hatte, aus den Bergen hervor unter Führung des Schmiedes *Cuscan* ...“<sup>23</sup> – und da bei letzterem

**20** Die Erfolgsmeldungen der Franziskaner vgl. Schmieder, Europa und die Fremden, wie Anm. 2, Kap. III. Zur lateinisch-christlichen Mission unter den Mongolen Jean Richard, *La papauté et les missions d’orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe – XVe siècles)*, Rom 1977 (Ecole fr. de Rome. 33).

**21** Johannes Elemosina, Chronik, in Auszügen ed. Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell’Oriente Francese*, 5 Bde., Quaracchi 1906–1927, II S. 103–137, hier S. 120, vgl. auch S. 107. Zum Werk Anna Dorothee von den Brincken, *Der „Oriens Christianus“ in der Chronik des Johannes Elemosyna OFM (1335–1336)*, in: 18. dt. Orientalistentag. Vorträge hg.v. W. Voigt, Wiesbaden 1974 (Zs. d. dt. Morgenländ. Ges. Suppl. 2) S. 63–75.

**22** Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, ed. Francesco Gherardi Dragomanni, 4 Bde., Florenz 1844–1845, V, 29 t. I, S. 209/10.

**23** Fazio degli Uberti *Fazio degli Uberti, Il dittamondo e le rime*, ed. Giuseppe Corsi, 2 Bde., Bari 1952: *Dittamondo* II, 26 vv.61–66, I S. 163.

auf eine Legende angespielt wird, die sich mit Činggis Khan verbunden hatte,<sup>24</sup> ist auch hier die Verbindung zwischen Mongolen und Endzeitvölkern evident. Noch weiter ging ein dritter Florentiner, der Romanautor Andrea da Barberino, gegen Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts: Sein weitgereister *Guerrino Meschino* erreicht die Berge, in die Alexander die Tartaren einschloß – die Tartaren, nicht die Juden, wie Andrea ausdrücklich vermerkte und damit also sogar die Prophezeiung korrigierte.<sup>25</sup>

Gog und Magog und Mongolen waren und blieben offenbar für viele Autoren ethnographisch eng verknüpft, und diese Verknüpfung hat einen historischen ebenso wie geographischen Ort. Damit drängt sich ein Blick auf die mittelalterlichen Weltkarten der Zeit auf, weil sie genau das Medium sind, in dem Weltgeschichte in ihrem geographischen Rahmen darstellbar wird.<sup>26</sup> Mittelalterliche Weltkarten (*mappae mundi*) unterscheidet von unseren heutigen intentional vor allem, daß es ihnen nicht in erster Linie um die Darstellung der Erde als geographischer Raum ging, sondern daß sie Heilsgeographie sein wollten:<sup>27</sup> Sie zeigen die wichtigsten Ereignisse der gesamten Weltgeschichte von deren Anfang, der Schöpfung, bis zu ihrem Ende, dem Jüngsten Tag. Deshalb gehörte das Irdische Paradies ebenso auf solche Karten wie die Völker Gog und Magog<sup>28</sup> – und ebenso alle mächtigen, Geschichte bewegenden Völker wie die Mongolen. Die Interpretation der *mappae mundi* wird erleichtert dadurch, daß sie ihre Gegenstände nicht allein im Bild zeigen, sondern mit oft zahlreichen und langen Legenden kommentieren.

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**24** Zum Schmied Cuscan und anderen Problemen der teilweise recht eigenständigen Versionen, die die Florentiner hier präsentieren, vgl. Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremde*, wie Anm. 2, S. 263, und hier vor allem Anm. 349 und 356.

**25** Andrea Barberino Andrea (di Jacopo) da Barberino (di Valdelsa) (= Andrea de' Magnabotti), *Guerrino detto il Meschino. Storia delle grandi imprese e vittorie riportate contro i Turchi di Carlo Magno imperatore re di Francia*, ed. ND Neapel 1939, S. 96.

**26** Zu *mappae mundi* als Repräsentationen von Elementen aus der Apokalypse des Johannes, vor allem anhand früherer *mappae mundi* und sehr kursorisch zu den einzelnen Elementen Alessandro Scafi, *Mapping the End: The Apocalypse in Medieval Cartography*, in: *Literature and Theology* 26 (2012) 400–416, bes. 409/10 (Gog und Magog).

**27** Heilsgeographie: Felicitas Schmieder, *Heilsgeographie versus „realistische Darstellung der Welt“ in der Kartographie des Mittelalters*, in: *Hommage à Patrick Gautier Dalché*, ed. Nathalie Bouloux et al., im Druck Paris 2015. Vgl. dies., *Edges of the World – Edges of Time*, in: Gerhard Jaritz u. a. (Ed.), *The Edges of the Medieval World. Papers given at an International Workshop. Island of Muhu (Estonia), August 24–25, 2006, Budapest 2009*, 4–20; dies., *Christliche Weltherrschaft – Anspruch und Grenzen in den Raum gezeichnet. Die Velletri/Borgia-Karte (15. Jh.) in ihrem politischen Kontext*, in: Ingrid Baumgärtner / Martina Stercken (Hg.), *Herrschaft verorten. Politische Kartographie des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, Zürich 2012, 253–271; vgl. Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae. Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*, Hannover 1992 (MGH.Schriften.36).

**28** Andrew Gow, *Gog and Magog on Mappemundi and Early Printed Maps: Orientalizing Ethnography in the Apocalyptic Tradition*, in: *Journal of Early Modern History* 2, 1 (1998) 61–88. – Zum Irdischen Paradies Alessandro Scafi, *Mapping paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth*, London 2006.

Auch hier finden wir ein ähnliches Bild wie in den chronikalischen Beispielen, die wir betrachtet haben. Der Genuese Petrus Vesconte zeichnete etwa zur selben Zeit, in der Johannes Elemosina die natürliche Milde der mit Gog und Magog identifizierten Mongolen konstatierte, um 1320, eine Serie von hochmodernen Weltkarten.<sup>29</sup> Im Nordosten der Welt befindet sich da jenseits der Berge mit den *Castra Gog et Magog* der Ort, an dem die Tartaren eingeschlossen gewesen waren. Und auch wenn man einwenden könnte, daß auch hier keine eindeutige Verknüpfung hergestellt wird: Ort und Assoziationen dürften für den zeitgenössischen Betrachter völlig eindeutig gewesen sein.

Ein halbes Jahrhundert später entstand auf der katalanischen Insel Mallorca aus jüdischem Wissen und von jüdischer Hand der Atlas Catalan, ein Weltatlas von ausgesprochen ungewöhnlichem Format für die damalige Zeit. Er zeigt Gog und Magog hinter Bergen eingeschlossen – mit einem Herrscher, der zeitgenössischen westlichen Darstellungen des mongolischen Großkhans sehr nahekommt. Vor allem aber steht an den diese Leute umgebenden Bergen geschrieben, daß hier Alexander die Tartaren Gog und Magog eingeschlossen habe (*Muntanyes des Caspis dens les quals Allexandri... encloy...los Tartares Gog e Magog*)<sup>30</sup> – vielleicht eine ähnliche Aufteilung, wie wir sie bei Jacopo d’Acqui sehen konnten.

Das dritte Beispiel ist noch einmal fast 100 Jahre jünger, die sog. „Genuesische Weltkarte“ aus dem 15. Jahrhundert.<sup>31</sup> Vielleicht ist es ihre ungewöhnliche Linsenform, die dafür sorgte, daß der von Bergen umschlossene Bereich ein riesiges Gebiet im Nordosten der Karte ist. Besonders schön sind auf dieser Karte Alexanders Tore dargestellt, bei denen entsprechend geschrieben steht: Die Eisernen Tore, hinter die Alexander die Tartaren einschloß (*Porte ferri ubi Alexander Tartaros inclusit*). So eindeutig allerdings diese Kurzformel alles zusammenzuziehen scheint, was man so weiß über die von „Alexander in undurchdringlichen Bergen hinter den Eisernen Toren

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**29** Pietro Vescontes Karte existiert in zahlreichen Versionen; eine Abb. bei John B. Harley / David Woodward (Ed.), *The history of cartography I: Cartography in Prehistoric, ancient, and medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, Chicago – London 1987, Farbtafel 16; vgl. Felicitas Schmieder, „Den Alten den Glauben zu entziehen, wage ich nicht ...“ Spätmittelalterliche Welterkenntnis zwischen Tradition und Augenschein, in: Gian Luca Potestà (Hg.), *Autorität und Wahrheit. Kirchliche Vorstellungen, Normen und Verfahren (XIII. – XV. Jahrhundert)*, (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs 84), München 2012, S. 65 – 77, hier 73/74.

**30** Atlas Catalan, Faksimile ed. Atlas Catalan (Katalanischer Weltatlas) von 1375, hg. u. übers. v. Hans-Christian Freiesleben, Stuttgart 1977, Tafel 6; ed. der Texte auf den Blättern des Atlas J.A.C. Buchon / J. Tastu, *Notice d’un atlas en langue catalane manuscrit de l’an 1375, conservé parmi les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale, sous le n°6816, Fonds Ancien*, in: *Folio Maximo*, in: *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 14,2 (1841) S. 1 – 152, hier 145.

**31** Genuesische Weltkarte teiled. Edward L. Stevenson (Ed.), *Genoese World Map 1457. Facsimile and critical text incorporating in free translation the studies of professor Theobald Fischer revised with the addition of copious notes*, New York 1912, S. 33; S. 43 noch einmal zu den von Alexander eingeschlossenen Völkern. Für die Details unzureichende Abbildungen z. B. Evelyn Edson, *The world map, 1300 – 1492: The persistence of tradition and transformation*, Baltimore 2007, S. 192 – 193. Zu dieser Karte wird eine Dissertation meiner Schülerin Gerda Brunnelechner entstehen.

eingeschlossenen Völker Gog und Magog, die Völker Antichrists“, und so sicher der kurze Satz über Alexander die entsprechenden Assoziationen auslösen musste – so wenig scheint gleichzeitig gerade beim Problem Gog und Magog der Autor der Genuesischen Weltkarten der leichtherzigen Identifikation zugeneigt zu sein, scheint sie eher zu verweigern.<sup>32</sup> Denn er versammelt in derselben geographischen Region abgetrennt voneinander eine ganze Reihe von Beschreibungen, die jede für sich allein in gleicher Weise wie der gerade eben zitierte Satz als pars pro toto-Hinweis auf das uns hier interessierende Wissenskonglomerat ausreichen würden. Im westlichen und südlichen und zumeist inneren Bereich des riesigen von „unzugänglichen Bergen“ (*montes inaccessibiles*) umschlossenen Nordostens der Karte notiert der Autor nordöstlich und südöstlich der „Eisernen Tore, wo Alexander die Tartaren einschloß“ getrennt voneinander a. den Namen Magog (vgl. Abbildung; das Pendant Gog steht südlich außerhalb der Berge), b. den Aufenthaltsort der verlorenen zehn Stämme der Juden, c. das Volk des Stammes Dan, aus dem Antichrist geboren werden wird, bevor er mit magischen Kräften die Berge öffnen und über die Christen herfallen wird, d. Türme, die der Priesterkönig Johannes gegen die Völker errichtet habe, damit sie nicht zu ihm gelangen könnten sowie endlich e. explizit das kleine Volk „aus dem Stamme Gog“.<sup>33</sup> Ohne daß diesen Einträgen hier im Einzelnen nachgegangen werden kann, scheint das Konglomerat an Legenden, die über Jahrhunderte zusammengewachsen und ineinander verflochten worden waren, hier in Bestandteile zerlegt worden zu sein, die alle einen gesonderten Platz auf der Karte erhalten haben. Zusätzlich zeichnet der Autor noch westlich des Kaspischen Meeres „Derbent, das in Sprache der dortigen Leute dasselbe heißt wie Eiserner Tore“ (*Derbent quod lingua eorum id quod porte ferri*) ein, eine Enge zwischen Kaukasusausläufern und dem Meer, die für vorderorientalische Völker offenbar oft selbstverständlich die Alexandertore war.<sup>34</sup> Bei aller Weigerung des Kartographen, sich auf das Gesamt der Legende und damit auch auf die Mongolenidentifikation festzulegen, zeigt die explizite Nennung der Tartarenidentifikation auf dieser „Liste“ (dazu die ungewöhnliche Zusammenstellung des Priesterkönigs Jo-

<sup>32</sup> Zur bewussten, kritischen Verweigerung von Identifikationen vgl. mein in Anm. 25 zitierter Aufsatz.

<sup>33</sup> Hic adeo...habitant ex Ebreorum tribus decem generacione cum dimidia Benjamin qui legis sue effreni degeneres vitam qui ducunt epicuriam [sic auf der Karte! Abschreibefehler von einer Vorlage für spuriciam?]/ De hac gente hoc est ex tribu Dan nasciturus est antichristus qui magica arte montes istos apperiens ad christocolas subvertendos accedet/ Has turres construxit presbyter Johannes rex ne inclusis hominibus ad eum pateat [schwer lesbar; grammtisch eher pateret] accessus/ Isti sunt ex Gog generacione qui cubitus altitudinem non excedunt annum etatis nonum non actingunt et continue a gruibus infestantur (bei dieser Inschrift unmittelbar außerhalb der Berge sind auch eingeschlossene Menschen dargestellt ähnlich wie auf der etwa 150 Jahre älteren und ansonsten ganz anders gestalteten Ebstorfer Weltkarte, vgl. Hartmut Kugler (Hg.), Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte. Kommentierte Neuausgabe in zwei Bänden, Berlin 2007, Abschnitt 10, A2). Die Transkriptionen Stevensons (wie Anm. 30, hier wo nötig an der Aufnahme der Karte gegenkorrigiert) der fraglichen Passagen finden sich verteilt auf den Seiten 33 – 43; ich habe – an Stellen, an denen die Karte eindeutig anders zu lesen ist – stillschweigend korrigiert.

<sup>34</sup> Stevenson, wie Anm. 30, S. 30; vgl. Schmidt, Brüste des Nordens, wie Anm. 4.

hannes mit den eingeschlossenen Völkern,<sup>35</sup> die ebenso wie die Notierung des Namens „Magog“ mitten im riesigen, von Bergen umschlossenen Gebiet<sup>36</sup> weitere Bezüge zur Mongolen-Identifikation enthalten könnte), wie etabliert innerhalb des Legendenkonglomerats diese spezifische Identifikation zum Zeitpunkt der Kartenerstellung gewesen ist.

Die Mongolen selbst allerdings haben ihre Herrschaft auf all diesen Karten ganz realistisch außerhalb der Berge.

Anscheinend liegen hier eine ganze Reihe spätmittelalterlicher Fälle vor, in denen Autoren Gog und Magog und die Mongolen nicht wieder trennten, weil die Identifikation gescheitert erschien – in denen Gog und Magog so eng mit den Mongolen verknüpft blieben, daß ihre ethnographische Qualität, oft verbunden mit einer geographischen, dominierte, während die eschatologische Dimension ausgeblendet erscheint.

Das heißt jedoch nicht, daß sie aufgegeben wurde – dies zu vermuten, wäre wohl eine zu moderne Interpretation des Befundes. Bedenkt man allein schon die Kontexte, in denen diese dauerhaften Identifikationen von Gog und Magog mit den Mongolen stehen, so sprechen sie größtenteils eine andere Sprache. Daß *mappae mundi* heilsgeographisch geprägt waren, wurde schon ausgeführt – und ein Johannes Elemosina stellte das Erstarken der natürlichen Milde seiner Protagonisten in den unmittelbaren Zusammenhang der christlichen Weltmission, auch das ein zutiefst endzeitliches

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**35** Der Priesterkönig Johannes ist hier in einer ungewöhnlichen Weise mit den eingeschlossenen Völkern verbunden, die entweder aus dem Orient stammt oder aber ein logischer Rückschluß aus der bereits im 13. Jahrhundert aufgekommenen Verbindung zwischen den westlichen Hoffnungen auf diesen christlichen König im Osten und dem Aufbruch der Mongolen ist, vgl. Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden*, wie Anm. 2, S. 253/54. Zum Priester allgemein Friedrich Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes*, in: *Abhandlungen der königlich sächsischen Akademie ...* Leipzig, Phil. hist. Kl. 7 (1879) 829–1028, 8 (1883) 3–186; separat Hildesheim – New York 1980; Ulrich Knefelkamp, *Die Suche nach den Reich des Priesterkönigs Johannes*. Dargestellt anhand von Reiseberichten und anderen ethnographischen Quellen des 12. bis 17. Jahrhunderts, Gelsenkirchen 1986; auch Bettina Wagner, *Die „Epistola presbiteri Johannis“ lateinisch und deutsch*. Überlieferung, Textgeschichte, Rezeption und Übertragungen im Mittelalter; mit bisher unedierte Texten, Tübingen 2000.

**36** Der Name Magog kann hier entweder ein Volk meinen, hier separat von Gog genannt, ähnlich wie bei Interpretationen wie denen Ricolds (vgl. oben), die von den magogoli sprechen, oder wahrscheinlicher einen geographischen Ort. Denn gerade hierfür dafür gibt es interessante Vorlagen. So bot Marco Polo aufgrund seiner Ortskenntnis an: Es gebe einen Ort, „den wir Gogo und Magogo nennen, aber sie nennen ihn Ung und Mungul. Und in jeder dieser Provinzen lebte ein Volk: in Ung waren die Gog und in Mungul leben die Tartaren“ (*Milione – Le divisament dou monde*, wie Anm. 14, LXXIV (73) S. 61 (90); Übers. S. 111). Diese oder ähnliche Grundlage haben die Überlegungen des Übersetzers und dementsprechend guten Kenners diverser Reiseberichte, Jean LeLong († 1383): *Die Tartaren würden von manchen für Gog und Magog gehalten, weil sie aus dem Land Mongal aufgebrochen seien, das rundum von Bergen eingeschlossen sei* (*Chronica sive Historia monasterii sancti Bertini*, ed. Edmond Martène / Ursin Durand, *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum*, 5 Bde., Paris 1717, III Sp. 441–776, hier 648). In anderer Weise als Orte, nämlich als Burgen, siehe oben Petrus Vesconte.

Thema (denn dem Apostel Paulus zufolge werden die Juden erst nach der Fülle der Heiden schließlich – vor dem Ende der Welt – bekehrt werden: Römer 11, 25–27). Hier haben wir es nicht mit Autoren zu tun, die den alten endzeitlichen Prophezeiungen kein Gewicht mehr zubilligten, die gar an der Endzeit selbst zweifelten und damit an der Wiederkehr Christi, dem Jüngsten Gericht und allem, was sonst damit verbunden war.

Sondern was wir an Aussagen vermissen und an Widersprüchen zu konstatieren glauben, müssen wir mit mittelalterlichen Augen sehen. Im Unterschied zu uns, die wir das Bedürfnis haben, analytisch fein säuberlich die Botschaften eines Textes aufzuschlüsseln, um zu dessen einer klaren Aussage zu kommen, lernte man im mittelalterlichen Schulunterricht den vierfachen Schriftsinn.<sup>37</sup> Dies bedeutet, daß vorrangig die Bibel, aber grundsätzlich auch jeder andere Text auf mehreren Aussageebenen gleichzeitig verfasst und gelesen werden konnte: Da war neben dem buchstäblichen Sinn der moralische, der Handlungsanweisungen gab, der allegorisch-typologische, der auf die Glaubenswahrheiten verwies (beide sind oben schon beispielhaft angesprochen worden) – und schließlich der eschatologische (oder anagogische). Diese Ebenen mussten nicht expliziert sein, um mitzuschwingen – sie mußten aber vor allem kein analytisch schlüssiges, widerspruchsfreies Bild ergeben. Der Autor konnte Gewichtungen vornehmen, doch war er nicht gezwungen, jegliches mögliche Verstehen auszuloten, um Abweichungen auszuschließen. Die Ambiguitätstoleranz der mittelalterlichen Denker war groß, wesentlich größer, als es die unsere ist.<sup>38</sup>

Wenn also nicht der Widerspruch zwischen der Identifikation Gogs und Magogs mit einem Volk, das inzwischen offensichtlich menschliche, politische Verhaltensweisen an den Tag legte (ja das bereits wieder von der Bühne der Weltpolitik abtrat), und ihrer Qualität als machtvolle Zerstörer der Endzeit entscheidend ist, was läßt sich an positiver Aussage aus dieser Identifikation herauslesen? Ich schlage vor, der Gog-und-Magog-Vergleich sollte die historische Rolle der Mongolen unterstreichen, indem

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**37** Friedrich Ohly, Vom geistigen Sinn des Wortes im Mittelalter, in: Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum 89 (1958) S. 1–23; wieder in: ders., Schriften zur mittelalterlichen Bedeutungsforschung, Darmstadt 1977, 1–31. – Im Zusammenhang von Gog und Magog kämpfte bereits Manselli mit der Frage, wie man verschiedene seit der christlichen Spätantike virulente Zugriffe auf die als real betrachteten Völker verstehen sollte, und verweist auf das allegorische Moment: Raoul Manselli, I popoli immaginari: Gog e Magog, in: Popoli e Paesi nella cultura altomedievale, Spoleto 1983, 2, 487–517, hier 497.

**38** Christel Meier (*Unusquisque in suo sensu abundet* (Röm 14,5). Ambiguitätstoleranz in der Texthermeneutik des lateinischen Westens?, in: Abrahams Erbe. Konkurrenz, Konflikt und Koexistenz der Religionen im europäischen Mittelalter, hg.v. Ludger Lieb u.a., Berlin 2015, 3–33) in Auseinandersetzung mit Thomas Bauer, Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams, Berlin 2011. – Vgl. zum kartographischen Zusammenhang Felicitas Schmieder, Heilsgeographie versus „realistisch Darstellung der Welt“ in der Kartographie des Mittelalters, im Druck in der Hommage an Patrick Gautier-Dalché, ed. Nathalie Bouloux et al. – Auf einen Autor, der den Nutzen von *mappae mundi* im moralischen Sinne hervorhebt, macht Chet van Duzer in einem Vortrag „Mapping the end of the Earth: Apocalyptic Mappaemundi in an Fifteenth-Century manuscript“ (Huntington Library HM 83) aufmerksam.

ihnen die Eigenschaften von Völkern zugeschrieben wurden, denen dereinst niemand widerstehen wird, die alles zerstören – die diese entscheidende Rolle in der Weltgeschichte aber mit Gottes Willen übernehmen werden. Es gibt nichts Schrecklicheres und Gewalttätigeres im Arsenal der Metaphern, die einem mittelalterlichen Autor zur Beschreibung von Völkern zur Verfügung standen, nichts Fremdartigeres – nichts aber auch, bei dem der Wandel, das Aufblühen der natürlichen Milde größer von Gottes Allmacht spräche. Unterstrichen wird von unseren Autoren also ihre Einschätzung der Bedeutung der Reichsbildung der Mongolen für die Weltgeschichte und damit eines Volkes, das in Gottes Plan nicht fehlen kann – eine Einschätzung dieses Steppenvolkes, die auch die heutige Forschung teilt. Bei all dem bleibt die für die vormoderne lateineuropäische Gesellschaft (und nicht allein für sie) grundlegende Überzeugung unberührt, daß Gott die Welt geschaffen hat und daß er sie eines Tages auch wieder vernichten wird.





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**III Jüdische Völker der Endzeit /  
Jewish Peoples of the Apocalypse**



Alexandra Cuffel

## Jewish Tribes and Women in the Genesis and Battle of the Dajjāl: Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammād al-Khuzā‘ī al-Marwzī’s *Kitāb al-Fitan*

Various scholars who have examined the role of Jews in medieval Muslim apocalyptic writing have noted the seemingly contradictory nature of these depictions. Jews are both allies of the Muslims and the Messiah during the Last Days, and their opponents, members of the army of the Dajjāl – the Muslim equivalent to the Antichrist. Researchers have attempted to explain these rather dichotomous representations in various ways. Some have attributed them to prolonged suspicion of Jewish converts to Islam generally, or toward specific converts.<sup>1</sup> Others have suggested that these contradictions derive from Christian or Jewish influence, or from Judeo-Christian, or Judeo-Muslim groups who consciously combined multiple traditions.<sup>2</sup> Uri Rubin has provided perhaps the most thorough and schematized examination of this issue. He analyzes how early or even pre-Islamic traditions about Jews combined with Muslim adoption and transformation of Christian, but most especially Jewish, apocalyptic traditions. He demonstrates that Shi‘i Muslims showed particular interest in Jewish traditions and even identified with the Jews, seeing their own struggles as paralleling those of the righteous Jews, whereas Shi‘i authors often equated Sunnis with rebellious Jews, punished by God. As a result, Jewish and non-apocalyptic Muslim traditions about distant righteous Jewish tribes separated from their co-religionists appealed to Shi‘i authors and contributed to a bifurcated portrayal of the role of Jews or Jewish tribes during the last battles between the Dajjāl and the Messiah and/or the Mahdi – such representations suited Shi‘i anti-Sunni polemic. Which is not to say that Sunnis did not also utilize these traditions, for they did, however, Rubin notes a general, albeit not universal, tendency on the part of Sunni authors to

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1 David Cook in his *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: Darwin Press Inc., 2002) 316, notes suspicion of Jewish converts as a factor, but seems to favor borrowings from Jewish and Christian apocalyptic sources as a major contributor to the various threads about the connections between the Dajjal and Jews; David Halperin, “The Ibn Ṣayyād Traditions and the Legend of al-Dajjāl,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 96/2 (1976) 213–225.

2 Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur‘ān: the Children of Israel and the Islamic Self Image* (Princeton: Darwin Press Inc., 1999) 13–35, 41, 44–49, 58, 60, 78–82, 199, 202–206, 261; David Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, 7–9, 93, 95, 100, 102, 119–120, 146–147, 149; Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994) 111–113; Michael Cook, “An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 52/1 (1993) 25–29.

adopt more of the negative traditions regarding Jews' involvement with the apocalypse.<sup>3</sup>

I would contest none of these assertions, however, I would suggest that greater attention needs to be paid to the effects of simultaneously co-opting Christian and Jewish apocalyptic traditions – a set of narratives that were already in dialogue, or more precisely, written as polemic one against the other.<sup>4</sup> Doing so will help throw light on Muslim eschatological discussions of the nature of the Dajjāl, women, illicit sexuality, and the role of Jewish tribes and Jews generally. I maintain that these themes are intertwined in Muslim apocalyptic writing because of the peculiar mixture of Christian and Jewish traditions harmonized and recast according to Muslim hopes and fears. Since the *Kitāb al-Fitan* of Nu'ayim ibn Ḥammād (al-Khuzā'ī al-Marwzī,) who died c. 843 CE has been frequently pinpointed as a particularly rich source of apocalyptic lore regarding the Dajjāl, Jews, and women, my analysis will focus on this source with some discussion of the afterlife of these traditions.<sup>5</sup>

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3 Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'ān*, pp. 11–35, 41–49, 55–61, 76–99, 108–109, 186–189, 213–250, 279–280. Steven Wasserstrom also notes close connections between aspects of or movements within Jewish and Shi'i thought, especially during the first centuries of Islam: *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) 13–14, 47–48, 65–71, 85, 93–135.

4 On discussions of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts being written at least in part as reaction to or polemic against the other religious tradition, see for example: Lutz Greisigern “Die Geburt des Armilos und die Geburt des ‘Sohnes des Verderbens’ Zeugnisse jüdisch-christlicher Auseinandersetzung um die Identifikation des Antichristen im 7 Jahrhundert,” in *Antichrist: Konstruktionen von Feindbildern*, ed. Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010) 15–37; Martha Himmelfarb, “The Mother of the Messiah in the Talmud Yerushalmi and Sefer Zerubbabel,” *The Talmud Yerushalmi in Graeco-Roman Culture*, vol. 3, ed. Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 369–389; Joseph Dan, “Armillus, the Jewish Antichrist and the Origins and Dating of the *Sefer Zerubbabel*” in *Toward the Millennium Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, ed. Mark Cohen and Peter Schäfer (Leiden/Boston/Koln: Brill, 1998) 73–104; *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. James C. VanderKamp and William Adler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Philip Alexander, “Late Hebrew Apocalyptic: A Preliminary Survey,” in *Apocrypha le champ des Apocryphes: la fable apocryphe*, ed. P. Geoltrain, E. Junod, J.-C. Picard (Turnholt: Brepols, 1990) 197–217; Nicole Belayche, “Les Figures politiques des messies en Palestine dans le première moitié du premier siècle de notre ère,” in *Politique et religion dans le judaïsme medieval: interventions au colloque des 8 et 9 décembre 1987* (Paris: Desclée, 1989) 58–74; Ezra Fleischer, “le-fitron le-she'lat zeman u-maqom pe'ilato shel R. 'Eli'ezar be- R. Qallir,” *Tarbiz* 54/2 (1985) 383–427; David Flusser, “An Early Jewish-Christian Document in the Tiburtine Sibyl,” in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, and Christianisme: Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon*, ed. A. Benoit et. Al. (Paris: Bocard, 1978) 153–183; W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend: A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore*, trans. A. H. Keane, intro. D. Frankfurter (London: Hutchinson, 1896, Reprinted: Atlanta: Scholars press, 1999) 97–98, 100–112, 117, 133–138, 143–144, 152–157, 164, 170–174, 186–187; Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'ān*, pp. 12–26, 32–35; Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press Inc. 1997) 538–541.

5 O. Livne-Kafri, “Some Observations on the Migration of Apocalyptic Features in the Muslim Tradition,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* 60/4 (2007) 467–477; Walid Saleh, “The

Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammād was a supporter of neither the Umayyads nor the Abbasids – he critiqued both, and he adamantly opposed Shi‘i groups or early Abbasid efforts to recruit the support of any Shi‘i or proto-Shi‘i. Nevertheless, he was very much part of the poly-religious culture and discussions of the early Islamic Iraq region, which included intense debates both within the Muslim communities and across confessional lines. Among the Muslims there were debates between Mutazilites and their opponents, Shi‘i and Sunni, plus conflicting claims about the Caliphate between the Umayyads and the Abbasids and between different Abbasid claimants, some of whom attempted to rally support from Shi‘i, Mutazilite or anti-Mutazilite groups. In addition to these strains of Muslim thought were Manicheans, Mazdeans (also known as Zoroastrians), Rabbinic Judaism, various types of Christianities, and sundry judaizing or Judaeo-Christian groups.<sup>6</sup> According to Jorge Aguadé, during the conflicts between the Umayyads and the emerging Abbasids, both Umayyad and then Abbasid caliphs culled Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts for predictions that might be interpreted as applying to themselves.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Nu‘ayim himself had strong connections or interest in Muslim traditions from Himyarite and South Arabian regions and from Egypt, having lived in Egypt as well.<sup>8</sup> Robert Hoyland notes at least one example of Nu‘ayim adopting a “Judaeo-Christian” style of apocalyptic narrative, and Hoyland points to the links between some traditions within the *Kitāb al-Fitan* and Syriac Christian eschatological motifs and language.<sup>9</sup> Within such a cultural milieu of religious borrowing and debate in addition to his own background, while Nu‘ayim may not have supported some of the Shi‘i groups who seem to have readily drawn from and transformed Jewish material for their own pur-

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Woman as a Locus of Apocalyptic Anxiety in Medieval Sunnī Islam,” in *Myths, Historical Archetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999) 123–145; M. Cook, “An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle”; idem, “The Heraculian Dynasty in Muslim Apocalyptic,” *Al-Qanṭara: Revista de Estudios Árabes*, 13/1 (1992) 3–23; Wilfred Mandelung, “Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥims in the Umayyad Age,” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 31 (1986) 141–185; Jorge Aguadé, “Messianismus zur Zeit der frühen Abbasiden: das *Kitāb al-Fitan* Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammād” Dissertation, Fachbereichs Altertums- und Kulturwissenschaften der Eberhard-Karls-Universität zu Tübingen (1979) 49, 55, 153, 172–211.

6 Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, pp. 41–46; Melhem Chokr, *Zandaqa et Zindīqs en Islam au second siècle de l’Hégire* (Damascus: L’Institut français d’études Arabes de Damas, 1993) 21–26, 29–68.

7 Aguadé, “Messianismus zur Zeit der frühen Abbasiden,” pp. 47–50.

8 M. Cook, “An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle”; Mandelung, “Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥims;” Jorge Aguadé, “La Importancia del ‘Kitāb al-Fitan’ de Nu‘ayim b. Ḥammād para el Estudio del Mesianismo Musulmán,” in *Actas de las Jornadas de la Cultura Árabe e Islámica (1978)* (Madrid, 1981) 349–352; idem, “Messianismus zur Zeit der frühen Abbasiden: das *Kitāb al-Fitan*”, pp. 8–19, 34–37, 55, 59–66, 70–71, 88, 92–147, 155–171, 196, 200, 202–206. On relevant Jewish messianic movements in South Arabia, with which Nu‘ayim may have been familiar: Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, pp. 49–51.

9 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 334–335.

poses, he would have had access to or been familiar with some of the same sets of traditions.

Nu‘ayim explicitly claims Jews and Christians, or their traditions, as sources for his information. A number of scholars have already noted his frequent transmission of hadith attributed to Ka‘ab, an early Jewish convert to Islam, however Nu‘ayim makes more direct references to non-Muslim sources as well.<sup>10</sup> At times, such references are vague, saying merely that “the people of the book” claim, for example, that Jesus will descend and kill the Dajjāl and his companions.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after this remark, Nu‘ayim recounts an exchange between a Jew and ‘Umar (al-Khaṭṭab), in which ‘Umar responds to the Jew’s questions, saying: “I have tested a righteous one among you about the Dajjāl. He said, “And a god of the Jews, for Ibn Miriam, will kill him in the courtyard of Lydda (a city in Palestine).””<sup>12</sup> Here the “Jewish” information seems misunderstood or garbled, or deliberately manipulated so that a Jew is made to call one “Ibn Miriam” – presumably Jesus – the victorious opponent of the Dajjāl. This Jew is also made to identify the Dajjāl as Jewish – a designation that accorded with Christian eschatological literature “predicting” that the Antichrist would be Jewish, often specifically from the tribe of Dan.<sup>13</sup> In this passage the Jews themselves are cast in a highly negative light by implication; the Dajjāl is not merely the leader of the Jews, as he is portrayed in other passages, he is their god, making the Jews the followers of the false and destructive anti-Messiah figure and worshippers of a God other than Allah. This construction is given credence attributing it to a Jewish source.

Nu‘ayim records a number of other traditions linking the Dajjāl with Jews. At various points he indicates that the mother of the Dajjāl is a Jewish woman.<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere,

<sup>10</sup> Mandelung, “Apocalyptic Prophecies in Hims;” Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur‘ān*, pp. 22–25, 251–254, 257–259.

<sup>11</sup> Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammad Khuzā‘ī, *Kitāb al-Fitan* (Mecca: al-Maktaba al-Tijārīya. 1991) 342.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, اني قد بلوت منك صنفا فاخبرتي عن الدجال فقال و اله يهود ليقتلنه ابن مريم ففناء له.

<sup>13</sup> Irénée de Lyons, *Contre les Héresies, Livre 5*, 2 vols. (*Sources Chrétiens* 151–152), ed and trans. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, C. Mercier (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1969) V.30.2; *Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. and trans. G. J. Reinink (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, vols. 540, 541, *Scriptores Syri, tomus 220 and 221*) (Louvain: E. Peeters, 1993) XIV.10; *Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Methodios*, ed. Anastasios Lolos, (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1976) XIV.10; Klaus Berger, *Die Griechische Daniel-Diegese: eine altkirchliche Apokalypse, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 10: 2–4, 11:1, pp. 15, 100–103, 149; Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. Dorothy de F. Abrahamse (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) 50, 195–198, 202, 218–219, 223; Greisiger, “Geburt des Armilos;” McGinn, *Antichrist*, pp. 59, 99, 102; Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalypik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main/Bern/ New York: Peter Lang, 1985) 80–84; Bousset, *Antichrist Legend*, pp. 26, 137, 140, 171–174; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 261 n. 9. For background to increased Christian hostility toward Jews and identification with apocalyptic events during the early expansion of Islam see Hoyland *Seeing Islam*, pp. 538–541.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 323, 327.

however, he merely proffers traditions that designate the Dajjāl as born of a woman – her origins unspecified, and is made of flesh.<sup>15</sup> Somewhat contradictorily to both of these contentions, Nu‘ayim also asserts, or records traditions that assert, that the Dajjāl is a Satan, and not human.<sup>16</sup> At one point Nu‘ayim includes what seems to be an elaborate compromise between these positions in which God announces the coming tribulations to the Satans, who instead of announcing that God is the people’s Lord and refuge, as God asks, they go and possess humans, particularly the family and followers of the Dajjāl, and make themselves appear like family members. They try to argue that one who provides refuge, fire, water and food must be from God.<sup>17</sup> In a previous passage, Satans are among the followers of the Dajjāl, and they take on the form of parents, who encourage their son to follow the one (namely the Dajjāl) who is seemingly capable of killing and resurrecting the soul, and of commanding rain from the heavens.<sup>18</sup> In another, perhaps even more curious portrayal of the Dajjāl as a kind of hybrid of living flesh and carved materials, Nu‘ayim records a tradition in which the Dajjāl is said to be “born a birth in Baysan from a tribe belonging to Ibn Ya‘qub. In his body is the sculpture of the sword, the shield, and the lance and the knife.”<sup>19</sup> What religion or sort of tribe “Ibn Ya‘qub” is supposed to be is not made clear, however, the early eighth-century author, S‘ad ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Qummi, emphasized that the four main tribes of Israel, from which the others derive, come

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 329

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. pp. 324, 329. On this theme in Muslim apocalyptic see: David Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 102, 111, 113, 119.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. pp. 327–328.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 327. During the sixth to eighth centuries, the Middle East and the Western Mediterranean were beset by severe environmental difficulties: plague, drought, famine, and earthquakes. These difficulties are much discussed in early Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sources; Nu‘ayim’s (and that of other ḥadīth writers) preoccupation with the Dajjāl being able to lead people astray by offering food and rain seems to reflect these difficulties. On these troubles and other sources discussing them see: A. Abel, “al-Djǧāl” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 2 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010) col. 2 p. 75; Michael Morony, “Michael the Syrian as a Source for Economic History,” *Hugoye*, 3/2 (2000) <http://syrcm.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol3No2/HV3N2Morony.html>; Benjamin Kedar, “The Arab Conquests and Agriculture: A Seventh-Century Apocalypse, Satellite Imagery and Palynology,” *Asian and African Studies*, 19 (1985) 1–15; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, pp. 18, 22–30, 64–66, 155; Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 83–86, 208–209, 211; Lawrence Conrad, “Arabic Plague Chronologies and Treatises: Social and Historical Factors in the Formation of a Literary Genre,” *Studia Islamica*, 54 (1981) 51–93 S. M. Imamuddin, “Famine and Famine Relief Work under the Umayyads in Spain 711–1031,” *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, 19 (1958) 75–85. Scholars examining early apocalyptic literature in the Mediterranean regions have noted the prevalence of environmental disasters as a theme in apocalyptic writing but do not connect such descriptions to actual environmental circumstances during the composition of apocalyptic texts. Berger, *Griechische Daniel-Diegesen*, pp. 124–125, 128–129; Bousset, *Antichrist Legend*, pp. 57, 238–247.

<sup>19</sup> Nu‘ayim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, p. 320. الدجال يولد مولود ببيسان من سبط لاوي من يعقوب. في جسده تمثال السلاح السيف و الترس و النيزك و السكين.

from Jacob b. Isaac (Ya'qub b. Ishaq).<sup>20</sup> Given this reference and the location of Bay-san, also known as Beit She'an in modern-day Northern Israel, it seems at least possible that Nu'ayim was hinting at Jewish tribe.

While the varied and contradictory origins of the Dajjāl in *Kitāb al-Fitan* may be attributed to the author's choice to include ḥadīth from many sources, the origins of these traditions and the combined implications of the ones selected remain significant. These stories about the nature and origin of the Dajjāl seem to reflect primarily Christian lore which assigns a Jewish origin – often from the tribe of Dan, but early Christian sources do not always specify – to the Antichrist. Similarly, while most Christian writers assert that the Antichrist is human, a number, such as Chrysostom (c.347–407 CE), feel obliged to refute the idea that the Antichrist is a devil or otherwise inhuman.<sup>21</sup> The necessity to do so suggests that some Christians assigned a supernatural, or rather, demonic, origin to the Antichrist. Indeed, Pseudo-Hippolytus, who has been dated anywhere from the fourth to the ninth centuries CE, maintains that while the Antichrist appears to be born of a human, virgin woman, in fact this is merely an illusion, for Satan cannot take on the flesh of those whom he has so long opposed (i. e. humans).<sup>22</sup> Other elements of Pseudo-Hippolytus' treatise on the end of the world also resemble some of Nu'ayim's depiction of the end times. Both authors recount in detail the ecological devastation that the Anti-Messiah will cause.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Pseudo-Hippolytus's Antichrist, like Nu'ayim's Dajjāl and followers, is a provider of food, at least initially, until he reneges on this role in the time of greatest need.<sup>24</sup> Directly after describing the Antichrist's demonic origin, Pseudo-Hippolytus says that his followers will be like him in wickedness, and later in his text he stipulates that the Antichrist: “will gather together his demons in man's form.”<sup>25</sup> Else-

**20** Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Qummī, *Kitāb al Maqālāt wa al-Firaq*, ed. M G. Mashkur (Tehran: Mu'ssasat Maṭbū 'ātī 'Aṭā'ī, 1963) 247; Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, pp. 66–67.

**21** John Chrysostom, *Homily 3 in 2 Thess.* PG 62: 482; McGinn, *Antichrist*, p. 300 nt. 68.

**22** Pseudo-Hippolytus, *On the End of the World and the Antichrist*, chap. 22, PG 10: 923/924–925/926. Entire work PG 10: 901–952; An English translation of Pseudo-Hippolytus by J.H. MacMahon may be found in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, Ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886). McGinn, *Antichrist*, pp. 71, 74; Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 195, 200, 216–217; Bousset, *Antichrist Legend*, pp. 139–142. Compare with other Christian apocalyptic texts that connect Antichrist figures or his followers to demons and the devil, for example: Berger, *Griechische Daniel-Diegesse*, pp. 125–127; *Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. and trans Reinink, XIV. 11–12; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime*, p. 28.

**23** Pseudo-Hippolytus, *End*, chaps. 3–4, 8, 27, 33, PG 10: 907/908, 911/912, 929/930–931/932, 935/936.. As indicated above (see footnote 18) environmental devastation was a common theme in apocalyptic texts and thus this parallel may or may not be indicative of a shared tradition between Nu'ayim's text and that of Pseudo-Hippolytus.

**24** Pseudo-Hippolytus, *End*, chaps. 28, 31, PG 10: 931/932, 933/934–935/936.

**25** συνάξει τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ δαίμονας ἐν σχήματι ἀνθρώπων Pseudo-Hippolytus, *End*, chaps. 25 PG 10:929/930. Compare with: Pseudo-Hippolytus, *End*, chaps. 10, 22, 26, PG 10:913/914, 923/924–925/926.



where in his eschatological treatise he details what these demons in human form will do at the behest of the Antichrist.<sup>26</sup> These passages are similar to, albeit more detailed than, Nu'ayim's account of Satans possessing or taking the form of the family and followers of the Dajjāl. Both authors agree that the Anti-Messiah is born of the Jews and that Jews, in a military capacity, will be followers of the Anti-Messiah, however, these latter points were common among late antique and medieval Christians.<sup>27</sup>

While I would not argue for a simple, direct case of textual influence, enough parallels do seem to exist to suggest that Nu'ayim drew from some of the same traditions as this particular Christian author, perhaps ones that Pseudo-Hippolytus himself started. Yet, while influence of Christian traditions linking the Anti-Messiah figure explicitly with the Jews on a number of levels are clear, these influences are only part of the story. A number of early Jewish apocalypses dating between the early seventh and the ninth centuries portray Armilos, the Jewish Anti-Messiah figure as born of a beautiful statue of a virgin and usually Satan, though sometimes, unidentified sinful humans who have sexual relations with her/it<sup>28</sup>. In *Sefer Zerubbavel*, one of the earliest exemplars, the text emphasizes the stone is Armilos' mother, and that all are forced to worship her or suffer death.<sup>29</sup> This tale does not exactly parallel Nu'ayim's stories of the Dajjāl being born with a statue inside him, however, the similarity is striking. Yet more striking is the parallel between Nu'ayim's narrative and another Jewish text dating from around the middle of the first millennium, the Aramaic version of the *Toledot Yesu*, a Jewish polemical retelling of Jesus' life and death.<sup>30</sup> There, Jesus promises to ensure that the emperor's daughter will become pregnant without the aid of a man. The young woman does conceive, but the child within her is miraculously turned to stone due to the prayerful intercession

**26** Pseudo-Hippolytus, *End*, chaps. 25–26, 28–29 PG 10: 927/928–929/930, 931/932–933/934.

**27** Pseudo-Hippolytus, *End*, chaps. 18–20, 23–24, PG 10: 919/920–921/922, 925/926–927/928. On Christian sources depicting Jews as among the primary followers of the Antichrist, see: Berger, *Griechische Daniel-Diegeese*, 10:1–7, 11:1–6, 12: 1–25, 13: 1–14, 14:13, pp. 15, 16–17, 18, 100–103, 120–122, 136–138, 142, 144, 149.

**28** *Sefer Zerubbavel* and 'Otiot ha-Meshiah in *Beit ha-Midrash*, part. 2, ed. Adolf Jellinek (Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1967) 55, 56, 60; *Tefillat R Shimo'on b. Yoḥ'ai* in *Beit ha Midrash*, part 4 (Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1967) 124 *Sefer Zerubbabel Secrets of R. Šimon b. Yoḥai Prayer of R. Šimon b. Yoḥai*, 'Otiot of R. Šimon b. Yoḥai 'Otiot ha- Mašiah, all in *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader*, ed. and trans. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 58–59, 65, 8, 103, 114, 118, 120, 125 On *Sefer Zerubbavel* and its relationship with other apocalyptic texts, both Jewish and Christian, see: Bousset, *Legend of the Antichrist*, pp. 106–109. A number of parallels exist between both the Jewish and Islamic apocalyptic accounts of the Anti-messiah's origins and Armenian apocalypses. On this see the article in this volume by Zaroui Pogossian.

**29** *Sefer Zerubbabel* in *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, p. 65.

**30** On the most recent assessment of the provenance and dating of the Aramaic *Toledot Yesu*, see: Michael Sokoloff, "The Date and Provenance of the Aramaic *Toledot Yeshu* on the Basis of Aramaic Dialectology," in *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 13–26

of R. Yeoshua b. Peraḥiya, and when Jesus attempts to perform a caesarian, the stone is discovered and Jesus identified as a fraud.<sup>31</sup>

In the *Toledot*, the stone is carried within the body of the virgin rather than being part of the false messiah's body, as in the case of Nu'ayim's narrative. It comes about as a result of, in essence, a magical battle between a rabbi and Jesus, however, as in the Muslim apocalyptic tradition, the stone demonstrates that Jesus, like the Dajjāl, is simultaneously wondrous and an imposter, although the focus of this Jewish text is to parody the virgin birth, rather than describe the body of the anti-messiah.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the early Jewish apocalyptic tradition assigns the Anti-Messiah's own birth to a stone, Nu'ayim makes stone part of the Anti-Messiah's physique. *Sefer Zerubbavel* and Jewish apocalypses which drew from it or parallel traditions do agree with both some of Nu'ayim's and Christian accounts that the Anti-Messiah figure is demonic. A number of scholars examining *Sefer Zerubbavel* have argued that the accounts of Armilos, his mother, and the mother of the Messiah in that text are direct, satirical counters to Christian assertions about Mary and their Messiah or to Christian veneration of icons or statues of Mary. Taking this interpretation, the author of *Sefer Zerubbavel*, and parallel Jewish apocalypses such as those surrounding R. Shim'on b. Yoḥ'ai, thus insinuate that the Anti-Messiah figure – this being Jesus for the Jews – was demonic in origin, and sought to lead people astray not only by making them follow and worship him, but also his mother.<sup>33</sup> As such, Nu'ayim and other Muslim authors who came after him could draw from both Christian and Jewish sources that suggested that the Anti-Messiah was at least partially demonic, and, following certain strands within the Christian tradition, that some of his followers were as well. More than the Jewish sources, Nu'ayim's version, in which the Dajjāl has “the sculpture of the sword, the shield, and the lance and the knife” within him emphasizes the warlike nature of the Dajjāl and the divisions he would bring because of it, in addition to portraying the Dajjāl as, at best, only partially human. In this case, such im-

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**31** The Aramaic text with medieval Hebrew parallels may be found in: Yaaqov Deutsch, “‘Eduiot ‘al nosaḥ qodem shel ‘Toledot Yeshu’” *Tarbiz*, 69 (2000) 177–197, see specifically pp. 189–191. For an analysis and discussion of this tradition's spread at least into early medieval Europe see: Peter Schäfer, “Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*,” in *Toledot Yeshu (“The Life Story of Jesus”) Revisited*, pp. 27–48.

**32** Jesus seeks to reproduce what he claims to be the miraculous circumstances of his own birth, i.e. conception by a virgin, and is thwarted by prayer, implying that if he cannot bring about a virginal birth, his assertions about himself must be false. Furthermore he is unable to make the stone live, again a counter to resurrection miracles attributed to Jesus by Christians.

**33** Himmelfarb, “Mother of the Messiah;” Dan, “Armilos, the Jewish Antichrist.” David Biale, “Counter-History and Jewish Polemics against Christianity: the *Sefer toledot yeshu*, *Sefer Zerubavel*,” *Jewish Social Studies*, 6/1 (1999) 130–145; and Paul Speck, “The Apocalypse of Sefer Zerubbabel and Christian Icons,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 4 (1997) 183–190 Himmelfarb cautions against a simple equation of the statue-mother with the Virgin Mary in a polemical move. Rather, she suggests that some of the characteristics of Mary were given to Hephizba, whereas others were assigned to the stone mother of the messiah.

agery was more effective for Nu'ayim's efforts to critique military struggles over whom should be Caliph, than imagery that would have directed the readers' focus to the mother of the Dajjāl. Nu'ayim's recasting themes within *Sefer Zerubbavel* and other early Jewish sources, to suit his own purposes accords with the overall tendency of Muslims to "creatively reshape" Jewish apocalyptic traditions noted by Steven Wasserstrom.<sup>34</sup>

In their original Jewish and Christian setting, these accounts of the Anti-Mesiah's origins and those of his family and adherents, were designed to condemn Christians and Jews respectively and their messianic claims or expectations. The harshness of the portrayal – that Jews would be among the followers of the destroyer of the world, who, in some cases, was demon-sired, and often was Jewish-born, according to Christian traditions, and that Christians worship a messiah conceived of a stone, possibly the spawn of Satan as well, according to Jewish apocalyptic sources – reflect the intense competition and negative feelings between late antique and early medieval Christians and Jews.<sup>35</sup> Nu'ayim, in adopting these polemical, apocalyptic threads, also took on the deeply negative images regarding the Dajjāl's family and

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<sup>34</sup> Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, p. 57.

<sup>35</sup> Studies on tensions, polemic, and efforts to establish clear dividing lines between the emerging Christian and Jewish communities are legion. However, see: Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? a History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2011); Peter Schäfer "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*," , in *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited*, in *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life of Jesus") Revisited*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 27 – 48; F.J.E. Boddens Hosang, *Establishing Boundaries: Christian-Jewish Relations in Early Council Texts and Writings of the Church Fathers* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) Daniel Boyarin, *Border lines : the partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) idem, *Dying for God : martyrdom and the making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (London/New York: T&T Clark Ltd. 1996) Wout J.C. van Bekkum, "Anti-Christian polemics in Hebrew liturgical poetry (*piyyut*) of the sixth and seventh centuries," in *Early Christian poetry: a collection of essays*, ed. by J. Den Boeft and A. Hillhorst [ *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, 22] (Leiden/New York: E.J. Brill, 1993) pp. 297 – 308; Burton L. Visotzky, "Anti-Christian polemic in Leviticus Rabbah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish research* 56 (1990), 83 – 100; Reuben Bonfil, "Edoto shel Agobard mi-Leon 'al 'olamam ha-ruchani shel yehude 'iro be-me'a ha-tesh'it." In *Mehkarim ba-kabalah, be-filosofyah yehudit uve-sifrut ha-musar vehe-hagut: mugashim li-Yesh'ayah Tishbi bi-milot lo shiv'im vi-hamesh sharim*, ed. by Joseph Dan and Joseph Hecker (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986) 327 – 348; Jacob Neusner, "Genesis Rabbah as polemic: an introductory account," *Hebrew annual review* 9 (1985), 253 – 265; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Who was a Jew? : rabbinic and Halakhic perspectives on the Jewish Christian schism* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing, 1985); Heinz Schreckenber, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.–11. Jh.)*. [Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe XXIII, Theologie, 172] (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1982); James Parkes, *The conflict of the church and the synagogue : a study in the origins of anti-Semitism* Philadelphia : Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961; A. Cohen, *The parting of the ways; Judaism and the rise of Christianity* (London: Published for the World Jewish Congress, British Section, by Lincolns-Prager, 1<sup>st</sup> ed, 1954).

followers. The Jews, misguided Muslims, and any others that are to follow the Dajjāl, are not merely mistaken or duped, they are potentially demonic themselves, being possessed or demonic look-alikes of human followers. Jews are marked as particular followers of the Dajjāl, but even worse, the Dajjāl may come from one of their own. In these scenarios, Jews become one of, if not the ultimate opponents to Islam.

While significant, more intriguing than the Anti-Messiah's demonic parentage, is Nu'ayim's preoccupation with the mother and other women who surround or follow the Dajjāl. In the passages examined so far, some woman, often Jewish, is doomed to be his mother, although Muslim accounts of the Dajjāl's demonic origins sometimes seem to absolve any woman of having given birth to the Dajjāl. In carefully including the mothers and sisters who will be among the possessed or demon-like family members, Nu'ayim ensures that his readers will not forget that women are among the supporters of the Dajjāl and that they will also actively encourage the believers to follow a false messiah. His consistent inclusion of the number of women amid the Jewish and other armies that accompany the Dajjāl serves a similar purpose.<sup>36</sup> Nu'ayim records several additional traditions that further link women with the Dajjāl on a more personal level, however.

At one point Nu'ayim briefly discusses how to recognize not merely the Dajjāl, but "the approach of his woman."<sup>37</sup> Who this woman is, and what she does Nu'ayim does not explain, but she, a bit like the stone virgin in early Jewish apocalypses, seems to be the partner of the Dajjāl in some way. Earlier in the *Kitāb al-Fitan*, Nu'ayim includes the following tradition, "With the Dajjāl is a woman named Ṭayybah (good) and she would not receive him hospitably except that she had arrived before him. She says, 'This man (who) has entered among you, beware of him.'"<sup>38</sup> Here, the female companion of the Dajjāl seems to be an innocent, basically good woman, as her name implies (*ṭayyib* means "good"), but pressed by the rules of politesse into treating the Dajjāl well. She even warns the people that the man is dangerous. According to David Cook, this figure is taken from the Christian tradition regarding the virgin Tabitha in the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, who pursues the Dajjāl in order to warn people against him.<sup>39</sup> Yet while in both *Kitāb al-Fitan* and the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, the woman is the opponent of the Anti-messiah, the details of this late third century apocalypse differ considerably from its rendering (assuming Cook is correct) in our Islamic text.<sup>40</sup> In the Christian source, which is cast as a prophesy of the end times, Tabitha is never a hostess to the Antichrist and she is his "companion" only

<sup>36</sup> Nu'ayim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, pp. 328, 329, 330. On women as followers of the Dajjal in Muslim apocalyptic in general see: David Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 99–100; Saleh, "Woman as a Locus of Apocalyptic Anxiety."

<sup>37</sup> Nu'ayim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, p. 321.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 317, مع دجال امرأة تسمى طيبة لا يؤم قرية الا سبقته اليها تقول: هذا الرجال داخل عليكم فاحذروه.

<sup>39</sup> David Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, p. 102.

<sup>40</sup> On the dating of the *Apocalypse of Elijah* see: David Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 1–3, 17–20.

in so far as she follows him closely to decry his deeds in the strongest possible terms. Rather colorfully, the Christian text states that the “Shameless One” will pursue her, suck her blood, and then toss her body upon the Temple. The Antichrist’s efforts of ridding himself of his tenacious female opponent are thwarted, however, for her blood provides healing for the people and she resurrects the next morning to taunt the Antichrist with his powerlessness over her.<sup>41</sup> Based on magical texts evoking Tabitha, or a similarly named female figure, David Frankfurter has convincingly argued of the local Egyptian origin of this female figure, drawing from the deity Tabithet or Isis, with whom Tabithet was often associated. The blood, seemingly the birthing blood, of both was widely linked with healing, and resurrection in Egypt.<sup>42</sup> The Christian author of the *Apocalypse of Elijah* attempted to co-opt this powerful local deity, and create a Christian persona for her. In turn, Nu‘ayim likewise either actively reformulated “Tabitha” or recorded a version of her story more suited to the timbre of early Muslim eschatological expectations. Nu‘ayim’s “Ṭayybah” is neither as proactive nor as powerful as her Christian or ancient Egyptian counterpart, nor is her power markedly feminine or linked with her body as it was in the Egyptian traditions. While the differences between the texts may be due to a muddled reception of the Egyptian Christian tradition on Nu‘ayim’s part, Nu‘ayim’s rendering allowed him to downplay feminine power. A woman’s opposition to the Dajjāl is noted and credited, while simultaneously making her an unwitting follower, thus according with the overall tendency in Nu‘ayim’s collection to remind the readers’ of women’s, as well as men’s allegiance with the Dajjāl.

This idea of a hapless female participant in the rise of an Anti-Messianic figure is reminiscent of another Jewish tradition about the mother of a false Messiah, namely Maryam in the *Toledot Yesu*, a Jewish anti-Gospel tradition. In these traditions, Mary is either the promiscuous willing partner to a neighbor or Roman soldier, or the duped victim of rape while menstruating by her lustful neighbor.<sup>43</sup> While evidence of this tradition appears in passing protests by late antique Christian authors, the earliest Jewish version is from the 9<sup>th</sup> century does not include the story of Jesus’ mother.<sup>44</sup> Yet the abundance of Judeo-Arabic manuscripts of the story which do in-

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 317.

<sup>42</sup> David Frankfurter, “Tabitha in the Apocalypse of Elijah,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990) 13–25.

<sup>43</sup> Origen, *Contre Celse*, 5 vols. ed. and trans. Marcel Boret [Sources Chrétiennes] (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967–1976) I. 32; Samuel Kraus, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2006) 1–28 38–40, 50–52, 64–69, 88–93, 118, 122–123, 131–139; Yaaqov Deutsch, “‘Eduiot ‘al nosaḥ qadum shel ‘Toledot Yeshu’”, *Tarbiz*, 69/2 (2000) 177–197. TS NS 298.57, recto ll. 1–6, verso ll. 4–5; Petersburg Arabic 3005, p. 7.1, ll 23, 24, p. 6.2, ll. 3, 15, 16, 17, p. 5.2 l. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Deutsch, “‘Eduiot;’” Michael Sokoloff, “Date and Provenance of the Aramaic Toledot Yeshu on the Basis of Aramaic Dialectology,” in *Toledot Yeshu (“The Life Story of Jesus”) Revisited*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, Yaaqov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 13–26; Daniel Boyarin, “Qri’ah metuqah shel ha-qeṭ’a ha-ḥadash shel ‘Toledot Yeshu’”, *Tarbiz*, 47 (1978) 249–252; W. Hor-

clude the scurrilous tale of Jesus' birth, starting from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the continued reference to these tales in early Christian sources suggests that this tradition or set of inter-related stories circulated in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as Western Europe from late antiquity through the later Middle Ages.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Shi'i authors from the ninth century onwards adopt a curiously parallel anti-Sunni polemic. Namely, those who are opposed to the family of the Prophet and those devoted to him are sons of menstruant women, conceived in an illegitimate sexual union (i. e. by an illegal marriage, adultery, or rape) and thus a "walad zinah" – in case sex during menstruation was not enough of a violation of Islamic law.<sup>46</sup> I have argued elsewhere that Shi'i authors adapted the Jewish *Toledot* stories for their own polemical purposes.<sup>47</sup> The relevant point here, however, is that this tradition was circulating in the Islamic circles familiar to Nu'ayim, although Nu'ayim's *Kitāb al-Fitan* seems to be among the earliest written attestations or indications of it in the Islamic world. Nu'ayim, like the creators of the *Toledot Yeshu* and Shi'i authors, makes the Dajjāl – who is an anti-messiah and opponent of the Prophet and believers – a "walad zinah," for one of the many traditions about the Dajjāl's origins that Nu'ayim includes is that the Dajjāl is a Jew born from a prostitute or that the majority of his followers are sons of prostitutes."<sup>48</sup> Such a remark bears a very close resemblance to the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, for there, Jesus was indeed a Jew born of woman, who, in some versions, willingly committed adultery.<sup>49</sup> Yet, what was once a highly negative

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bury, "The Trial of Jesus in the Jewish Tradition," in *The Trial of Jesus*, ed. E. Bammel (London, 1970) 116–121; S. Krauss, "Fragments araméens sur Toledot Yechou," *Revue des Études Juives*, 62 (1911) 28–37; E. N. Adler, "Un fragment araméen du Toledot Yechou," *Revue des Études Juives*, 61 (1910) 126–130.

**45** Agobard of Lyons, *De Judaicis superstitionibus* in *Agobardi Lugeunensis Opera Omnia* [Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 52] ed. Lieren van Acker (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), letter no. 12, pp. 206–207 also in *Patrologia Latina* (PL) 104: 87b-88a; Amulo, *Liber contra Judaeos* in PL 116: 155–156, 168–169; Cambridge Geniza Manuscripts TS NS 298.57; TS NS 298.55; TS NS 298.49; TS NS 246.24; Petersburg 3005 Arabic; Princeton Hebrew MS 18; Raimon Marti, *Pugio Fidei adversus Mauros et Jdaeos cum Observationibus Josephi de Voisin et Introductione Jo Benedicti Carpozovi*, (Gregg, 1967, reprint of Bibliothecae Paulinae Academiae Lipsiensis, 1687) Secunda Pars, Cap. IV. Vi, pp. 362–364; Peter Schäfer, "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*," Philip Alexander, "The *Toledot Yeshu* in the Context of Jewish-Muslim Debate," Michael Meerson, "Meaningful Nonsense: A Study of Details in *Toledot Yeshu*," all in *Toledot Yeshu* ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited, pp. 27–48, 137–158, 181–195 respectively; Miriam Goldstein, "Judeo-Arabi Versions of *Toledot Yeshu*," *Ginzei Qedem*, 6 (2010) 9–42; Kraus, *Das Leben Jesu*, pp. 148–146.

**46** Etan Kohlberg, "The Position of the *walad zina* in Imami Shi'ism," in *Belief and Law in Imami Shi'ism* (Brookfield VT: Variorum, Gower Publishing Co. 1991) 237–266.

**47** A. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007) 74–75.

**48** أكثر تبع النجال اليهود اولاد المومسات

"Most (who) follow the Dajjāl the Jew (are) sons of the prostitute." The form of the word prostitute – normally مومسات or مومسة with the plural being مومسات is odd here. Perhaps it is intended as a plural, in which case the quote should read "sons of (male???) prostitutes". Nu'ayim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, p. 333.

**49** See references above.



anti-Christian polemic, now taints Jews (and women, or at least one woman). Furthermore, the statement is an early example part of a growing tradition in which, at least in some circles, the enemies of Islam are characterized by their illegitimate conception. By association, Jews and women are cast as suspect, as the producers of this base-born enemy of Islam. I would suggest that Nu‘ayim drew from traditions like the *Toledot Yeshu* and *Sefer Zerubbavel*, in his depictions of a female companion for the Dajjāl, his birth from a Jewish woman and a prostitute, but he (or the oral sources from which he drew) manipulated these traditions to their own purposes. This preoccupation with women’s role in the apocalypse translates in other 10<sup>th</sup> century authors, like the Shi‘i writers Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulaynī (d. c. 941) and Aḥmad ibn Ja‘afar ibn Muḥammad al-Munādī (d. 947) as sexual promiscuity between men and women as an indicator of the end times.<sup>50</sup> While, as the research of David Cook and Walid Saleh demonstrate, Shi‘i were far from the only Muslims to adopt this theme, Shi‘i apocalyptic writers were among the earliest to integrate this topos into their characterization of the signs of end times, and they, like Nu‘ayim, appear to have drawn from Jewish traditions.<sup>51</sup> Other early Sunni authors, such as Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-Dānī (c. 981–1053 CE), likewise incorporated this theme in their apocalyptic writings.<sup>52</sup> Al-Munādī further states that the primary followers of the Dajjāl will be Jews and *awlad zinah*, a remark that simultaneously ties this early apocalyptic text to other Shi‘i polemic against those whom they considered to be enemies of Islam, and connects the text thematically to *Toledot Yeshu* and Nu‘ayim’s *Kitāb al-Fitan*.<sup>53</sup> The juxtaposition of *awlad zinah* and Jews as followers of the Dajjāl implies an equation between the two types of people, thus staining Jews with promiscuity by association. Thus, in an ironic twist, Jews became linked to an epithet they seem to have helped to create. As the producers of *awlad zinah*, participants in promiscuity, and prominent followers or family members of the Dajjāl, women, like the Jews, are targeted as people of the Dajjāl in *Kitāb al-Fitan* and other Muslim apocalyptic texts that follow the trajectory of traditions chosen by Nu‘ayim. These negative associations were perpetuated as later Muslim apocalyptic writers repeated such associations in their own collections, even into the sixteenth century.<sup>54</sup> As Saleh points out, however, unlike Nu‘ayim, later Muslim apocalyptic writers did not in-

50 Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, *Rawḍah min al-Kāfī*, vol.8, ed. Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran: Dār al-Sulṭānī, 1969) 38–39; Aḥmad ibn Ja‘afar ibn Muḥammad al-Munādī, *Al-Malāḥim*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-‘Uqaylī (Qum: Dār al-Sirah, 1998) 301.

51 David Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 13–14, 185–186; Saleh, “Woman as a Locus of Apocalyptic Anxiety;” Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur’an*, pp. 22–26, 32–35, 76–82, 95–99, 103, 175, 186–189, 214, 230, 233–234, 257–258.

52 ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-Dānī, *al-Sunan al-wāridah fī al-fitan wa-ghwā’ilihā wa-al-sā’ah wa-’ash-rāṭihā*, ed. Abū ‘Abd Allah Muḥammad Ḥasan Muḥammad Ḥasan ‘Ismā‘il al-Shāfi‘ī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘alamīah, 1997) #664, p. 232

53 al-Munādī, *Al-Malāḥim*, p. 302.

54 For example, the sixteenth century writer al-Hindī: ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muttaqī al-Hindī *Kanz al-‘ummāl li sunan al-aqwāl wa-al-af’āl* (Aleppo, 1969) vol. 14, no. 39709, p. 614.

clude more positive images, such as Ṭayybah's efforts to warn against the Dajjāl, which served to counterbalance negative images of women's apocalyptic roles.<sup>55</sup>

Regardless of any potential Jewish basis for any of these traditions, the choices on the part of Nu'ayim and other Muslim apocalyptic authors to link Jews with the armies of the Dajjāl, his mother, promiscuity or, like al-Dānī, to juxtapose Jewish origins with demonic associations for the Dajjāl, were certainly polemical moves against Jews.<sup>56</sup> I would suggest that these negative moves are based at least in part by political animus. Nu'ayim asserts that the Dajjāl is a Jew from Isfahan.<sup>57</sup> While he includes other geographical origins or discusses other peoples who will pose a threat to the Muslim community or sacred places, this identification of the Dajjāl as a Jew specifically from Isfahan is significant for it points to the political and religious conflicts which potentially inspired Nu'ayim's preoccupation with the role of Jews in the last battle.<sup>58</sup> This "Jew from Isfahan" probably refers to the Abū Isa, a self-proclaimed Jewish prophet and military leader from Isfahan who led a revolt against the Muslim government, likely, starting under the last Umayyad Caliph, and continuing through the reigns of the first two Abbasid Caliphs, ending in the reign of al-Mansur who died in 775 CE.<sup>59</sup> I would argue that this rebellion left a lasting mark on Muslim apocalyptic writing, for the assertion that a Jew from Isfahan was the Dajjāl and attracted a following of Jews and others continued to be repeated by Muslim apocalyptic writers in the following centuries.<sup>60</sup> The specifics of Abū Isa and his followers continued to intrigue Muslim authors well into the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>61</sup> Very much like accounts of the real Abū Isa, Nu'ayim's Jewish Dajjāl, in addition to being from Isfahan, attracts crowds or tribes of Jewish men and women, and additional Arabs.<sup>62</sup> Much of this portrayal is in accord with Christian assertions that Jews, sometimes in tribes, sometimes generally, follow the Dajjāl, and certainly Muslim authors were influenced by Christian eschatological lore. However, political events also affected which traditions to accept.

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55 Saleh, "Woman as a Locus of Apocalyptic Anxiety."

56 al-Dānī, *Sunan*, # 103, p.207. Compare with #664, p. 232. Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, pp. 108, 178–180, 186–189, 215–217.

57 Nu'ayim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, pp. 332, 335.

58 Ibid. Other places of origin include Khorasan: p. 190, Merv: p. 223, Egypt: p. 223. Other dangerous peoples include Gog and Magog and Ethiopians, pp. 316–317, 326, 356–365 and 406–411 respectively although they are not necessarily directly linked to the Dajjāl.

59 On this messianic claimant and his followers see: Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, pp. 68–89; idem, "Isawiyya Revisited," *Studia Islamica*, 75 (1992) 57–80.

60 al-Dānī, *Sunan*, #664, p. 232; Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābūwayh al-Qummī, *'Iknāl al-dīn wa-'itmām al-ni'ma fī ithbāt at-raj'ah* (Najaf, 1970) 491.

61 Salih b. al-Husayn Ja'afari, *al-Muntakib al-jalīl min takhīl man ḥarrafa al-injīl*, compiled Abū al-Fadl al-Sa'ūdī al-Malikī, ed./rev. Ramadan al-Safanawī and Mustafa al-Zuhbī Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, (1997) 247–248. He died in 1269 CE though his work was studied again by a sixteenth-century author, Abū al-Fadl al-Sa'ūdī al-Malikī.

62 Nu'ayim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, pp. 327, 329, 330, 332, 335, 346.



For Nu‘ayim the apocalypse is a great contest, not merely between Muslims and non-believers, but between Jewish tribes. He records a tradition in which “two tribes of the people of Israel will fight one another on the day of the great slaughter. Islam and its people will assist.”<sup>63</sup> Here the Muslims are mere afterthoughts, participants in a battle that is primarily between Jews. Elsewhere in *Kitab al-Fitan*, as a number of scholars point out, the righteous tribes of Moses and of Isḥaq assist the Muslims against the Dajjāl (and his own Jewish tribes), help them obtain Constantinople and/or Rome, and both the “bad tribes” and the “good” ones participate in the battle for Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup> These more positive traditions, like the negative ones, derive from both Jewish and Christian sources about the final battle – Christians feared and Jews hoped for the Jewish conquest of Jerusalem and the defeat of the Christians. Nu‘ayim’s reference to the tribe of Moses or two “good” tribes reflect Jewish accounts which find written form in such early Jewish texts such as 4 Ezra 13:13 and *Pesiqta Rabbati* (ninth century) in which virtuous tribes of Israel are taken by God beyond the River Sambation, the legendary river behind which many or all of the “lost” tribes of Israel come to dwell in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim lore. While the idea of the Sambation and the scattered tribes dates to late antiquity, the Jewish texts focusing on the “hidden” pious children of Moses date from the early Islamic expansion, even finding a place in the Qur’an.<sup>65</sup> A number of Nu‘ayim’s Muslim contemporaries were likewise aware of either tribes of Jews in a distant land beyond the Sambation or of the virtuous people of Moses whom God separated from the rest of world’s inhabitants.<sup>66</sup>

From what little evidence remains, Abū Isa also drew from these sources about the sons of Moses, and his rebellion set Jews against Jews, as well as Muslims against Muslims. Thus, the inclination on the part of Nu‘ayim and those who followed him to adopt both Jewish and Christian traditions and to cast Jews in both positive and negative roles, reflects the diversity of Jewish and Muslim attitudes toward one another and the political realities which were still part of recent history for Nu‘ayim. On the one hand, Abū Isa was very much part of the religious chaos and strife that characterized the early Abbasids and which so distressed Nu‘ayim, and thus made a good model for the Dajjāl. Yet both Abū Isa and Nu‘ayim drew from a redemptive narrative in which righteous, distant tribes of Jews would turn the tide of the eschaton, and these tribes found a role in both of their messianic/apocalyptic speculations. Steven

<sup>63</sup> Nu‘ayim *Kitāb al-Fitan*, p. 296. . من أسباط بني اسرائيل يقتتلون يوم الملحمة العظمى فينصرون الاسلام و أهله .

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 281. Rubin, *Between the Bible and the Qur’an*, pp. 5, 24 – 30; Bousset also notes the significance of the ten tribes to apocalyptic lore, although he does not discuss Muslim sources. Bousset, *Legend of the Antichrist*, pp. 102 – 110.

<sup>65</sup> Qur’an 7:159, 17:104; *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, pp. 206 – 207; Rubin, *Between the Bible and the Qur’an*, pp. 255, 279.

<sup>66</sup> Muqatil ibn Sulayman *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, d. 767CE; 8<sup>th</sup> cent traditions included in al-Tabari and Ibn Abi Hattim, both c. ninth-tenth century CE. For all of these see Rubin, *Between the Bible and the Qur’an*, pp. 24 – 30, 242.

Wasserstrom has demonstrated that Jewish “syncretic” groups, like the Isawiyya, and Muslims inclined to adopt Jewish practices and views continued through the 11<sup>th</sup> century or even later, so that Jews remained a source of attraction and/or potential converts, but also of danger to the coherence and “right belief” of the Muslim community.<sup>67</sup> This duality of attraction and repulsion very much shaped Nu‘ayim’s apocalyptic imaginings about the Jews, and, because his text was so influential, later Muslim expectations about Jews’ role in eschaton and their relationship with the Dajjāl. Nu‘ayim’s tendency or choice to include a predominance of negative traditions about Jews, or traditions which he or his sources chose to redesign so that they had anti-Jewish implications would have served to emphasize to his Muslim readers and hearers that those Jews who did not embrace “right belief” or did not support the Muslims were not to be trusted. Yet his collection of ḥadīth still leaves room for Jews who might be supporters of Islam. This ambiguity, or rather eschewal of any monolithic portrayal of Jews and their final religious stance during the end times derives, therefore, from both conflicting religious, literary traditions about the Jews from which Nu‘ayim drew, and from actual, recent political and social events, in which Jews assertively debated and acted upon variegated conceptions of the Messiah and eschatological warfare.

Nu‘ayim’s depiction of women similarly defies clear-cut categories of good or evil, friend or enemy. As with his choice of ḥadīth about Jews, the diversified roles Nu‘ayim assigned to women reflect a combination of literary influences from both Christian and Jewish sources, and social and literary realities peculiar to the early Islamic world. Both early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions regarding the Messiah and the Anti-Messiah have strongly positive female leaders in the persons of Hephizba, in the Jewish tradition, and Mary and Tabitha in the Christian one. Both traditions also possess highly negative ones, mostly in the form of the mother of the Anti-Messiah. Notably, Nu‘ayim retained the positive role assigned to the heroine and one-time Egyptian goddess, Tabitha/Ṭayybah, however, he did so in a substantially diminished fashion. This ambiguous treatment of a female figure, where she is at once sympathetic and struggles on behalf of the believers, but remains relatively powerless, I would argue, reflects the changing position of women between the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period. In her examination of women in classical Arabic poetry Teresa Garulo notes a shift in the poetry from the Umayyad to the Abbasid periods. According to her, in the Umayyad era, the women described in the poetry are free and of the same social class as the poet. They also appear to have been actual women. In the Abbasid, however, the women addressed are either slaves, or pseudonyms are used.<sup>68</sup> Garulo connects this change to shifts in women’s freedom of movement in public and attitudes toward

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<sup>67</sup> Steven M. Wasserstrom, “Isawiyya Revisited,” *Studia Islamica*, 75 (1992) 57–80.

<sup>68</sup> Note that this thread of analysis does not take into account women as poets in their own right in either period.

it. Increasingly in the Abbasid period free women were expected to remain at home or otherwise sequestered from public viewing and interaction with those outside the family circle. Those who defied these expectations were censured. Garulo suggests that as Muslim society became increasingly urbanized, anxiety about the potential threat which extensive interaction with complete (male) strangers posed to free, Muslim women's honor (and that of the men connected with them) also rose.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, it is within this period and slightly later that a growing apprehension about women of any status or religious orientation as a source of *fitna*, i.e. temptation or trouble, may be discerned in a wide variety of genres of Muslim, Arabic writing. The sexual temptation women inspired was often closely tied with religious temptation.<sup>70</sup>

Thus like the Jews, women in Nu'ayim's society occupied and were portrayed as occupying a multiplicity of roles that spanned the entire range of negative to positive. The diminishing of Tabitha/Ṭayybah's efficacy and power as opponent to the Anti-Messiah by Nu'ayim or the author of the tradition from which he drew, parallels the thread in at least some Arabic sources to advocate diminished public agency on the part of pious, free, Muslim women. Yet just as such agency did not disappear in the face of criticism, neither did the possibility of presenting a woman as warner and advocate against the Dajjāl vanish. Rather it was contracted, even as women's avenues of unrestricted interactions became more restricted.

Nu'ayim's traditions of a promiscuous, Jewish mother of the Dajjāl or the Dajjāl's satanically associated female and male family members, in addition to being analyzed in the context of potential Jewish or Christian influences, also need to be un-

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69 Teresa Garulo, "Women in Medieval Classical Poetry," in *Writing the Feminine: Women in Arab Sources*, ed. Manuela Marin and Randi Deguilhem (London/New York: I. B.Tauris, 2002) 25–40. For rising concern about the sequestering of women also see: Cristina de la Puente, "Juridical Sources for the Study of the Female's Capacity to Act According to Maliki Law," in *Writing the Feminine*, pp. 95–110, and Nadia Lachiri's discussion of free women in Andalusī proverbs ("Andalusī Proverbs on Women," in *Writing the Feminine*, pp. 41–48, esp. p. 43) although in the first case, the author's findings limited to a single legal school and in the second, are very limited geographically and one far from the center of Nu'ayim's center of activity. Nevertheless, these authors' findings indicate the prevalence in the Islamic world of the tendencies noted by Garulo.

70 Alexandra Cuffel "Polemicalizing Women's Bathing among Medieval and Early Modern Muslims and Christians." In *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott (Leiden: E.J. Brill Press, 2009) 171–188; idem, "Reorienting Christian 'Amazons': Christian women warriors in medieval Islamic literature in the context of the crusades" In *Religion, Gender, and Culture in the pre-modern world*, ed. Brian Britt and Alexandra Cuffel. (New York: Palgrave Press, 2007) 137–166; Nadia El-Cheik, *Byzantium as viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, MA: 2004) 123–138; idem, "Women's History: A Study of al-Tanūkhi," in *Writing the Feminine*, pp. 129–148; Remke Kruk, "The Bold and the Beautiful: Women and 'fitna' in the *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himma*: the story of Nūra," in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* ed. Gavin Hambly (New York: Garland, 1998) 99–116. See however the cautionary analysis against over-generalizing Muslim views of women and *fitna* by Julia Scott Meisami, "Writing Medieval Women," *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, ed. Julia Bray (New York: Routledge, 2006) 47–87.

derstood in relationship to depictions of women as potential sources of sexual and religious *fitna*. By assigning or adopting narratives that assigned a non-Muslim, or worse, demonic, feminine origin to the Anti-Messiah, Nu‘ayim tied women to both sexual and religious temptation. “Wrong” sexual encounter with the religious other (Jewish) results in terrible religious temptation in the form of the Dajjāl and his minions. Thus at one coup, Jews and women both become sources of religious and sexual danger. Thus the ḥadīth in *Kitāb al-Fitan* on the one hand very much reflect influence from Jewish and Christian traditions which simultaneously shaped and themselves were reshaped to suit the cultural, gendered, and religious expectations of the Muslim compiler. *Kitāb al-Fitan* was immensely influential on later Muslim apocalyptic traditions, but many of these later collections retain primarily negative traditions regarding Jews and women – those threads of apocalyptic narrative that no longer resonated with the social mores and concerns of the later periods were dropped. Nu‘ayim’s mixture of positive and negative portrayals reflect the shifting, ambiguous roles of Jews and women between the Umayyad and Abbasid periods.

Zaroui Pogossian

# Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: a Fictional Community or New Encounters?

In the monotheistic traditions of the medieval Eastern Mediterranean eschatological texts, i.e. compositions whose declared purpose was to foretell events that heralded the End of the World, could become a medium of polemics and propaganda. The targets of denigration could range from kings and emperors to entire communities, particularly if those were believed to represent competing or antagonistic positions on religion, politics or other spheres of life. End-time adversaries from one perspective could be the heroes from the point of view of a different community and its narratives. Apocalyptic texts transmitted in Armenian, either composed in that language or translations, are no exception. A significant number of such sources exists, of which some have been published, even if rarely in a critical form, while others are still available only in manuscripts. This type of texts can provide interesting and at times unique pieces of information on perceptions of other linguistic, cultural and religious communities with whom the Armenians came into contact. In this paper I will explore the image of the Jews and the functions ascribed to them in Armenian apocalyptic narratives, focusing especially on the 12<sup>th</sup> century texts composed in the Cilician environment.

## Definitions of Terms and the Historical Context

In this paper the terms “apocalyptic” and “eschatology/eschatological” will be used interchangeably to refer to texts and traditions that narrate earthly events leading to the Second coming of Jesus and the End of Times. None of the sources to be presented deal with other-worldly journeys, the fate of the soul after death or personal eschatology. Thus, they belong to the category of the so-called “historical apocalypses”.<sup>1</sup> As such, they allude to historical events in the form of *vaticinia ex eventu*, followed by predictions of the future, even though it is not always easy to draw the line between the two parts. This latter section includes a narrative on the Antichrist – a personalised end-time anti-hero – which usually describes his birth,

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<sup>1</sup> This type has been classified as “i.a” by J. J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” in *Apocalypse: the Morphology of a Genre*. Semeia 14 (1979): 1–21, esp. 14.

his physical appearance and his deeds, always imagined as taking place on earth and mingled with earthly politics. Recent or contemporary events may find a reflection also in this “prophetic section,” thus, complicating the division of the texts into any neat portions: that about the past and that about the future. The Jews appear in the presumed prophetic section, usually as a group and always associated with the origin and deeds of the Antichrist.

Recent scholarship has emphasised that the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries marked a period of increased production of eschatological narratives in Armenian.<sup>2</sup> Written accounts that have come down to us range from self-standing textual units with the specific purpose of describing the End-time events<sup>3</sup> to chronicles, historiographic compositions and poetry cast in an eschatological framework or tending to ascribe eschatological significance to occurrences or natural phenomena.<sup>4</sup> Prophecies and/or independent apocalyptic text-blocks were incorporated or alluded to in a variety of source types.<sup>5</sup> Among traditional explanations for this heightened interest in eschatology the loss of the Kingdoms of the Bagratunis and Arçrunis of Greater Armenia in the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the Seljuq conquest of Anatolia in its latter part, especially after the Battle of Manazkert (Manzikert) in 1071, loom

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2 A fundamental volume and one of the first studies of the eschatological texts as expressions of political ideas and trends in Armenian sources is A. Hovhannissyan, *Drvagner hay azatagrakan mtk'i patmut'yan*. [Episodes from the Armenian national liberation thought]. 2 vols. (Yerevan, 1957). Unfortunately this book is not accessible to most Western scholars because of the language barrier. For more recent work cf. S. La Porta, “Conflicted Coexistence: Christian-Muslim Interaction and its Representation in Medieval Armenia,” in *Contextualizing the Muslim Other in Medieval Judeo-Christian Discourses*, 103–123. Ed. J. Frakes (New York, 2011) and Z. Pogossian, “The Last Roman Emperor or the Last Armenian King? Some Considerations on the Armenian Apocalyptic Literature from the Cilician Period,” in *Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: A Comparative Perspective* (Leiden, 2014), 457–503.

3 Such as the *Sermo de Antichristo* and the *Prophecies of Agaton*. Cf. notes 13 and 15 for further information.

4 The most representative compositions of this *genre* from this time-period that cast historical events in an eschatological framework are the 11<sup>th</sup> century (second half) Aristakēs Lastivertc'i [Aristakēs of Lastivert], *Patmut'iwn* [History]. Ed. K. Yuzbašyan. (Yerevan, 1963) and the 12<sup>th</sup> century (finished around 1138) Matt'ēos Uihayec'i [Matthew of Edessa], *Žamanakagrut'iwn* [Chronicle]. Ed. M. Melik'-Adamyān and N. Ter-Mik'ayelyan, trans. to modern Armenian with comments H. Bart'ikyan. (Yerevan, 1991) [henceforth: ME, *Chronicle*].

5 For example, two *Prophecies* attributed to a learned 11<sup>th</sup> century scholar Yovhannēs Kozeṛn are incorporated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa, as well as circulated independently. For the prophecy of Kozeṛn cf. N. Marr, “Skazanie o katolikose Petre i učenom Ioanne Kozeṛne” [The tale on Catholicos Peter and the scholar Ioan Kozeṛn], *Vostočnye Zametki* (1895): 9–34 and L. Xaçikean, “Yakob Sanahnec'i žamanakagir XI dari” [Yakob Sanahnec'i: a chronicler of the XI century], in *Banber Matenadaran* 1 (1971): 22–48. The text of Kozeṛn's *Prophecies* and an English translation can be found in T. Andrews, *Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa, with a Discussion of Computer-aided Methods Used to Edit the Text*. (Ph.D. Dissertation. Lincoln College, University of Oxford, 2009), 227–306.

large.<sup>6</sup> But even before these events, the anxiety about the year 1000 – the Millennium of the Resurrection – provided an impetus for prophetic pronouncements independent of political turmoil.<sup>7</sup> Warnings about the End were often coupled with a call for repentance and the eschatological enemy – often the Muslims – were depicted as instruments of God’s wrath sent to punish the Armenians for their sins. It has been proposed that the dehumanisation and eschatologisation of the Muslims in general and the Seljuqs in particular were aimed at masking a *modus vivendi* that had been achieved in Asia Minor and elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean between the Christian Armenian and Muslim populations, in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, in an attempt to draw clearer cultural and behavioural boundaries.<sup>8</sup> Besides these concerns, many of the apocalyptic texts had another political agenda: to foretell the renewal of an independent Armenian kingdom.

The critical approach to the sources, as well as the juxtaposition of conclusions based on the study of historiography, art history, architecture, poetry and epigraphy have borne significant results in understanding Christian-Muslim relations in medieval Asia Minor, particularly between the Armenians and the Muslims. It would be fruitful to assess the validity of this model within more narrowly defined time-periods and specific geographical contexts in order to further nuance our understanding of perceptions and actual interactions between the Armenians and the Muslims, the latter represented by more than one linguistic community or political allegiance. One could hypothesise *a priori* that there must have been regional differences and, for example, an Armenian/Armenians living in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in the semi-independent south-western enclave of Tarōn ruled by the pro-Byzantine T’ornikēan-Mamikonean nobility had a different experience and, consequently, a different perception of the Muslims than someone in the northern district of Širak, where the nostalgia and idealisation of the recently suppressed Bagratuni rule, as well as resentments against the Byzantine Empire for the conquest of Ani in 1045 and the ousting of the last Bagratuni King Gagik II, must have been significant at least among

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6 These are discussed in more detail in Pogossian, “The Last Roman Emperor” and La Porta, “Conflicted Coexistence.”

7 For example, both the *First* and the *Second Prophecy of Kozein* cite the Millennium of the Resurrection as the date when Satan would be set free. ME, *Chronicle*, 62. Of these, the *Second Prophecy* was later up-dated to include references to 12<sup>th</sup>-century events, including the conquest of Edessa by Nur ad-Din Zengi.

8 Andrews, *Prolegomena to a Critical Edition*, 166–182. She assumes that the Armenians had closer ties and a more complex relationship with Chalcedonian Greeks – whom they also viewed as religious adversaries – than the Muslims, a point that is not entirely persuasive in light of Armenians’ five centuries of interaction with the Muslims. La Porta, “Conflicted Coexistence,” provides a general overview of recent scholarship on various aspects of that interaction expressed in art, architecture, poetry and linguistics. See also the important contribution of J. Russell, “The Credal Poem Hawatov Xostovanim (“I Confess in Faith”) of St. Nersēs the Graceful,” in *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*. Eds J.J. Van Ginkel, H.L. Murre – van den Berg, T. M. van Lint. (Leuven-Paris-Dudely, MA, 2005), 185–236.



some of the citizens. If one adds variations of points of view due to the social class or urban versus rural background of persons involved, then the picture must have been invariably more complex. Therefore, it would be methodologically mistaken to talk of an abstract Armenian or Armenians, as well as a Muslim or Muslims if we remember, again, the incredible variation of linguistic and cultural factors in the complex patchwork of the Muslim polities in the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries Asia Minor.

Despite these reservations, it has been possible to historically contextualise and offer plausible explanations for the reasons that made eschatological interpretations appealing to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century authors when reacting to Seljuq advances and settlement in Greater Armenia and beyond. They are often treated as just another Muslim group set on a military conquest. The same cannot be said about the adherents of the other Monotheistic religion – the Jews – whose presence and function in the 12<sup>th</sup> century Armenian apocalyptic sources has not been addressed. Certainly, the latter were a usual target of Christian polemic since the first century of the Common Era.<sup>9</sup> In fact, they appear as one of the most significant foes in a variety of scenarios within a wide spectrum of Christian apocalyptic texts. Thus, presumably one should not be surprised to encounter them in Armenian compositions of this genre too. However, their presence is particularly intriguing in a cluster of eschatological texts written or re-edited in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the Cilician milieu where the Armenians had moved in large numbers since the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Jews

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**9** There is enormous amount of literature on Jewish-Christian relations and polemical literature. The following works (in chronological order) on which I have relied are but a tiny portion of the whole: J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire (641 – 1204)*. (Athens, 1939; Rpt. New York, 1970); M. Simon, *Verus Israel. Étude sur les relations entre Chrétiens et Juifs dans l'Empire Romain (135 – 425)* (Paris, 1948); B. Blumenkranz, "Vie et survie de la polémique antijuive," *Studia Patristica* 1/1 (1957): 460 – 476; M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule*. (Oxford, 1976); H. Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.–11. Jh.)*. (Frankfurt, 1982); *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*. Eds J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (London-New York: 1992); L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World. Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, 1993); A. Cameron, "Byzantines and Jews: Some Recent Work on Early Byzantium," *Bulletin of Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1996): 249 – 274; *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*. Eds G.G. Stroumsa and O. Limor (Tübingen, 1996); W. Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy*. (Edinburgh, 1998); A. Külzer, *Disputationes Graecae contra Iudaeos. Untersuchungen zur Byzantinischen antijüdischen Dialogliteratur und ihrem Judenbild* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1999); A. Cameron, "Blaming the Jews: The Seventh-Century Invasions of Palestine in Context," *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002): 57 – 78; G. Dagron and V. Déroche, *Juifs et Chrétiens en Orient Byzantin*. (rpt. Paris, 2010).

**10** What had started as a spontaneous and gradual process of Armenian immigration westward was precipitated after the Battle of Manazkert (Manzikert) in 1071. A massive movement of Armenians first to Cappadocia and then to Cilicia ensued after that date, followed by their exertion of military and political control on what were *de jure* Byzantine territories. However, some Armenian nobles had exchanged their ancestral lands with those in the Empire already in the second half of the tenth and the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. With time members of the old Armenian nobility and newly emerging lords controlled various locations such as Sebastea, Caesarea, Melitene, Tzamandos, Edessa and An-



are subject to too similar a treatment in these texts for this to be accidental. The interest in the fate of the Jews at the End of Times, as these sources transmit, has not attracted scholarly attention thus far. The aim of this study, therefore, is to start filling this gap. I will explore the functional purpose of evoking the Jews or of being Jewish in some Armenian apocalyptic narratives in two ways. The bulk of the investigation will be dedicated to a source-critical analysis. This will allow to position these Armenian compositions in a wider context of apocalyptic traditions of diverse Christian cultures and languages, especially those that show thematic affinities with the texts at hand. Not only, such an exploration will reveal the impact of certain apocalyptic traditions from neighbouring cultures on Armenian texts of the same genre, and their modification to suit the needs of each text and its purpose. Not least, the paper will identify some unpublished texts, original Armenian compositions or translations and situate them within Armenian apocalyptic traditions. The source-critical approach allows only a partial explanation of the function of the Jews and their fate at the End of the World in the Armenian texts to be presented here. Thus, a second goal of the paper is to explore the 12<sup>th</sup>-century political, religious and intellectual climate as another path to understanding the sources and their content. I will hypothesise that some historical factors, such as the possibility of real encounters and interactions between (at least some) Armenians and Jews in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the Cilician context, may have been one of the reasons for a renewed interest in the people who held fast to the First Alliance and whose presence must have been accounted for in the Armenian end-time speculations. The limitations of space will allow only a brief survey of this last aspect rather than an exhaustive study.

## Presentation of the Texts

Five texts that make up a cluster will be considered in this paper. First, I will analyse the *Vision of St. Nersēs* (VN) incorporated in his presumably 10<sup>th</sup> century *Life*.<sup>11</sup> Sec-

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tioc. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century one of the most powerful Armenian rulers in the region was a Chalcedonian prince Philaretos Brachamios. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the strongest Armenian lords in Cilicia included the Hetumids and the Rubenids. The latter acquired a royal status in 1198 when Prince Lewon II Rubenid was crowned as King Lewon I, recognised both by the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the Byzantine Empire. Cf. G. Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens entre Grecs, Musulmans et Croisés*. 2 vols. (Lisbon, 2003) for the most recent analysis and history of the Armenians in that region up to the crowning of Lewon.

<sup>11</sup> For a long time the *Life of St. Nersēs* was accessible only in its short version published as *Patmut'iwn srboyn Nersisi Part'ewi* [History of St. Nersēs Part'ew]. *Sop'erk' haykakank'* Vol. 6 (Venice-St. Lazzaro, 1835). Its editor utilised, among others, a ms copied in 1131, as per the colophon reproduced on p. 143. Recently the longer version of the *Life* was published. Even if the latter is not a critical edition strictly speaking, it provides a list of all identified manuscripts containing the *Life*, as well as a critical apparatus which indicates the variant readings of the oldest known manuscripts or publications. Cf. *Mesropay Ēric'u Vayoc'jorec'woy Patmut'iwn srboyn Nersisi Hayoc' Hayrapeti* [History of

ond, an anonymous *Sermo de Antichristo* (SA) attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis and composed some time between 1125 and 1144 will be considered.<sup>12</sup> Third, I will look at a 12<sup>th</sup>-century composition extant in at least three recensions, ascribed to an un-known author Agat'on or Agadron and conventionally entitled the *Prophecies of Agaton* (PA). It has not received an adequate edition thus far.<sup>13</sup> The fourth text is a *Counsel* written in 1212 by the renowned theologian Vardan Aygekci who relied on a number of eschatological traditions.<sup>14</sup> Finally, a different text with which PA shares many details will be the focus of attention, especially considering its presumed an-

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St. Nersēs Patriarch of the Armenians by Priest Mesrop Vayoc[jorec'i]. Ed. G. Tēr-Vardanean. *Matenagirk' hayoc' / Armenian Classical Authors*. Vol. 11. (Antelias, 2010), 631–741 [Henceforth: LN]. Any manuscript referred to in this paper will be cited according to the conventions of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes (AIEA) available at [http://aiea.fltr.ucl.ac.be/aiea\\_fr/SIGLE\\_FR.htm](http://aiea.fltr.ucl.ac.be/aiea_fr/SIGLE_FR.htm), i.e. a capital letter indicating the location or name of the library followed by the number of the manuscript according to the given library's cataloguing system. The following *sigla* appear in this work: J = Jerusalem, the Library of the Armenian Patriarchate; M = Matenadaran, Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia; P = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale; V = Venice, Library of the Melchitarist Congregation of St. Lazzaro.

**12** *Sermo de Antichristo*. Introduzione, testo critico, versione latina e note a cura di G. Frasson. *Biblioteca Armeniaca 2*. (Venice, 1976) [Henceforth: SA]. Frasson dated the final edition of the text to between 1113 and 1149 in *Ibid* LIV, but I have suggested elsewhere that 1125 and 1144 are more convincing *termini*. Cf. Pogossian, "The Last Roman Emperor," 483–484.

**13** Only a portion of the *Prophecies* was published in Y. Awger, "Agat'on kam Agadron" [Agat'on or Agadron], *Bazmavēp* (1913): 396–400. Its oral and written sources, are discussed in Hovhannisyán, *Episodes*, vol. 1, 33–57, and B. Sargiseán, *Usumnasirut'iwnc' hin ktakarani anvawer groc' vray* [Studies on the apocryphal literature of the Old Testament] (Venice-St. Lazzaro, 1898) 177–219. I will consistently spell Agat'on as Agaton in this paper for simplicity's sake, as well as use PA for abbreviating the title. A list of 23 manuscripts and their division into three recensions has been available since the monumental publication by H. Anasyán, *Haykakan matenagrut'yun* [Armenian Bibliography]. Vol. 1. (Yerevan, 1959), cols. 144–149. Anasyán indicated the existence of three recensions, pointing out their main differences. Other variations between the recensions have emerged from my further study of the manuscript tradition which will be discussed in a future publication. Some information can be found in Pogossian, "The Last Roman Emperor," 479–497. The oldest extant manuscript of the *Prophecies of Agaton* is M1382 dated to 1219, but it is unfortunately badly damaged. I will therefore use M3839 (14<sup>th</sup> c.) which represents the same text-type and is fully legible. My earlier indication in Pogossian, "The Last Roman Emperor," 480 that the earliest extant manuscript of PA is V207 (dated to 1288 the latest) should now be corrected. There are important textual differences between V207 and the recension represented by M1382 and M3839. A discussion of their relationship will take me far beyond this paper. I will therefore use only M3839 (representing the oldest available text-type) version for the purposes of this article.

**14** This text is also unpublished. I have had access to parts of the transcription of the *Counsel* based on J936 thanks to my colleague Dr. Sergio La Porta whom I wish to thank warmly. Cf. also his article "Vardan Aygekci's Counsel and the Medieval Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition," in *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition*, 504–537. I thank Dr. La Porta again for having made his article available to me before publication. The full title of the treatise is *Concerning the birth of the Antichrist and the bitter time that will be; and concerning his destruction*. I will consistently refer to it as VC or *Counsel*. Information on the manuscript and the date 1212 of the text's composition are discussed in La Porta, "Vardan Aygekci," 504.

tiquity. The latter is sometimes attributed to the same mysterious Agat'on or Agadron (as in M641 or M2116) as the *Prophecies of Agaton*, at other times to Agat'angel (as in M8387, M6961) and Agat'ang (as in M2004).<sup>15</sup> It has never been published. The original (pseudo) attribution may have been to Agatangel, aspiring to appropriate the name of one of the most revered Armenian authors, i. e. Agat'angelos.<sup>16</sup> In the present work I will consistently refer to this text as Agatangel *On the End of the World*. This seemingly older composition has never attracted scholarly attention.

## The Vision of St. Nersēs

The earliest manuscript witness to the textual cluster described above is that of the *Life of St. Nersēs* which includes the *Vision of St. Nersēs* (VN). It will therefore be described first. Moreover, I will dedicate more space to the presentation of this text since virtually no study or description of it is available in a Western language.

St. Nersēs was one of the most revered *catholicoi* of the Armenian Church, whose reforms in the 4<sup>th</sup> century were fundamental for shaping some of her institutions and traditions. His name was also closely associated with the anti-Arian Nicene orthodoxy and thus, inextricably linked to the perceived purity of the doctrine of the Armenian Church.<sup>17</sup> The *Life of St. Nersēs* has survived in numerous manuscript versions, while the *Vision* itself, circulating also independently of the *Life*, was subject to continuous up-dates.<sup>18</sup> It would therefore be difficult to suggest any absolute date for the *Vision* – a common problem when dealing with apocalyptic texts – since a full review of the surviving manuscript witnesses is bound to reveal versions

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15 This un-known author Agatangel and the text *On the End of the World* is briefly described in Anasyan, *Armenian Bibliography*, cols. 149–151, who rightly suggests not to confuse it with Agaton/Agadron of PA. Anasyan does not discuss the relationship of the two texts. He identified 7 manuscripts with this text, while my further research has raised that number to 14.

16 This is itself a pseudonym for the author of a complex work with numerous recensions and translations into various languages, which recounts the history of the conversion of Armenia by St. Gregory the Illuminator and King Trdat. The date of the extant Armenian version of this *History of the Armenians* is generally accepted as 460's. Agat'angelos, *Patmut'iwñ hayoc'* [History of the Armenians]. Crit. ed. G. Ter-Mkrtchian and S. Kananianc', transl. to modern Armenian A. Ter-Levondyan. (Yerevan, 1983). English translation, *Agathangelos History of the Armenians*. Trans. and commentary R. Thomson. (Albany, 1976).

17 On St. Nersēs' activities and importance for the Armenian Church cf. N. Garsoïan, "Nersēs le Grand, Basile de Césarée et Eusthate de Sébaste," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 15 (1983): 145–169.

18 A list of 111 manuscripts with a full or a partial text of the *Life* can be found in LN, 638–662. No list of mss which contain only the *Vision* is available.

relevant to periods ranging from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the Mongol conquests and later. One version was even translated also into Latin, probably in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup>

According to the colophon attached to the *Life* it was compiled in 967 by an otherwise un-known priest Mesrop from the village of Hołoc‘munk‘ in the region of Vayoc‘ Jor.<sup>20</sup> Nothing else is known about this Mesrop. Nor is his commissioner – Vahan Mamikonean whom Mesrop had baptised according to the colophon – identified. Vahan seems to have resided in the region of Tarōn and obviously belonged to the Mamikonean noble clan. Mesrop’s colophon implies that the *Life* included a *Vision of St. Nersēs* already in 967, if that is, indeed the date of its composition, but one would never know what was its exact content unless an autograph manuscript were to be found. The *Life of St. Nersēs* is based on information about the Saint scattered in the 5<sup>th</sup> century *History of the Armenians* attributed to one P‘awstos Buzand, but also in other, later traditions, both written and oral.<sup>21</sup> Mesrop himself cites his source as from “the Eastern Books of the *Paralipomena of the Histories of the Armenians*.”<sup>22</sup> No critical study of LN’s sources is currently available.

Unabashed propaganda for the Mamikonean noble clan pervades the *Life*. This comes as no surprise given its presumed commissioner’s origin but is rather unexpected in light of the date of the colophon by Mesrop. The Mamikoneans were one of the most influential aristocratic clans in Late Antique Armenia and played a pivotal role in its political and religious affairs until a failed rebellion against the Abbasid overlords in 774/5.<sup>23</sup> They traditionally held the office of the *sparapet*, i. e. the

**19** Published in A. Pertusi, *La fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo. Significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in Oriente e in Occidente*. (Roma: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1988), 130–135. The Latin version has numerous divergences from the Armenian text.

**20** LN, 740 for the colophon. The author of the colophon describes his work as “ճալկաբալ արարի / I compiled”. For a discussion of the *Life of St. Nersēs* and its prophetic *Vision* cf. Hovhannissyan, *Episodes*, vol. 1, 18–29 and briefly in R. W. Thomson, “The Crusaders through Armenian Eyes,” in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*. Ed. A. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh. (Washington, DC, 2001), 74–75.

**21** For problems of attribution of this *History* to one P‘awstos Buzand cf. *The Epic Histories Attributed to P‘awstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmut‘iwnk‘)*. Trans. and comments by N. Garsoïan (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 11. The Armenian edition used here is: *Pawstosi Biwzandac‘woy Patmut‘iwn hayoc‘ [History of the Armenians of P‘awstos Biwzandac‘i]*. (Yerevan, 1987). [Henceforth: PB, all citations will be made to book and chapter numbers]. Garsoïan suggests that ‘Buzand’ stands for the Persian word *bowzand* and is part of the title rather than the name of its author. I use the traditional appellation for convenience’s sake, even if I am aware of the problems inherent in this choice.

**22** LN, 740: յԱրևելից գրոց ի Հայոց մնացորդացն պատմութեանց. Tēr-Vardanyan mentions also Movsēs Xorenac‘i (dated to 5<sup>th</sup> or each of the subsequent three centuries) as one of LN’s sources and marks that LN has also significant differences compared to P‘awstos and Movsēs Xorenac‘i. Cf. LN, 632. A detailed source-critical study of the *Life* would be a worthy undertaking.

**23** For the Mamikonean family cf. C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, (Washington, DC, 1963), 209–211, 270, 323–324, 452–453; Idem, “The Mamikonids and the Liparitids,” in *Armeniaca, Mélanges d’études arméniennes* (Venice, 1969), 125–137; and N. Adontz, “Les Taronites en Arménie et a Byzance,” in *Études Arméno-Byzantines*. (Lisbon, 1965), 197–263. For a succinct presentation of the fortunes of Tarōn after 775 cf. also Avdoyan’s “Introduction” to Pseudo-Yovhannēs

commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Armenian Kingdom during the Aršakuni rule, as well as after its abolition in 428. Their power base was in the territory of Tarōn/Turuberan, north-west of Lake Van, stretching from the river Mehraget to the river Aracani (or Upper Euphrates) and delimited by the Taurus mountains in the south.<sup>24</sup> During the Arab domination of Greater Armenia the Mamikoneans – usually adopting a pro-Byzantine political orientation – engaged in a power struggle for dominance over Armenian territories and lesser nobility with another potent family – the Bagratunis, the latter pursuing a pro-Arab policy. The Mamikoneans eventually lost, since their fortunes were particularly hard hit after the defeat at the battle of Bagrewand in 774/5.<sup>25</sup> From this fateful event they never fully recovered and the territory of Tarōn gradually fell under Bagratuni rule, with a near-total control achieved probably by the 850's. A century later, however, the Bagratunis themselves ceded Tarōn to the Byzantine Empire. The process of annexation took years and was completed in 966. This would mean that at the presumed time of Mesrop's compilation Tarōn neither belonged to the Mamikoneans, nor was it even under Armenian sovereignty. This context must be taken into consideration when exploring the function and the intended audience of this text. It is possible that the new Byzantine rule in Tarōn revived a nostalgic harking back to the "olden days" when the "glorious Mamikoneans" ruled the land. Hence, the pro-Mamikonean bias of the *Life* and the *Vision of St. Nersēs*.

The pro-Mamikonean discourse in the *Life* is fitted into a prophetic and eschatological framework whose main elements are based on yet another *Vision*, this time ascribed to St. Sahak (d. 438), the last catholicos from the line of St. Gregory the Illuminator and the son of St. Nersēs. The *Vision of St. Sahak*, which is dated variously to either slightly before 700 or around 500, in fact, prophesied that the Armenian royal Aršakuni dynasty and the line of catholicoi from the house of St. Gregory the Illuminator would soon disappear.<sup>26</sup> However, at the End of Times both the king-

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Mamikonean, *The History of Tarōn*. Historical investigation, Critical translation, and Historical and Textual Commentaries by L. Avdoyan. (Atlanta, 1993), esp. 27 – 29 and Idem, "Feudal Histories: Paying Court to the Mamikonians and Bagratunis of Taron," in *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush*. Ed. R. Hovannisian. (Costa Mesa, 2001), 71 – 90.

**24** For a geographical description of Tarōn see R. H. Hewsen, "The Historical Geography of Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush," in *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush*, 41 – 58. Part of the Taurus mountains in Tarōn were known as Sasun and gave this name also to the adjacent region.

**25** For an overview of the Bagratuni-Mamikonean rivalry and its expression in written sources, especially historiography, cf. L. Avdoyan, "Feudal Histories."

**26** "Tesil Sahakay Part'ewi" [*Vision of Sahak Part'ew*], *Bazmavēp* 89 (1932): 18 – 19. The impact of this eschatological motif on the apocalyptic texts from the Cilician period is discussed in Pogossian, "The Last Roman Emperor." The *Vision of St. Sahak* has been dated to just before 700 by N. Akinean, "K'nnut'iwn teslean Srboyn Sahakay" [A Critical Study of the *Vision of St. Sahak*]. Parts 1 & 2. *Handēs Amsōreay* 81 (1936): 465 – 479 and 82 (1937): 48 – 87, esp. 81. But recently Muradyan has argued that it was an integral part of the *History of Łazar P'arpec'i* where it is found today, and not a later interpolation. This would make the date of its composition around 500. G. Muradyan, "Sahaki tesile

ship and the office of the catholicos would be renewed respectively by an off-spring from the royal Aršakuni clan and a catholicos from St. Gregory the Illuminator's progeny. Taking this scheme for granted, the *Life of St. Nersēs* emphasises time and again that the Mamikoneans were heirs of both the Aršakunis and the Gregorids. Not only, a renewal of the royal and priestly offices, according to this text, would necessarily include also the office of the *sparapet*, the hereditary privilege of the Mamikoneans. To this end, the *Life* posits a genealogy, not found in any other Armenian source, according to which St. Nersēs, before his sacerdotal ordination, was married to a Mamikonean princess – Sanduxt – who gave birth to their son Sahak (the future catholicos to whom the *Vision of St. Sahak* is ascribed) and died three years after the marriage.<sup>27</sup> Nersēs himself is told to be the cousin of his contemporary Armenian King Aršak, which would make him an Aršakuni on his maternal side.<sup>28</sup> In one shot, then, Mesrop Vayoc'jorec'i or his source(s) made the Mamikoneans the greatest potential beneficiaries of an end-time scenario conceived in terms expounded in the *Vision of St. Sahak*. The praise for the Mamikoneans, their bravery and constant reminders that they were blood relations of the royal Aršakunis run through the *Life* and are very likely based on oral traditions and legends on the Mamikonean family and their illustrious deeds that lingered on long after their loss of power in Tarōn.<sup>29</sup> The *Life's* genealogy implies that both the royal and the highest priestly offices just before the End of Times would be occupied by men who were the blood relations of the Mamikoneans.

With virtually no information on the Mamikoneans in the 10<sup>th</sup> century Tarōn, it is extremely complicated to place the *Life of St. Nersēs* with its unconcealed pro-Mamikonean bias into a proper historical context.<sup>30</sup> One could imagine such a discourse more easily in the decades just before 774/5 when the power struggle between the Mamikoneans and the Bagratunis was at its height. In a similar spirit but promoting the interests of the rival Bagratunis, the historian Łewond cites a prophecy pronounced by an un-named monk who foresaw the re-establishment of the Armenian kingship. Łewond implicitly associates the royal revival with the Bagratuni prince Smbat, without making a direct claim, however.<sup>31</sup> Thus, it is possible that the *Life*

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Łazar P'arpec'u «Patmut'yan» mej' [The Vision of Sahak in the "History" of Łazar P'arpec'i], in *Levon Khachikian* 90. (Yerevan, 2010), 193–201.

27 LN, 670.

28 Ibid. Nersēs is Aršak's father's sister's son / հոսրաբէն որդի.

29 LN, 671, 672, 673, 709, 737 (on the latter page, the Mamikoneans are the beneficiaries of a special blessing by Nersēs). Individual Mamikonean princes are also singled out for their bravery in war and their loyalty to the Aršakuni kings, Ibid 700, 706–707, 734. That legends on the Mamikoneans persisted in the region of Tarōn can be inferred also from [Ps.]Yovhan Mamikonēan which took its final shape, according to Avdoyan, in the 10<sup>th</sup> century but which is replete with centuries-old tales on the valiant deeds of warriors from the Mamikonean stock.

30 This is noted also by Tēr-Vardanean in LN, 632.

31 *Patmut'iwn Łewonday meci vardapeti hayoc'*, or *yalags Mahmeti ew zkni norin, t'ē orpēs ew kam orov awrinakaw tirec'in tiezerac', ew s arawel t'ē hayoc' azgis* [History of Łewond the great *vardapet*



of *St. Nersēs* preserves traces of a ‘textual contest’ between the two noble clans going back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century and to their political efforts to gain the upper hand in ruling the Armenian lands on the basis of the *Vision of St. Sahak*, a hypothesis that requires further substantiation.

It has been suggested that the junior branches of the Mamikoneans survived in the mountainous parts of Tarōn – Sasun – whence they re-emerged as the T’oṛnikeans at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and created an independent enclave against the Seljuq expansion as well as that of Philaretos Brachamios. The latter was an Armenian Chalcedonian military man at the service of the Byzantines, who controlled large territories encompassing Cilicia, northern Syria, and south-western Armenia.<sup>32</sup> The Mamikonean revival of the 11<sup>th</sup> century is yet another plausible context where the *Life* fits but this hypothesis needs substantiation too.

The *Life of St. Nersēs* includes two brief prophetic pronouncements by the Saint before the actual extended *Vision*. Among these the first is a curse on the Aršakuni royal house and a prophecy of their future doom. Here the eschatological connotations are related to the fate of the dynasty at an eventual Second Coming. It foretells

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of the Armenians on Mohammad and what came after him, on how and in what manner they ruled the universe and especially our Armenian nation]. Ed. G. Tēr-Vardanean. *Classical Armenian Authors*. Vol. 6. (Antelias, 2007), 832. Traditionally Łewond’s *History* has been dated to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century based on the last events he includes in it. However, T. Greenwood has questioned this assumption and argued for placing the *History* to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in “A Reassessment of the *History* or Łewond,” *Le Muséon* 125/1–2 (2012): 99–167. One of the arguments on which he basis this hypothesis is the content of this prophecy. Greenwood suggests that Łewond associates the renewal of the Armenian royalty with a Bagratuni prince – Smbat – from a vantage point of the late ninth century, more specifically after the actual coronation of Ašot I Bagratuni in August 884. This particular argument is weak, as Greenwood himself admits: the prophecy of the monk is presented in an extremely negative light by Łewond and actions based on it are told to have led to a disaster. Thus, a pro-Bagratuni interpretation of the prophecy is something not supported by the textual environment in which it is cited. Moreover, the idea that the Armenian Kingdom would be renewed circulated through the *Vision of St. Sahak* at least since 700, if not 500. The diffusion and knowledge of this and perhaps other prophecies during the Arabic domination of Armenia must be explored further before this part of Greenwood’s argument for a late date of Łewond can be accepted. One suspects that both the Bagratunis and the Mamikoneans used the *Vision of St. Sahak* to their own ends, each legitimating its own dynastic superiority. The prophecy cited in the *History* of Łewond and the *Life of St. Nersēs* may represent the vestiges of the Bagratuni-Mamikonean contest for a claim as the “true heir” of the Aršakunis, destined to renew the Armenian kingship.

**32** On the 11<sup>th</sup> century Mamikonid revival cf. N. Adontz, “Les Taronites,” 235–236. Avdoyan, “Feudal Histories,” 88–89 indicates, however, that the revival started already at the end of the tenth century, following the Byzantine annexation of Tarōn. The T’oṛnikean princes of Sasun were favourable disposed towards the Byzantine Empire also at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century according to Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens*, vol. 1, 322–327. For a detailed treatment of Philaretos’ rise to power and vicissitudes cf. again Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens*, vol 1. This scholar thinks that Philaretos was “maître de la frontière sud-orientale de l’Empire byzantin de 1072 à 1086,” *Ibid* 70. In 1086 Philaretos submitted to the suzerainty of the Seljuqid ruler Malikshāh and converted to Islam, *Ibid* 63. For a precise description of the borders of his territory in 1078, at the height of his power, cf. *Ibid*, 108. This extended from Khlat in the north of Lake Van, to Antioch.



the end of the Aršakunis, not the imminent End of the World.<sup>33</sup> The second curse on the Aršakunis has a different eschatological perspective, comparable to the *Vision of St. Sahak*, where it is told that God will turn His back on the Aršakunis “until the approaching of the impure one of the desert” which seemingly means that the Aršakuni’s fall from grace will end at that point.<sup>34</sup> It is presumed that the “approaching of the impure one of the desert” would signal the End of the World, but the text does not make this point explicit beyond the Biblical allusion to Dan. 9.27 or Mat. 24.15. Finally, Nersēs pronounces his eschatological *Vision* just before his death caused by poisoning at the order of the Aršakuni King Pap.<sup>35</sup>

We do not know when the *Vision* was incorporated into the *Life of Nersēs*. While it is possible that Yovsēp Hołoc‘mec‘i included an earlier form of it in his composition already in 967, what we have today is a later rendition consisting of diverse textual layers of different dates. On the one hand, it contains an *ex eventu* prophecy which must have been formulated not long after the Byzantine-Sasanian wars of the seventh century, involving the capture and the return of the True Cross to Jerusalem, followed by the Muslim conquest of the Holy City. The text contains explicit references to these events.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the earliest known manuscript of the *Vision* dated to 1131 reflects the 11<sup>th</sup> century events, such as the Seljuq conquest of territories in Greater Armenia. Moreover, it knows also about the first Crusade and the “Frankish” capture of Jerusalem in 1099. As a result of constant re-writing and additions of narrative units that betray different historical periods and, at times, opposing points of view on the same events, both the *Life* and the *Vision* put together contrasting pieces of information. A case in point is the combination of a pro-Byzantine perspective, possibly reflecting the mood of the nobility in the 11<sup>th</sup> century Tarōn and their hopes of the liberation of Greater Armenia with the help of the (Last?) East-

**33** LN, 693–694. LN’s prophecy is a slightly expanded version of the curse on King Aršak found in PB 4.15. This was occasioned by Aršak’s assassination of his cousin Gnel in order to possess his wife.

**34** LN, 703: “բարձցի թագաւորութիւնդ յազգէդ Արշակունեաց ... եւ դարձուցէ արարիչն զերեսս իւր յազգէդ յայրմանէ՛ մինչեւ ի մերձենալ պղծոյն անապատի / the kingship will be lifted from the nation of the Aršakuni ... and the Lord will turn his face from your nation until the approaching of the impure one of the desert.” The prophecy is briefly repeated again just before the *Vision*, LN, 718. VS, 19 includes a restorative messianic note too: “մերձ յերեւումն պղծոյն անապատի դարձեալ յառնէ թագաւոր յազգէն Արշակունեաց / near the appearance of the impure one from the desert there will rise again a king from the nation of the Aršakuni.” The second curse of Nersēs does not have verbatim parallels in PB, even though the latter describes Nersēs’ chastisement of Aršak for the city he founded – Aršakawan – and its dissolute mores. The “impure one of the desert” is a literal translation of պիղծն անապատի / βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως which could be rendered more generically as the *abomination of desolation*, found in Dan. 9.27 or Mat. 24.15 (itself citing Dan. 9.27). This designation was often applied to the Antichrist or an Antichrist-like figure. Cf. B. McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*. (New York, 2000), 40–41; 62–63 the use of the term in Hippolytus

**35** LN, 718–732.

**36** *Ibid*, 713.

ern Roman Emperor, with a layer of open anti-Byzantine hostility.<sup>37</sup> Despite these complexities, the *Vision* must be considered in this study because it presents the earliest physical (manuscript) witness to a particular tradition of onomastics on the Antichrist and his parents that are repeated also in later Cilician texts.

## ***Sermo de Antichristo, the Prophecies of Agaton and Agatangel On the End of the World***

The *Sermo de Antichristo* (SA) has been edited with ample commentary by G. Frasson while the *Prophecies of Agaton* (PA) is available only partially and in a less than reliable publication.<sup>38</sup> The last text, *Agatangel On the End of the World*, is extant only in manuscript form and has not been addressed in secondary literature. While Frasson's edition and his erudite analysis and comments are of great benefit to any scholar interested in apocalyptic traditions, it is not a critical edition. The editor himself noted that a more thorough search in manuscript catalogues was bound to reveal other witnesses.<sup>39</sup> A study of the manuscript tradition of SA could allow more refined conclusions as to its diffusion and popularity. Both SA and PA are dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century in their present form. Agatangel, on the other hand, defies any easy periodisation given that its "historical" portion is opaque; either obvious or hidden allusions to actual events are hard to discern. While for SA the termini 1125–1144 seem plausible, it is not possible to provide a more precise dating for PA than the 12<sup>th</sup> century, most likely before its last decade.<sup>40</sup> At this point I would not venture even into a relative dating of the two texts but rather consider them roughly contemporary. Agatangel seems to be an earlier text for reasons outlined below. However, while there are some textual similarities between SA, PA and Agatangel, they do not necessarily depend on each other in any direction, but likely stem from similar written or oral sources and traditions. Textual affinities exist also between these texts and VN, but it

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37 Hovhannissyan, *Episodes*, vol. 1, 47–48 and Pogossian, "The Last Roman Emperor," *passim* for these aspects. The pro-Byzantine attitude could also be a part of coming into terms with the loss of the Armenian territories, starting with that of Tarōn, by creating positive legends about Byzantine emperors, particularly about Basil II, emphasising his ties to Armenia and the Armenian Orthodoxy and, eventually, legitimating him as the "father of the Armenians." On legends about Basil II as reported in ME which possibly preserve information and attitudes from the now lost 11<sup>th</sup> century *History* of Yakob Sanahnec'i, cf. Andrews, *Prolegomena*, 142–148.

38 Cf. note 13 and 14 for publication information.

39 Frasson in SA, XIV fn 9. Frasson used only two mss for his edition.

40 Information from PA is cited in the *Letter of Love and Concord* which was most likely written in the last decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. Z. Pogossian, *The Letter of Love and Concord. A Revised Diplomatic Edition with Historical and Textual Comments and English Translation* (Leiden, 2011), 88–90 and 119–125.

must be noted that SA is the one that is most closely related to VN.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, PA and Agatangel share many more common details than any of the other texts. It has been suggested that despite their final Cilician redaction, both SA and PA include large text-blocks that were composed earlier, particularly in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, similar to VN and any apocalyptic text generally speaking, SA and PA contain several identifiable layers, each expressing diverse points of view on the End-time events and actors. For example, like VN, these Cilician texts also merge a sympathetic attitude towards the Byzantine Empire as one favoured and protected by God, with a later, negative interpretation of its rule after the Empire's expansion in the East and annexation of Armenian territories, with ensuing intra-religious conflicts. These components are then exacerbated due to eschatological speculations tied to the Seljuq conquests.<sup>42</sup> This disapproving stance of Armenian authors towards Byzantium – who probably reflect the general mood of the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century – was most fervent after the Battle of Manazkert (Manzikert) in 1071. PA and SA also incorporate local traditions from various regions of Greater Armenia, such as Tarōn, or more specifically Sasun, Mananaḷi and the cities of Ani and of Karin/Theodosiopolis in their narrative.<sup>43</sup> Thus, while the final redaction of the texts must have been achieved in the Cilician milieu and clearly reflect knowledge of the success of the First Crusade, they contain earlier information that represents diverse points of view on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century political events. Unfortunately, such clear allusion to real historical events are absent in Agatangel.

The main premise of the political eschatology in SA and PA is inspired by the *Vision of St. Sahak* and the *Vision of St. Nersēs*. SA and PA, each in its own way, provide details of how the predictions of Sahak and Nersēs will actually materialise. They explain the process through which Kingship will be renewed by an off-spring of the first Christian Aršakuni King Trdat and the catholicosate by the progeny from the line of St. Gregory the Illuminator.<sup>44</sup> These predictions are described in the first – historical – part of the narratives. Significantly, in these texts a new element is introduced: the renewals will happen with the help of a Roman Emperor. While the Roman Emperor in the earlier versions may have referred to the Byzantine Emperor, the Cilician redactions of SA and PA imply that the Last redeemer king was the Western Roman – Frank – Emperor, even though both texts maintain a certain ambiguity in the use of the term “Roman.” However, in PA the first in a series of messianic Roman Emperors is described in terms reminiscent of a Crusader leader. The

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41 As regards the relationship between SA and VN, Frasson, in SA, LXVII-LXIX, concludes that it cannot be reduced to a simple dependence in any direction, but that they rely on a common pool of traditions. A complete investigation of the complexities of these texts' relationship to each other cannot be accomplished here. I will only analyse those portions which are relevant to the Jews.

42 Hovhannisyan, *Episodes*, vol. 1, 49–52 and Pogossian, “The Last Roman Emperor,” 459–464.

43 Pogossian, “The Last Roman Emperor,” 494–495.

44 These prophecies became a part of royal ideology in Armenian Cilicia, as expressed in the *Letter of Love and Concord*.

historical portion of both texts is built around the rule of Roman Emperors and Armenian kings, or one King as in PA, including their cyclical victories against such enemies as the pagans or the infidel, i. e. the Muslims. While it is clear that a Western Roman Emperor(s) is bestowed with the role of the eschatological “saviour king” of all the Christians in general and the Armenians in particular, the Armenian King(s) never appear in a subordinate role, but rather act as the Emperor’s ally, his “brother in arms,” the ruler of an Armenian Kingdom which is depicted as the Eastern superpower.<sup>45</sup>

As mentioned earlier, despite numerous common themes, it is not easy to pinpoint direct textual dependence and its direction between SA, PA and Agatangel. Their audiences are also different. On the level of the final redaction the first two express the aspirations of the Armenian rulers of Cilicia, particularly the Rubenids, who wished to emphasise their connection to the perceived glorious Armenian past and its royal dynasties. SA also stresses the idea of a strong and independent Armenian Church. As I have discussed elsewhere, contrary to SA, PA is less interested in the ecclesiastical sphere and seems less concerned with the hierarchy of the Church.<sup>46</sup> It appears to have been the more popular of the two texts, not only based on the amount of manuscripts that have survived, but also the testimony of William of Rubruck from 1250.<sup>47</sup> Despite these differences, the three texts relied on a common set of ideas and descriptions of eschatological scenarios. This is especially apparent in their prophetic sections where the deeds of the Antichrist are described. And this will be the focus of our attention below.

## The *Counsel* of Vardan Aygekc’i

The *Counsel* on the End of Days by Vardan Aygekc’i (VC) is the only composition discussed here that has a date – 1212 – and an identified author – the renowned theologian who lived during one of the most significant periods of Cilician Armenian history (1170 – 1235). As a consequence, we can also propose more plausible hypothesis as to its purpose, biases and intended audience. The *Counsel* is actually a homily included in a series of moral and paraenetic treatises written for a junior member of the royal Rubenid dynasty – Paltin. Vardan states that the purpose of his work is to set forth the various features of the Antichrist in order to prepare the present generation for the latter’s imminent appearance. Vardan ascribes to the royal ideology of the Rubenids in Cilicia who emphasised their connection to earlier Armenian royal

<sup>45</sup> All these motifs are discussed in Pogossian, “The Last Roman Emperor,” 492 – 493.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Hovhannissyan, *Episodes*, vol. 1, 82 – 86 and Z. Pogossian, “Armenians, Mongols and the End of Times: An Overview of 13<sup>th</sup> Century Sources,” in *Caucasus during the Mongol Period / Der Kaukasus in der Mongolenzeit*. Eds J. Tubach, S. G. Vashalomidze and M. Zimmer (Wiesbaden, 2012), 193 on a version of PA reworked after the Mongol conquests and, according to William of Rubruck, enjoying immense popularity among the Armenians.

dynasties and promoted the coronation of Lewon (in 1198) as the renewal of the Armenian kingship and the fulfilment of the previous prophecies. However, Vardan's most crucial concern seems to be the elevation of the institution of the Church and its teaching as the ultimate guarantee of salvation, especially by means of identifying and defeating the Antichrist. Several pieces of information on the Antichrist that are found in VN, SA, PA and Agatangel *On the End of the World* are known also to Vardan who cites the *Vision of St. Nersēs* explicitly.<sup>48</sup> He sometimes indicates that he is relying on more than one source on the Antichrist or his deeds. He, thus, seems, to be commenting and synthesising knowledge on the Antichrist accumulated before him. Therefore, his narrative can serve as a concluding text in the current investigation, indicating that traditions appearing in spurious or pseudonymous texts had acquired a certain canonicity to be accepted by a learned doctor in his own treatise on the End-time enemy.

## Peoples of the End-Time: Eschatological Enemies

A number of peoples – real or fantastic – come under attack in our texts: Muslims, Jews, Romans (Western or Byzantines) but also Armenians whose sins were thought to have caused a disastrous chain of events. Among eschatological adversaries diverse groups of Muslims are presented as the most fearful military threat. Only Agatangel *On the End of the World* lacks any mention of either the Muslims or the Armenians.

In the *Vision of St. Nersēs* the appellations used to identify the Muslims include the “Ismaelites” and the “Nation of the Archers.” The latter presumably refers to the Seljuqs. We also meet “pagans” – a generic term of abuse that is difficult to assign to any particular group. Then, there are the “Greeks,” that is the Byzantines, who are reproached for their oppression of the Armenian Church.<sup>49</sup> SA has more variations when referring to the Muslims, such as “Xuzik’ who are the T’urks,” the “Arabs who are the Tajiks,” Elamites and Persians, the “Nation of the Archers,” “K’urdistanis,” the “infidel nation of K’am,” the “sons of Hagar,” and the “T’urk’estanis.”<sup>50</sup> There is ample criticism of Byzantines also throughout this text. PA does not lag behind in labelling either. Here too the eschatological enemies include the “Nation of the Archers,” the “Nation of Ismael,” the “sons of Ismael and the Nation of Hagar” who are described as worshippers of pagan deities.<sup>51</sup> Both SA and PA include the episode of the invasion of the twenty two (or twenty four) “unclean nations” enclosed

<sup>48</sup> The sources of Vardan, as well as his audience and the presumed agenda of the homily are discussed in La Porta, “Vardan Aygekc’i,” *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> LN, 718–719.

<sup>50</sup> SA, 12; 14; 16; 20; 32; 46; 104; 108. See also Frasson’s comments on these peoples in *Ibid*, 182–184.

<sup>51</sup> M3839 fols. 201, 208, 209, etc.

behind the Gates of Alexander the Great.<sup>52</sup> In the *Counsel* of Vardan Muslims are considered to be the forerunners of the Antichrist and are described as “the lawless sons of Hagar and other nations who are the disciples of the demoniac Mohammad, and [his] cursed father Satan.”<sup>53</sup> Moreover, their subdual by a king modelled on Lewon I is cited as one of his greatest virtues.

In all the texts Muslims are presented in the historical portion of the apocalyptic narratives as a powerful military enemy, something that echoes other types of written sources too.<sup>54</sup> Jews, on the other hand, appear in the prophetic section and are closely related to the *Life* and deeds of the Antichrist. Thus, we meet them first as the tribe of Dan, whence the Antichrist will be born. Later, they become the followers and, subsequently, the opponents of the Antichrist. There are significant textual and conceptual parallels in all the texts presented here. Some of the information is found only in these Armenian sources, even though it probably does not originate with these texts.

## The Jewish Antichrist

Let us first look at the Antichrist’s genealogy as it appears in the distinct narratives before analysing the affinities between these textual witnesses. There are several common pieces of information in all of them as can be easily gleaned from the quotations below.

### Vision of Nersēs

Now do not think that he is Satan or a demon from his army: no, but a human with a corrupted mind<sup>55</sup> from the tribe of Dan. And he is born from the village of K’orazin,<sup>56</sup> from the Nation of Israēl. And his father’s name is Hřovmelay<sup>57</sup> and his mother’s Nerliminē<sup>58</sup> and his name is Hřa-

<sup>52</sup> In SA the “unclean nations” episode is included twice, once in the historical portion of the text on p. 18 (without a list of names) and a second time in the eschatological section on pp. 106–108. For Frasson’s comments on the ethnonyms, as well as other related texts and traditions cf. 189–191 and 292–301. For PA cf. M3839 fol. 209.

<sup>53</sup> La Porta, “Vardan Aygekc’i,” 507.

<sup>54</sup> La Porta, “Conflicted Coexistence.” On the representation of Muslims as military rather than religious adversaries in Byzantine sources cf. C. L. Hanson, “Manuel I Comnenus and the “God of Muhammad”: A Study in Byzantine Ecclesiastical Politics,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, 55–82 (New York-London, 1996).

<sup>55</sup> Compare 2 Tim 3.8.

<sup>56</sup> When not citing the Armenian text directly, I will spell the names of the three cities as Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capharnaum, instead of their transcription from the Armenian variants.

<sup>57</sup> Variants: Հոմմէլայ, Հոմմայել / Hřovmelay, Hřovmayel.

<sup>58</sup> Variants: Ներմինէ, Մերմինէ, Ներմինէ / Neiminē, Melitinē, Nelitinē.

sim. And he is born from virgins and he comes to Byzandion and earns a great name according to the greatness of the Greeks.<sup>59</sup>

## Prophecies of Agaton

Whence or from which people is he? [He is] from Pontus, whence [came] Pilate. There is a woman from the nation of Dan whence Ahithophel originated, from the tribe of Judas Iscariot the traitor. [The physiognomy of the woman is described]. She will be the companion of a Greek Roman tradesman who is a eunuch<sup>60</sup> according to the tradition of the Romans. And he will fight to soil the woman but is not able to. But they mingle with each other and commit the wicked deed [of] adultery. And the woman becomes pregnant from his filthy disease and her virginity is spoiled from the seed of Satan. And at that time she flees to the country of Arabia, to the city of K'orazin. And there that woman spawns the soldier of Satan the wicked Antichrist. For this reason the Lord<sup>61</sup> raises three 'woes' to them: since he is born in Arabia which is K'orazin and is nourished in Egypt which is Bet'saida and reigns in Kap'aïnaum which is Jerusalem.<sup>62</sup>

## Sermo de Antichristo

... and the evil Antichrist is born from the Nation of Dan in K'urazin, from a wicked and adulterous father and a fornicating mother who will lie about themselves as being virgins. These are their names. His father's [is] Hfomelay<sup>63</sup> and his mother's Meliteneay,<sup>64</sup> and his Hfasim.<sup>65</sup>

59 LN, 722. Արդ մի կարծիցեք, թէ սատանայ է նա կամ դեւ ի գաւրաց նորա. ոչ, այլ մարդ ապականեալ մտաւ ի տոհմէն Դանայ, եւ ծնանի ի Քորազին գեղջէ, յազգէ Իսրայէլի. եւ անուն հար նորա Հոովմէլայ, եւ մարն նորա Ներդիմինէ. եւ անուն նորա Հուսայիմ. եւ ծնանի ի կուսանաց, եւ գայ ի Բիւզանդիոն եւ մեծանայ անուամբ ըստ մեծութեան Յունաց.

60 The text is emended here based on other manuscripts, i.e. instead of “his son is a eunuch”, it should be “who is a eunuch”.

61 Here the name of Nersēs is added, which must be a scribal error and is not supported by other ms witnesses.

62 The text is based on M3839 fols 213 – 214. Ուստի և կամ յոր ժողովրդէն է: Ի Պոնտոսէ ուստի Պիղատոսն էր. լինի ոմն կին յազգէն Դանայ, ուստի Ակիտոբէլէն էր, ի ցեղէն Յուդայի Իսկարիովտացոյ մատնչին: ... Սա կացցէ յարքանեկութիւն վաճառականի յունի հոռոմի և լինի <որդի \214\ նորա> ներքինի, ըստ աւրինակին հոռոմին: Եւ նա մարտիցէ ապականել զկինն և ոչ կարէ. այլ խտոնին ընդ իրեար և ի միջի նոցա ոմիրս գործի շնութիւն և առնու կինն յուրթիւն ի պէղծ աստեւ նորա, և ի սերմանէ սատանայի ապականի կուսութիւն նորա: Եւ յայնժամ փախստական լինի յերկիրն արաբիայ, ի քաղաքն Քորազին և անդ ցընկնի կինն այն զգաւրականն սատանայի զպիղծ Նեոն: Վասն այնորիկ տէր <Ներսէս> վաճ տայ նոցա. զի ծնանի յԱրաբիայ որ է Քորազին և սնանի յԵգիպտոս որ է Բերսայիդայ և թագաւորէ ի Կափառոնաումն որ է Երուսաղէմ: Words in < > are variants not supported by other mss witnesses as discussed in notes 60 and 61, and are most likely secondary readings.

63 Variant: Հոովմէլայ/Hfomēlay.

64 Variant: Մելիտինեայ/Melitinea.

65 SA 88 – 90. The text is that of the L recension, but no major differences appear between the two recensions in this location, apart from orthographic differences in proper names. “... ծնեալ էւս լինի չար Նեոնն, յազգէն Դանայ ի Քորազին, ի պիղծ էւ ի շնացոյ հորէ եւ ի պոռնիկ մօրէ. որ էւ



## Vardan Aygekci's Counsel

And she will be from the tribe of Dan, and a soldier, seeing her, desires her with a sick evil love and takes her as his wife. And she will be a virgin and the man happens to be effeminate, weak and a eunuch<sup>66</sup> and cannot unite effectively with the woman in marriage. And the woman becomes pregnant when she [is] soiled with him but she remains a virgin.

But the saints also make the Antichrist's name known in diverse ways, just as St. Nersēs says that “his name is Hřayim and his father's Hřomelas and his mother's Meletinē.” And that “he is born in K'orazin and raised in Bet'sayida, on which our lord said ‘woe’, and sits as king in Kap'arnaum, about which Jesus Christ said: “You, Kap'arnaum will descend upon hell.”<sup>67</sup>

Many pieces of this information are common to the genre of medieval “biographies” of the Antichrist and could be based on a number of texts and traditions preserved in different languages. Here I suggest that an important and possibly a much earlier witness to these notices is a hitherto virtually unknown anonymous text: *Agatangel On the End of the World*. Before arguing for the various points, let us look at the relevant excerpt from Agatangel:<sup>68</sup>

Thus, the cursed son of Satan appears from the nation of Pontus, whence Pilate [originated].<sup>69</sup> And that woman is from the tribe of Dan whence Ahithophel was and Judas Iscariot [came] from it (?) [too].<sup>70</sup> His father [is] a Hellene from the house of the Greeks.

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խաբէութեամբ ասէն զինքեանս իբր թէ կոյս գոլով. որոց անուանք այս են. հօր նորա Հռոմէլայ, եւ մօր նորա Մէլիտէնէայ, եւ իւրն Հռայիմ”.

**66** The word for “eunuch” used by Vardan – չէզոք – can also mean ‘neutral’ and is different from the more usual term employed in the other texts which is ներքինի.

**67** The transcription based on J936 has been kindly provided by Dr. La Porta. Here too I have capitalised the proper names and standardised the punctuation. “...եւ իցէ նա յազգէ Դանայ եւ զինուոր տեսեալ զնա եւ ախտի չար սիրով, տպի ի նա եւ ի կնութիւն իւր ասցէ զնա: Եւ իցէ նա կոյս եւ այրն կնատ եւ թոյլ պատահի եւ չէզոք եւ ոչ կարէ գործով ամուսնութեան միաւորիլ ընդ կիկն: Եւ կիկն ամուսնութիւն՝ յորժամ աղտէղանայր ընդ նմա, բայց կոյս մնայ: Բայց եւ զանուն Նեոխինն պէսպէս ծանուցին սուրբքն, որպէս եւ սուրբն Ներսէս ասէ. «անուն նորա Հռայիմ. եւ հօր նորա Հռոմէլա. եւ մօր նորա Մէլիտիկէ», եւ թէ. «ծնանի ի Քորազին եւ սնանի ի Բէթսայիդա, որով վայ ասաց տէրն մեր: Եւ նստի թագաւոր ի Կափառնաում, գորմէ ասաց Յիսուս Քրիստոս թէ. «դու՛, Կափառնաում, մինչև ի դժոխս իջցես»...”.

**68** All citations from Agatangel are based on M641. This is a manuscript of miscellaneous works copied in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. When necessary I will correct the text of M641 against other witnesses, especially M2004 and M8387, representing two other recensions. Any emendations will be noted.

**69** Here apparently a text-block is missing because the next sentence jumps immediately to the genealogy of Antichrist's mother abruptly, without a logical transition. From what follows, it seems that the region of Pontus is more likely to be associated with the Antichrist's Greek father. The tradition that Pontius Pilate came from Pontus is found in Movsēs Xorenac'i, *Patmut'wn hayoc'* [History of the Armenians] (Yerevan, 1991), 2.15.

**70** The Armenian ի նմանէ “from him” or “from it” could refer both to the tribe of Dan and to Ahithophel.

This [woman] will be the companion of a tradesman and [he] will wish to discharge on the woman but will not be able to because he is a eunuch and does not have a man's faculty. And they mingle with each other through adultery and perform numerous wicked [deeds]. And the woman becomes pregnant from the seed of Satan. And when she conceives the tare of bitterness, then, being afraid of her acquaintances and relatives she goes as a fugitive to the city of K'orazin. And staying there, the wicked woman spawns the son, the soldier of Satan. His father's name is Hřomela and his mother's Meliton and his name [is] Hřasim, according to the prophecy which says: "They wished to make Hrasim, the son of Hořomelay, their king."<sup>71</sup> For this reason the Lord raises a 'woe' saying: "Woe is thee K'orazin, woe is thee Bet'sayiday and thee Kap'ainaum, which has been raised to heaven but will descend upon hell." Because the cursed one is born in K'orazin, grows up in Bet'sayiday and reigns in Kap'arnayum, the wicked one.<sup>72</sup>

All the texts above agree that the Antichrist originates from the tribe of Dan, and all but VN specify that it was his mother's tribe. Except for PA, all the other texts know that her name is Nerlimine/Meletinē/Meliton, the three being variants/corruptions of an un-identifiable original. They also agree that the Antichrist's father's name is Hřo (v)melay, while that of the Antichrist is Hřasim. VC claims that he found this information in the *Vision of St. Nersēs*. Moreover, the texts share a number of other notices, such as knowledge of and a polemic against the virginity or false virginity of either the Antichrist's mother alone or both of his parents, and that his conception was in some way the result of improper sexual conduct. They are aware of the 'three woes' tradition (based on Mat. 11.21, 23; Luke 10.13, 15) interpreted as referring to crucial points in the *Life* and deeds of the Antichrist. PA and Agatangel also agree that his father was a Greek/Roman merchant.

That the Antichrist's mother comes from the tribe of Dan became a rather diffused *topos* since Irenaeus of Lyon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, who likely relied on earlier Christian and Jewish exegetical traditions about this tribe, using them to his own

71 A reference to Is 8.6.

72 M641 fol. 235 r-v: "Արդ անիծեալ որդին սատանայի [յ]այտնի [յ]ազգէն Պոնդացոյ, ուստի Պեղատոսն էր: Եւ կիկնն այն լինի ի ցեղէն Դանայ ուստի Ակիտոփելն էր, և ի նմանէ Յուդայ [Բ]սկարովտացին: Հայրն նորա հելէնացի ի տանէն [յ]ունաց: [The description of the Antichrist's mother's physiognomy follows]. Սայ կացցէ արբանէկութիւն առն վաճառականի. և կամիցի արծակել ի վերայ կնոջն և ոչ կարիցէ քանզի ներքինի է. և ոչ ունի գորտիւն առն. և խառնակին ընդ միմեանս շնորեամբ և բազում ոնիրս գործէն: Եւ առնու կիկնն այն յղութիւն ի սերմանէն սատանայի: Եւ յորժամ յգանայ գորտն դառութեան, յայնժամ երկուցեալ ծանաւից և ազգականաց իւրոց երբայ փախըստական ի քաղաքն Քորազին: Եւ անց կացեալ ցընկնի պեղծ կիկնն գորդին գորականն սատանայի: Անունն հորն Հոռմելա և մորն Մելիտոն և անունն նորա Հրասիմ, ըստ մարգարէութեան, որ ասէ թէ. «Կամեցան առնել իւրեանց թագաւոր զՀրասիմ, գորդին Հոռմելայ»: Վասն այն տէրն վայ տա ասելով. «Վայ՛ վեգ Քորազին, վայ՛ վեգ Բեթսայիդայ, և դու՛, Կափառնայում, որ մինչև երկինսն բարձրացեալ ես, բայց մինչ ի դժոխս իցջես»: Քան զի անիծեալն ի Քորազին ծնանի, և [ի] Բեթսայիդայ սնանի, և ի Կափառնայումն թագաւորէ պեղծն:":

ends.<sup>73</sup> The same genealogy was accepted by other Christian authors, among whom Hippolytus deserves a special mention for his systematisation of the notion of the Antichrist as the negative mirror image of Christ, something apparent also in the Armenian texts at hand.<sup>74</sup> The typology of the Jewish Antichrist from the tribe of Dan proposed by Irenaeus and reiterated by Hippolytus was not, of course, the only one developed in the Patristic period or later, since parallel ideas of an Antichrist as *Nero redivivus*, thus connected to the Roman Emperors, or an arch-heretic, continued to generate reflections by medieval authors.<sup>75</sup> In this context, the interpretation of Dan 7.20–24 as referring to the break up of the Roman Empire into ten units/kingdoms which would be eventually subdued by the Antichrist, who sometimes is

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73 Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus haereses* V.30.2. I have used the critical text established by A. Rousseau-L. Doutreleau-C. Mercier (in *Sources Chrétiennes* 153, Paris: 1969) reprinted without the apparatus in *L'Anticristo. Vol. 1. Il Nemico dei tempi finali. Testi dal II al IV secolo*. Eds G. L. Potestà and M. Rizzi. (Milan, 2005), 29–69 [Henceforth: Potestà-Rizzi, *L'Anticristo 1*]. Cf. Ibid 32 for comments on Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* as the earliest (surviving) Christian work to indicate that the Antichrist will belong to the tribe of Dan, a notion that will have a long history in the centuries to come. Irenaeus is also credited for being the first Christian author to associate the term 'Antichrist' – used in various, particularly anti-heretical context, both before and after him – with the End of Times. Cf. Ibid, xx-xxiv. For further comments and analysis of Jewish and early Christian exegetical tradition about Dan, cf. Ibid 478 note 116 for sources; C.E. Hill, "Antichrist from the Tribe of Dan," *Journal of Theological Studies* (1995): 99–117 and C. Badilita, *Métamorphoses de l'Antichrist chez les pères de l'église*. (Paris, 2005), 173–176. The comments of Frasson in SA, 265–276, where he explores diverse traditions on types of Antichrist, are also pertinent.

74 Hippolytus, *De Christo et Antichristo* (in Rizzi-Potestà, *Anticristo 1*, 126–128, §§ 14.1–15.1). It is not the place here to enter into a discussion about the authenticity or the authorship of various works attributed to Hippolytus, as well as the problem of his origin being Rome or somewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the Armenian manuscripts the latter is usually identified as Hippolytus of Bosra. For an overview cf. the "Introduction" of Manlio Simonetti in Ippolito, *Contra Noetum*. Ed. M. Simonetti (Bologna, 2000). On the significance of Irenaeus and Hippolytus for introducing concepts that left a long-lasting impact on the Christian conceptions of the Antichrist, cf. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 58–63. While the author of *De Christo et Antichristo* has traditionally been called Hippolytus, whatever his real identity, there is another work on the End of the World attributed to him – *De consummatione mundi* – but which is clearly not authentic. The confusion of the authors is due to numerous similarities between the two texts and massive borrowings from Hippolytus in Ps.-Hippolytus. I will refer to the author of this work as Ps.-Hippolytus, as is common convention.

75 Typologies of eschatological adversaries in the Patristic period are discussed in Badilita, *Métamorphoses*; useful comments can be found throughout the two volumes edited by Potestà and Rizzi, *L'Anticristo 1* and *L'Anticristo. Vol 2. Il Figlio della Perdizione*. Eds G. L. Potestà and M. Rizzi. (Milan, 2012) [Henceforth: Potestà-Rizzi, *L'Anticristo 2*]. Cf. especially the "Introduzione generale" in *L'Anticristo 2*, xi-xxiv; and more generally in McGinn, *Antichrist*. For the 'heresiological' Antichrist type in Byzantine Christianity cf. M. Rizzi, "L'ombra dell'anticristo nel cristianesimo orientale tra tarda antichità e prima età bizantina," in *Antichrist: Konstruktionen von Feinbildern*. Eds. W. Brandes and F. Schmieder. (Berlin, 2010), 1–13.

told to rule in Constantinople, was another popular apocalyptic motif.<sup>76</sup> In the Armenian texts explored here several currents about the Antichrist are juxtaposed. On the one hand, they are influenced by the Irenaeo-Hippolytan notion of the “Antichrist from the tribe of Dan” and born of false virgin(s), imitating the real Christ in order to lead people astray. Agatangel, VN, SA, PA and VC repudiate the virginity of the Antichrist’s mother or of both parents, as well as cast a shadow on his conception. They charge his parents with disgraceful sexual conduct or even blame Satan who – one is tempted to sarcastically add “miraculously” – impregnated his mother, in perfect, but theologically problematic, contrast to Christ’s Divine conception and birth from the Virgin. Yet, even if *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus and possibly also *De Christo et Antichristo* of Hippolytus were translated into Armenian, it is not necessary to posit these texts as the direct sources of any of the narratives discussed here.<sup>77</sup> For a Medieval author the Antichrist’s origin from the tribe of Dan was a piece of information to be taken for granted, even though there were critiques of this view too.<sup>78</sup> Among those that adopted the Dan tradition the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* was probably one of the most widely diffused in almost all Christian languages and, in

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**76** Frasson in SA, 281 comments on the topicality of this passage in apocalyptic texts and cites, among others, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus, Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Sibylline Oracles and, last but not least, the *Vision of St. Nersēs*.

**77** I fully agree with Frasson’s comments on the sources of SA, which can be extended to the other texts presented in this paper. He rightly notes that information about the Antichrist may have its origin in the Patristic sources such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Cyril of Jerusalem and Ephraem Syrus, but they are repeated in later Medieval texts too, such as Ps.-Ephraem (edited by Kaspari and, later, Verhelst, not the *Homily* edited by Beck), Ps.-Methodius, Adso of Montier-en-Der and the *Vision of St. Nersēs*. Frasson, then, suggests that these later texts are more likely to have been known to the author of SA who also seems to be more familiar with the so-called ‘Eastern’ sources. Cf. SA, LV. For the Armenian translation of Irenaeus, cf. Irenaeus, *Gegen die Häretiker*. Buch IV und V in armenischer Version entdeckt. Ed. K. Ter-Mekertschian (Leipzig, 1910). It is not clear whether Hippolytus *De Christo et Antichristo* was translated into Armenian. There are numerous mss which contain a text on the End of the World ascribed to Hippolytus and one must fully review these mss before any conclusions. My own very limited research in manuscript catalogues has demonstrated that in most cases we are dealing with *De consummatione mundi* of Ps.-Hippolytus.

**78** In the 6<sup>th</sup> century Andreas of Caesarea in his *Commentary on the Revelation of John* accepts the origin from Dan. The text consulted is in *L’Anticristo* 2, 189. This *Commentary* was translated into Armenian by Nersēs of Lambron in 1179. For a study of this translation cf. *Nerses of Lambron Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John*. Translation of the Armenian text, Notes and Introduction by R. W. Thomson (Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA, 2007). For criticism of the Dan tradition, see, for example, Gerhoch of Reichersberg in *L’Anticristo* 2, 393 – 399. La Porta, “Vardan Aygekc’i,” 511 also notes Ps.-Ephraem’s *Homily On the End of Days*, a text sometimes ascribed to Isidore of Seville, where the tribe of Dan and the ‘false virginity’ of Antichrist’s mother are mentioned. From the two publications of the *Homily* I have had access to the text in C. P. Caspari, *Briefe, Abhandlungen und Predigten. Aus den zwei letzten Jahrhunderten des Kirchlichen Altertums und dem Anfang des Mittelalters* (Brussels, 1964), 208 – 220, 215 for the origin from the tribe of Dan through “ex immunda vel turpissima virgine.” These motifs and sources are discussed also in J.-M. Rosensteihl, “Armenian Witnesses of Three Eschatological Motifs,” in *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition*, 254 – 282.

turn, influenced a cluster of texts dependent on it.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, another text attributed to Hippolytus and preserved in numerous Armenian manuscripts, i. e. *De consummatione mundi* of Ps.-Hippolytus, seems to have had a rather significant and barely examined influence on the Armenian apocalyptic traditions in general, and on VN, SA, PA and VC, but especially Agatangel.<sup>80</sup> A number of elements in Agatangel follow Ps.-Hippolytan notions about the Antichrist and his deeds; it is not implausible that Agatangel was the link between Ps.-Hippolytus and the later Armenian apocalyptic texts. For example, Ps.-Hippolytus not only affirms the origin of the Antichrist's mother as the tribe of Dan, but is one of those texts that confuse the Antichrist with Satan and, subsequently, is at pains to explain this relationship.<sup>81</sup>

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**79** *Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*. Ed. G. J. Reinink. *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*. Vols 540 and 541. (Louvain, 1993), XIV.5 – 6 where other Syriac sources that rely on this tradition are identified, such as Jacob of Edessa's *Scholion* on Gen. 49.17. Reinink thinks that Ps.-Methodius' source was Hippolytus' *De Christo et Antichristo* which was fully translated into Syriac. There is no critical edition or an adequate study of Ps.-Methodius' Armenian translation. The only published version is an excerpt included in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century historian Step'annos Ōrbelean, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan* [History of the Region of Sisakan]. (Tiflis/Tbilisi: 1910), 144 – 157, where the translation from Greek is ascribed to Bishop Step'annos Siwnec'i (8<sup>th</sup> century). There was possibly more than one translation of this text. Cf. M. Stone, "The Document called *Question*," in *La Diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale: Il Romanzo di Alessandro e altri scritti*. Eds R. B. Finazzi and A. Valvo. (Alessandria, 1998), 295 – 300.

**80** The only publication of the Armenian version of this text is partial and is ascribed to Hippolytus: "Ēraneloyñ Hippolitay episkoposi, asac'eal vasn kataraci ašxarhis ew vasn neñinn. ev miws angam galstean K'ristosi Astucoy meroy margareut'ean [Of the blessed Bishop Hippolytus On the End of the world and on the Antichrist and on a Prophecy about the Second Coming of Christ our God], in *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi*. Vol. 2. Ed. J. B. Pitra (Typis Tusculanis, 1884), 270 – 273. Excerpts are reproduced also in Sargisean, *Studies on apocryphal literature*, 194 – 212, who rightly pointed out the impact of this treatise on several apocalyptic texts preserved in Armenian. But also Sargisean discusses this text as one by Hippolytus of Bosra. Frasson, who did not know of the existence of the Armenian version of Ps.-Hippolytus, notes the affinities between SA and Ps.-Hippolytus and, again, emphasised the common intellectual background of both texts rather than direct borrowings. Cf. SA, LVII. In all Armenian manuscript catalogues, the work is, indeed, ascribed to Hippolytus. Thus, any attempt to explore the Armenian versions of Hippolytus' *De Christo et de Antichristo* as well as *De consummatione mundi* of Ps.-Hippolytus must take this into consideration. The Greek version of *De consummatione mundi* is published in *Hippolyts kleinere exegetische und homiletische Schriften*. Ed. H. Achelis. Leipzig: 1897, 289 – 309. I would like to thank Gañnik Harutyunyan from the Matenadaran (Yerevan) for his help in identifying some of the manuscripts with the text of *De consummatione mundi* currently held at this institution.

**81** The association of or, sometimes, confusion between the Antichrist and Satan/Devil/Beliar seems to have been a Palestinian-Mesopotamian tradition. Some of the authors who subscribed or tried to explain this view include Ps.-Hippolytus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Macarius of Magnesia, Theodoret of Cyrus, Andreas of Caesarea, the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse*, and the Greek *Daniel Apocalypse*. For the relevant texts, with pertinent introductions and detailed notes, Rizzi-Potestà, *L'Anticristo* 2, 101 – 153; and L. Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse. Greek Text, Translation and Commentary," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974): 197 – 261. For analysis of the problematic theological implications of this view, cf. Badilita, *Métamorphoses*, 356 – 364, where he emphasises the significance of

Similarly, all the Armenian texts considered here try to harmonise or contradict the Satanic origin of the Antichrist with the Dan tradition. The latter, theologically problematic, notion must have been wide-spread but obviously not quite accepted, since the *Vision of St. Nersēs* actually tried to negate it. On the other hand, Agatangel and PA have no problem in stating that the Antichrist was actually conceived from the seed of Satan and is “his son.” SA holds that his advent “is according to the power of Satan,” who with his hosts “had been united to him since childhood.” On another occasion Satan is called “his father.”<sup>82</sup> According to Vardan Aygekc’i Satan will make the Antichrist “his instrument.”<sup>83</sup> Even the *Vision of St. Nersēs* which warns against those who confuse the Antichrist – a human being from the tribe of Dan – with Satan, maintains a layer of information, appearing earlier in the text, which affirms that the Antichrist’s “advent is according to the power of Satan.”<sup>84</sup> Another important affinity between Ps.-Hippolytus and the later Armenian texts, again possibly mediated through Agatangel, is the change of behaviour that characterises the Antichrist. First, he is gentle, kind, just and merciful, but when he acquires power (in some texts becomes king), he reveals his real nature as being mean, angry, unjust and ruthless.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, traces of another Antichrist-type anti-hero survive in all the texts, that which ties the career of the Antichrist with the Roman (i. e. Byzantine) Capital and/or the Court. Agatangel emphasises the Antichrist’s achievements and success in “Byzandion.” Here not only does he learn “the false doctrines and the magical [arts] of the Hellenes in the Athenian language” but is also allowed free access to the royal and other noble households.<sup>86</sup> PA abbreviates this information by generically indicating that he will rule in “Byzandion which is Constantinople.”<sup>87</sup> For VN he will “achieve a great name according to the greatness of the Greeks.”<sup>88</sup> Agatangel, SA and VC recount his military prowess and rise to power.<sup>89</sup>

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the theme in Cyril of Jerusalem, as well as its appearance in Jerôme, Ps.-Hippolytus and the Greek *Apocalypse of Daniel*.

**82** SA, 92: “գալուստ նորա ըստ ազգեցութեանն Սատանայի եւս լինի / his advent is also according to the power of Satan”; on p. 102 there is an episode where Beliar and his companions are told to have entered the Antichrist and dwelt in him. This is reminiscent of the *Ascension of Isaiah* where Nero/Antichrist is told to be the incarnation of Beliar (*apud* Badilita, *Métamorphoses*, 358), on p. 122 Satan is called Antichrist’s father.

**83** La Porta, “Vardan Aygekc’i,” 514 where sources with similar wording, such as Cyril of Jerusalem and Ephraem, are indicated.

**84** LN, 720–721, which is close to SA, 92.

**85** Potestà-Rizzi, *L’Anticristo* 2, 114–115 for this feature which they find to be innovative in Ps.-Hippolytus.

**86** M641 fols 236 r-v.

**87** M3839 fol.215.

**88** LN, 722.

**89** SA, 92 says that he will be in the “royal army.” In VC he is told to be exalted by people who will desire to make him “king of this world.” La Porta, “Vardan Aygekc’i,” 515. In Agatangel M641, fols 236v-237r his rise to power is described.



The reference to the so-called eschatological ‘woes’ is found in slightly different forms in our texts. According to Reinink the association of Mat. 11.21–23 and Luke 10.13–15 with the Antichrist’s “Biography” appears for the first time in the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, even though he does not exclude the possibility of an earlier exegetical tradition upon which Ps.-Methodius relied.<sup>90</sup> In view of the Armenian texts’ affinities with concepts and information stemming from Agatangel, I would hypothesise that this motif too goes back to it and to a different pool of traditions rather than Ps.-Methodius and the latter’s cluster. At this point it is not possible to determine whether Agatangel itself depends on Ps.-Methodius or on a common source, possibly shared knowledge of Biblical exegesis of the relevant verses. While Ps.-Methodius does not elaborate on the reasons for why or how the three cities are associated with the Antichrist, Agatangel’s corresponding narrative is more elaborate. It is clarified that the Antichrist was born in Chorazin because his mother fled there when she became pregnant, for fear of her relatives. Moreover, the horrendous aspect of her new-born son seems to be the implicit reason why she moves again and settles in Bethsaida. The reader thus is informed why he was raised in Bethsaida which, as a consequence, deserved a ‘woe’ too. It is at this juncture that Agatangel explains also the Antichrist’s connection to Constantinople. He was taken there along with his mother as a prisoner of war by the Emperor Tēodos (Theodosius) who invaded “Arabia.”<sup>91</sup> PA and Agatangel present identical information in this regard.<sup>92</sup> Vardan Aygekc’i also knew this narrative unit but did not provide the exact name of the Emperor. Interestingly, this motif is employed in another composition preserved in Armenian, the *Vision of Enoch the Just*.<sup>93</sup> The latter, however, does not belong to the same cluster of texts as those under consideration here.

The piece of information that is unique to all these Armenian texts is the names of the Antichrist and his parents. However, they are not mentioned in PA which comes as a surprise in light of numerous verbatim correspondences between Agatangel and PA. This highlights the fact that the latter – or at least any of its extant versions – could not have been the source of VN or SA. Yet, since it is likely that notions about the Antichrist circulated also orally, one cannot indicate Agatangel as the single source of knowledge for VN and SA. In any case, either orally or through writing, ideas found in Agatangel seem to have been widely known not only to the 12<sup>th</sup> cen-

<sup>90</sup> *Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, 70. P. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*. Ed. D. Abrahamse. (Berkley-Los Angeles-London: 1985), 195–196 thought that Ps.-Methodius depended on two models on the birth of Antichrist: one “from the tribe of Dan” and another one based on the “Chorazin-Bethsaida-Kaparnaum” exegesis.

<sup>91</sup> M641, fol. 236r. The identification of the messianically-coloured Byzantine Emperors in the historical portion of Agatangel must wait a future exploration.

<sup>92</sup> M3839, fol. 215. There are some differences, however. In PA Bethsaida is associated with Egypt, even if later when talking about the invasion of Emperor Tēodos (Theodosius) it is told to be in “Arabia.”

<sup>93</sup> *Tesil Enovk’ay ardaroyñ* [Vision of Enoch the Just], in *Ankanon girk’ hin ktakaranac’* [Apocrypha of the Old Testament]. Vol. 1 (Venice-St. Lazzaro, 1896), 378–386, esp. 384.



tury Cilician authors or redactors, but possibly even earlier in Greater Armenia where the *Vision of St. Nersēs* originated. The names of the Antichrist and his father are explained only in Agatangel by the Biblical verse Is 8.6–7: “and they wished to make a king for themselves Hrasim, the son of H(ō)romelay.” Here Agatangel relies on Biblical exegesis attested also by Hippolytus. The latter too cites Is 8.6 and considers Rassin/Rezin (i.e. Hrasim of the Armenian texts) as a type of Antichrist.<sup>94</sup> It is also noteworthy that a similar-sounding form of the name *Āromelay/Armilus* – was that of the anti-Messiah in medieval Jewish apocalyptic texts. Thus, while the citation of Is 8.6–7 indicates the type of Biblical commentary tapped into when shaping a “Biography” of the Antichrist, the use of the name *Āromelay* for the Antichrist’s father may have given further complexity to the understanding of these Biblical verses in an eschatological context. The name possibly alluded to and attempted to refute a Jewish anti-Christian eschatological motif, i.e. that of the anti-Messiah *Armilus* with its Roman associations.<sup>95</sup> No convincing hypothesis has been proposed for the name of the Antichrist’s mother thus far.<sup>96</sup>

An anti-Jewish eschatological interpretation of Biblical stories, possibly a counter-exegesis, seems to be the basis of another piece of information on the Antichrist’s Jewish ancestry both in PA and Agatangel. The tribe of Dan is told to be that of Ahithophel and of Judas Iscariot. Here Ahithophel is quite surprising since he is not a usually-mentioned villain in eschatological texts. However, these two *personae* share some common features and negative connotations in the Bible. Ahithophel was King David’s treacherous adviser who instigated the latter’s son to rebellion

**94** M641, fol. 235v. Hippolytus’ text in Potestà-Rizzi, *L’Anticristo* 1, 175 (§57.1). This excerpt is analysed in detail by Rosenstiehl, “Armenian Witnesses,” 254–263. The author relies on M706 for his transcription of the text. I have not seen this manuscript, but from Rosenstiehl’s discussion it is apparent that the text is a version of Agatangel. Rosenstiehl demonstrates that the use of this verse indicates an earlier layer of Biblical exegesis employed in this text. It implies a procedure of interpreting the Biblical past as a pattern for eschatological events. Frasson in SA, 272–276 indicates Hippolytus as the source of traditions which considered Rasin/Rezin as a type of Antichrist.

**95** For a detailed study on the possible linguistic and legendary origins of the name *Armilus* in medieval Jewish eschatological texts, as well as an exploration into its anti-Christian connotations cf. L. Greisiger, “Armilus – Vorläufer, Entstehung und Fortleben der Antichrist-Gestalt im Judentum,” in *Der Antichrist. Historische und Systematische Zugänge*. Eds M. Delgado and F. Leppin. (Stuttgart, 2011), 207–240.

**96** Frasson, SA 270–271 suggests that Melitinē is the *lectio facilior* and may be a reference to the toponym Melitenē, while Nerlimine is the correct variant and represents a corruption of “Nero”. I agree with La Porta, “Vardan Aygek’ci,” 516–517 that the derivation of Nerlimine from Nero is “tortured”. Rosenstiehl, “Armenian Witnesses,” 261–262 reconstructs the name as a corruption of ‘Abaddōn, Arm. Աղբաղոն [Ałbadon], a transcription from Hebrew and signifying ‘Destroyer’ found in Rev. 9.11. He thinks that the process of name-giving must have been similar to what is found in the Greek *Apocalypse of Daniel* (Potestà-Rizzi, *L’Anticristo* 2, 230, § 11) where the word ἀδικία (injustice) becomes the name Ἀδικία for the Antichrist’s mother. While the process of name-giving may have been as described by Rosenstiehl, graphically the corruption of Աղբաղոն [Ałbadon] to Մեկիստոն/Մեկիստինե, or Ներմիլինե is not easy to explain.

and eventually committed suicide.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Judas Iscariot also betrayed his teacher and ended his life in the same manner: suicide.<sup>98</sup> Evoking the figure of Ahithophel may represent yet another level of polemics. In fact, in the Mishna Ahithophel, along with Balaam, Gehazi and Doeg, is one of the four individuals who will be excluded from what is reserved for Israel in the future, i.e. the afterlife or the “World to Come”.<sup>99</sup> Scholars of Judaism have clarified that “Balaam” may have functioned as a code-name for an apostle, possibly Peter.<sup>100</sup> But even more significantly, the Babylonian Talmud (b Berakhot 17a-b) replaces Balaam with Jesus. This not only associated the Christian Messiah with bad company but denied him, and possibly his followers, the possibility of an afterlife. Agatangel’s approach represents a diametrically opposite association of Ahithophel to the tribe of Dan and, consequently, to the Antichrist. Thus, Agatangel or his source, possibly represented or maintained the vestiges of a polemical response to the Talmudic invocation of Ahithophel and Jesus, conveying the message that Ahithophel was related to a *false* messiah, i.e. the Antichrist, refuting squarely the Berakhot story. The inclusion of Judas Iscariot into the same party of villains issuing from the tribe of Dan served an identical purpose, given Judas’ brilliant career in such Jewish anti-Christian counter-historical texts as *Sefer Toledot Yeshu*.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, Judas Iscariot is mentioned also in Greek, Latin and Armenian versions of Ps.-Methodius as belonging to the tribe of Dan.<sup>102</sup> But the negative associations do not end here. Agat’angel and PA manage to twist the Antichrist’s Roman – paternal – lineage too. The text is garbled in this location but implies that his father’s homeland was Pontus, “thence Pontius Pilate” heralded.<sup>103</sup> Thus, yet another ambiguous, if not negative, Biblical *persona* was numbered among the ancestor of the Antichrist.

The above discussion reveals that rather than simple borrowings, the Armenian apocalyptic texts from the Cilician period exemplify what has been generally noticed for this kind of sources. Namely, that they emerged from a complex process of text-creation involving the adoption of motifs and narrative units from more than one genre, some of which could have circulated also orally. In no case there is enough evidence to postulate direct textual dependence. Rather, all these texts seem to rely on a pool of common knowledge, possibly diffused through Agatangel, itself very much a product of Hippolytan and Ps.-Hippolytan Antichrist traditions.

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**97** 2 Sam 16–17.

**98** Mt 26.14–6, 27.5; Mk 14.10, 14.43; Lk 22.3–4, 22.47–48; Jn 13.18, 18.2–5.

**99** P. Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton and Oxford, 2007), 31–33.

**100** R. T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London, 1903), 70–71 even though the identification of Ahitopel as a type of Peter is considered hypothetical.

**101** O. Limor and I.J. Yuval, “Judas Iscariot: Revealer of the Hidden Truth,” in *Toledot Yeshu* (“*The Life Story of Jesus*”) *Revisited*. Eds P. Schäfer, M. Meerson and Y. Deutsch (Tübingen, 2011), 197–220.

**102** Apud Frasson in SA, 267.

**103** Cf. note 69 for a possible source of this conjunction.

Thus far I have assumed that Agatangel predates PA and all the other texts without supporting this claim, something that needs to be addressed presently. There are numerous and rather large identical text-blocks in PA and Agatangel. In some locations, all of which cannot be presented here, the differences between the two boil down to *variae lectiones*. No wonder, then, that both texts were ascribed to the same or a similar-sounding author in the manuscripts. However, PA has also significantly modified and up-dated whatever primary material it shares with Agatangel in order to reflect the 12<sup>th</sup> century Armenian Cilician context and concerns. Most significantly, PA's main purpose is to legitimise the Armenian-(Western) Roman alliance and posit the Western Romans as the ultimate saviours of the Armenians. This mission would culminate, according to PA, in the re-establishment of an independent Armenian King before the End of Times. It also includes regional Armenian traditions of armed resistance for various causes – here coloured apocalyptically – into its general narrative. Agatangel, on the contrary, is not at all concerned with Armenia. Its dominant subjects are the career of the Antichrist which is told on the background of a succession of Byzantine Emperors and a rather long text-block concerned with the Jews. It is possible that even the sequence of Byzantine emperors, including the theme of the Abdication of the Last Emperor on the Golgotha, is a later textual layer, added to a narrative which was concerned exclusively with the Antichrist in an a-historical and anti-Jewish vein, pieced together from a diversity of Biblical exegeses and counter-exegeses.<sup>104</sup> The anti-Jewish polemic is carried out by exploiting the notion of a Jewish Antichrist, evident from his origin from the tribe of Dan, and the initial positive attitude and interaction of the Jews with this pseudo-messiah. These are some of the most compelling reasons for assigning Agatangel chronological precedence. While one can easily explain the additions in PA as the result of up-dating and Armenianising Agatangel, there is no reason why an Armenian author would reshape PA as to purge it of any references to things Armenian. As mentioned above the anti-Jewish polemic is a major component of Agatangel. A further study of this text will surely enable one to date it with more precision, as well as shed light on the original language of its composition and contextualise its anti-Jewish discourse. It must be emphasised that while the Muslims appear in all the later texts as military adversaries and oppressors, Agatangel does not mention them at all. In order to avoid the danger of *argumentum e silentio*, Agatangel cannot be dated to the pre-Islamic period based on this claim alone, but one must necessarily consider this factor in an eventual attempt to establish temporal *termini* of this source. What is clear is that a text focused on the Byzantine Empire and the Jews without any concern for Armenia or the Armenians probably did not originate in

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**104** The historical section of Agatangel bears conceptual and textual affinities with the *Tiburtine Sibyl*. In Pogossian, “The Last Roman Emperor,” 496 I had noted a possible relationship between the *Tiburtine Sibyl* and PA. It is now evident that Agatangel relies on the same traditions. Thus, a future study should look also at the relationship between Agatangel and the *Tiburtine Sibyl*, more specifically the latter's part known as the *Vaticinium of Constans*, as well as Ps.-Methodius.

the Armenian milieu or in the Armenian language. When and from what language it was translated, remains uncertain. What can be proposed is a relative chronology to work with. It is reasonably certain that Agatangel precedes PA. It is likely that also VN's source of information on the name of the Antichrist and his parents is Agatangel. SA's debt to Agatangel is not as blunt as that of PA, but SA too knows the same traditions on the Antichrist whose earliest witness is Agatangel. Vardan Aygekc'i, the author of the *Counsel*, could well have had access to more than one source as he himself indicates. Of course, Agatangel was not these texts' only source on the Antichrist and his deeds, but it was one of the most influential. Based on this, I will explore which elements of Agatangel's anti-Jewish polemic were absorbed in the later texts and try to contextualise this later re-use, without trying to propose here an in-depth study of Agatangel itself.

## Rehabilitating the Jews' Salvific Function at the End of Times through Martyrdom

Once the Jewish origin of the Antichrist through his mother is established, four out of five texts follow this up by developing the theme of the false messiah recognised by the Jews, as well as those "weak in faith," and a persecutor of the Christians.<sup>105</sup> This basic narrative unit is embellished in Agatangel, SA, PA and VC with various details. However, all of them agree that the Jews will first support the Antichrist but later repent and convert. As a result they will be martyred by him.

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**105** This, of course, was a common theme in what one may call apocalyptic texts' polemic with each other. That the Christian messiah Jesus was a false one from a Jewish point of view or that after the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus anyone recognised by the Jews to be the Messiah would immediately acquire the label of anti-Messiah or Antichrist in the Christian context, are topics that have been long explored by scholars. From a large literature on the subject, I have found the following few studies especially illuminating: R. Bauckham, "Jews and Jewish Christians in the Land of Israel at the Time of the Bar Kochba War, with Special Reference to the Apocalypse of Peter," in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Eds. G. Stanton and G.G. Stroumsa (Cambridge, 1998), 228–238, esp. 233 on Christian perceptions of a False Messiah and his promise to build the Third Temple in the second century CE; for the same time-period and always exploring the problem of the true vs the false messiah during the Bar Kochba revolt cf. M. Goodman, "Messianism and Politics in the Land of Israel," in *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity*. Eds M. Bockmuehl and J. Carleton Paget (London, 2007), 149–157; N. de Lange, "Jewish and Christian Messianic Hopes in Pre-Islamic Byzantium," in *Ibid*, 274–284; an insightful discussion of the concept of the Messiah during the early Islamic conquests is found in G. Stroumsa, "False Prophet, False Messiah and the Religious Scene in Seventh Century Jerusalem," in *Ibid*, 285–296; and an admirable effort to contextualise especially 7<sup>th</sup> century Jewish and Christian eschatological sources within contemporary historical events in L. Greisiger, *Messias, Endkaiser, Antichrist. Politische Apokalyptik unter Juden und Christen des Nahen Ostens am Vorabend der arabischen Eroberung*. (Ph.D. Dissertation. Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, 2011).

From among the four later texts, the *Vision of St. Nersēs* contains the least amount of information on the Jews. Besides the origin of the Antichrist, the only other reference to the people of the First Covenant is to generically accuse them of expecting a false messiah: “the impious one will [appear] for the admonition of the Jews, since they too in fact expect the one who leads astray.”<sup>106</sup> To be fair, VN has the most succinct text on the Antichrist compared to the others in all respects, not only with regards to the Jews. Thus, it is impossible to know whether its author had more extensive information on the connection of the Jews with the Antichrist which he did not find useful for his purposes or whether his source was already a trimmed version of a text like Agatangel, which maintained only the most essential facts of the eschatological adversary. While the genealogy and the name of the Antichrist and his parents seem to indicate that VN knew traditions stemming from Agatangel, one cannot know whether this knowledge was based on the reading of the same source as we have or whether it was orally transmitted and easily available to a curious author.

The Jewish theme and the anti-Jewish polemic is a major topic in Agatangel and occupies a dominant place in its entire narrative. Here the reasons for the appearance of the Antichrist are spelled out more specifically and encapsulate the two most significant arguments brought against the Jews by numerous Christian authors: he appears “on account of the impious and apostate nation of the Jews who did not believe the testimony of the prophets and did not confess the Word God born from the Virgin.”<sup>107</sup> The sequence of Agatangel’s narrative on the Jews is as follows.

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**106** LN, 721: Էս լիցի պիղծն այն ի յանդիմանութիւն Հրէիցն, զի Էս նոբա խակ ակն ունին մոլորեցուցչին. Note the reference to the “one who leads astray” based on 2 Tim 3.13.

**107** M641 fol. 238r: վասն պէղծ և ուրացող հրէից ազգին զի ոչ հաւատացին վկայութեան մարգարէիցն և ոչ յտստովանեցան զծնեալ բանն աստուած ի կուսէն. On the issue of the correct understanding of the Scripture – expressed in practice by interpreting some proof-texts or specific verses from the Old Testament in diverse or opposing ways by Jews versus Christians in the first three centuries of the Common Era – as well as the recognition of Jesus as the Word of God in early Jewish-Christian polemic or apology, cf., for example, O. Skarsaune, “Jews and Christians in the Holy Land: 135 – 325,” in *Redemption and Resistance*, 158 – 170; D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*. (Philadelphia, 2004), 37 – 40 on Justin Martyr’s definition of Christianity vs Judaism based on the recognition of the Logos of God and 89 – 147 for a review of previous scholarship and insightful remarks on the process whereby the ‘Logos-theology’ actually became a widely spread dividing line between Christianity and Judaism; A. H. Becker, “Beyond the Spatial and Temporal Limes. Questioning the “Parting of the Ways” outside the Roman Empire,” in *The Ways that Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Eds. A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed (Minneapolis, 2007), 373 – 392, esp. on the *topos* of the “blindness of the Jews to their own scripture” as wide-spread. Justinian’s law of 553 which forbade the use of any Greek Bible but the Septuagint or Aquila’s translation had the specific purpose of convincing the Jews of “the prophecies contained in ‘the Holy Books’ through which they will announce the great God and Savior of the human race, Jesus Christ,” cited in O. Irshai, “Confronting a Christian Empire: Jewish Life and Culture in the World of Early Byzantium,” in *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*. Eds R. Bonfil, O. Irshai, G. G. Stroumsa and R. Talgam. (Leiden, 2012), 17 – 64,

Once the Antichrist acquires the royal power he reveals his evil nature and declares himself to be “Christ.” It must be assumed that here as well as further in the text when recounting the Antichrist’s deeds, the word “Christ” is applied as a title, standing for “Messiah” rather than the name – as in Jesus Christ.<sup>108</sup> This may be a preliminary indication that the text was translated from Greek where “Christ” maintained its pre-Christian significance of the “anointed one”. He then goes to Jerusalem and sits “in the Temple of Solomon”<sup>109</sup> calling everyone to come and worship him.<sup>110</sup> The Jewish tribes, especially that of Dan, flock to him. The latter proclaim him to be “the Christ and the saviour of the world ... the King of Israel.”<sup>111</sup> It is noteworthy that the narrative sets to explain the Jewish point of view, even if its author had to comply with the long and old tradition that Jews took the Antichrist – a false Messiah – to be the true one. Thus, despite obvious and vicious polemical tropes, the author also seems to wish to justify the Jewish support and acceptance of the Antichrist based on their history of persecution at the hands of the “foreign nations and pagans.”<sup>112</sup> In fact, the Jews implore the Antichrist with tears and lamentations: “Save us from our enemies and deliver us from all the hated [ones]. And put to shame those who oppressed us ...”<sup>113</sup> Nowhere in this mini apologetic is it implied that the complaints or the lamentations of the Jews were insincere or that they deserved their sorry lot. The dialogue does not leave the impression of being an artificially constructed conversation, similar to what is often found in disputation literature (*altercatio*), which, admittedly may be due to the literary skills of the author rather than his allegiance.<sup>114</sup>

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citation on 56. The type of Biblical exegesis that emphasised the contrast between the Old and the New Testaments and blamed Israel for the incomprehension of the prophets was employed also by Armenian authors. Cf., for example, Biblical commentaries of Step’annos Siwnec’i who emphasised that the Mosaic law was superseded by Christ and reproached the Jews for their incomprehension. However, Step’annos was much more restrained than his later peer, Hamam Arewelc’i in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, whose Commentary on the Book of Proverbs is replete with continuous diatribes against “Israel” for not having heeded to the prophets. These issues are discussed in the “Introduction” of R. Thomson to Hamam, *Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*. Edition of the Armenian text, English translation, Notes and Introduction by R. W. Thomson (Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA, 2005), 10 and 24–25.

**108** M641 fol. 237v: Էս եմ քրիստոս, որ իջի երկնից և մարմնացայ ի կուսէն և եկի կեցուցանել զաշխարհս / I am Christ who descended from heaven, became incarnated from the virgin and came to save the world.

**109** Apparently a reference to 2 Thess 2.4 where the “opposer” will sit in the Temple of God. For later Christian authors this would signify a Church, as, for example, in PA.

**110** The reference to the Temple of Solomon is quite astonishing for a medieval text and can only be explained by positing a much earlier source. Consistent with this, the theme of the construction of the “Third Temple” by the false Jewish Messiah is absent in Agatangel. It does appear in PA.

**111** M641 fol. 238v: դու Էս քրիստոս փրկիչ աշխարհի ... բազաւորն իսրայէլի:

**112** M641 fol. 238v: ազգաց օտարաց և հեթանոսաց.

**113** M641 fol. 238v: փրկեայ զմեզ ի ձեռաց թեմամեաց մերոց. և ամենայն ատել[ե]աց ապրեցոյ զմեզ. և անօր արայ զայնոսիկ որ նեղէին զմեզ.

**114** For the use and re-use of dialogues in anti-Jewish polemic cf. V. Déroche, “Forms and Functions of anti-Jewish Polemics: Polymorphy, Polysémy,” in *Jews in Byzantium*, 535–548.



Jews are presented as genuinely grieving for their unjust treatment and, thus, appear to be implicitly justified for believing in a ‘saviour’ who promises to deliver them from their current afflictions. Despite this, the reader is reminded that the Jews will follow the Antichrist because “those gone astray expect the one who has gone astray.”<sup>115</sup> The Antichrist then launches his persecution of the Christians after which there follow tremendous natural disasters and tribulations. Jews again plead with the Antichrist to deliver them from this new agony. At this point he performs miracles, which are naturally false ones, but which convince the Jews of his greatness and power. The Lord sends Enoch and Elijah in order to console the persecuted.<sup>116</sup> These Biblical figures are, of course, familiar actors in many Christian apocalyptic texts.<sup>117</sup> In Agatangel they foreshadow the fate of the Jews as a collective entity. Enoch and Elijah appear as individual Jews who accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah and are then executed by the Antichrist. For this purpose, the text inserts another dialogue, this time between the Antichrist and the two Prophets about the latter’s exact genealogy and a discussion of the correct interpretation of the Biblical prophecies about the Messiah.<sup>118</sup> Elijah, as an Israelite, is singled out to affirm Jesus’ redemptive mission in whom all the prophecies were fulfilled. The Antichrist retorts that this is a lie and not supported by “your laws.”<sup>119</sup> Not only, it is implied that he is aware of Jewish anti-Jesus traditions, when he states: “there is a multitude [of those] who say that he [Jesus] was a deceiver and one who led [people] astray. For this reason they denied and crucified him.”<sup>120</sup> However, since Enoch and Elijah do not change their opinion, even when the Antichrist offers them riches and honours, they are put to the sword. Yet, even this extreme measure does not convince the Jews of their error, but they accept the mark of the Antichrist on their forehead

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**115** M641 fol. 239r: “զի մոլորեալք մոլականին ակն ունին,” however M2004 fol. 118r has the variant: “զի մոլեալք մոլականին ակն ունին / since those gone mad expect a mad one.” The version մոլեալ and related մոլական are probably corruptions of մոլորեալ(ք)/մոլորական attested in PA: M3839 fol. 216: “զի մոլորեալքն մոլորելոյն երկիր պագանեն / since those gone astray worship the one gone astray” and V207 fol.75v “զի մոլորեալքն պաշտեն զմոլորեալն / since those gone astray worship the one gone astray”, as well as VC in La Porta, “Vardan Aygekc’i” 518: “մոլորականքն մոլորականին ակն ունին / those who have gone astray expect the one who has gone astray.” La Porta suggests that the statement may be based on 2 Tim 3.13.

**116** M641 fol. 240r-241v.

**117** The descent of the “two witnesses” is based on Rev. 11.3–7. They were identified with Enoch and Elijah already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century *Apocalypse of Peter* and became an important *topos* in many later apocalyptic texts. Hippolytus seems to be the first to suggest that Enoch and Elijah will be martyred by the Antichrist. Rizzi-Potestà, *L’Anticristo* 1, 509–510 note 71.

**118** There are no exact references to any specific Biblical proof-texts or verses, but a rather general appeal to “the Prophets.”

**119** M641 fol. 241v: “ոչ ունիս վկայութիւն ի օրինացն ձերոց / you have no testimony from your laws.” But the word օրէնք / law can be translated also as “religion.”

**120** M641 fol. 242r: բագում այն էն, որ ասացին վասն նորա, թէ խափեփայ էր և մոլորեցուցիչ, վասն այն ուրացան զնա և խաչեցին.



and the right hand out of fear.<sup>121</sup> At this point the text is rather brief and without persuasive explanations states that the Jews, having seen the torments of those who did not accept the Antichrist, started doubting him. Eventually they themselves oppose the Antichrist and boldly speak against him, presented in the form of yet another dramatic dialogue. They now declare him to be a false messiah and are, therefore, put to the sword: “and ... they joined the ranks of the martyrs whose names were written in the book of life.”<sup>122</sup> The total number is given as 144 thousand canonised since the Revelation of John.<sup>123</sup>

From among the later texts the closest parallels can be detected between Agatangel and PA, but the latter is much more abbreviated. It has no dialogues which deprive this text of the complexity and dramatic effects that characterise Agatangel. PA is not concerned with the problem of distinguishing the true messiah from a false one. Nor does it employ such disputation techniques as evoking the common Scripture but interpreting it differently. The narrative moves in a rather linear manner. After having become “king” in “Byzandion,” the Antichrist goes to Jerusalem and declares his intention to “gather the dispersed of Israel” and re-build Jerusalem.<sup>124</sup> He sits in “the Church of God” and declares himself to be “Christ born of a virgin.” The localisation of the Antichrist in the “church of God” rather than the “Temple of Solomon” as in Agatangel, speaks again for the latter’s archaic models. In PA too all the tribes of Israel, but especially that of Dan, worship the Antichrist. In contrast to Agatangel, however, there are no dialogues between the Jews and the Antichrist along themes commonly found in Christian *adversus judaeos* texts. Reflections on the condition of the Jews that one finds in Agatangel are absent in PA. In the latter the confrontation of the Jews with the Antichrist is reduced to an accusatory speech by the Jews against the eschatological villain with a *finale*, that too similar to Agatangel, of their confession of Jesus as the Messiah:

If you are Christ son of God who descended from heaven and was born of the Holy Virgin Mary, give us bread and water to eat and drink and we will believe you, since, behold, we are perishing. But if you cannot give us that which we ask, you are not Christ, but a deceiver and false liar. And there is no truth in you. And you are the true Antichrist and soldier of Satan, since he did not remain in truthfulness. Whereas Christ was the one who came and took a body from the holy and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God. And for thirty years God trod the earth as a human. He resurrected the dead, illuminated the blind, chased the demons and with five loaves fed the five thousand, and issued water from the rock for the twelve tribes and our fathers drank and he fed them with the heaven-sent bread. But our fathers were deceived and raised him to the cross. He was placed in the grave but resurrected from the dead. And he ascended to heaven and he

<sup>121</sup> M641 fol. 243v. Rev 13.16.

<sup>122</sup> M641, fol. 244r: և կատարեցան ի Քրիստոս, խառնելով ի դասս մարտիրոսաց, որոց անուանին գրեցան ի դպրութիւն կենաց. Rev 7.4, although the Armenian Bible has գիրք կենաց.

<sup>123</sup> Rev 7.4.

<sup>124</sup> M3839 fol. 216.

will come again in the glory of the Father in order to judge the living and the dead. \220\ He was Christ and not you, false and impious one, that have been estranged from the life of God.<sup>125</sup>

Such an affront could not but raise the ire of the Antichrist who orders that the 144 thousand Jews be executed. The descent of Enoch and Elijah follows the martyrdom of the Jews. Their mission is to console the Christians who remained true to their faith despite tribulations and persecutions.

While SA's core narrative on the Jews is similar to that of Agatangel and PA, it also has some differences compared to both texts. While in Agatangel the Antichrist is told to become learned in Hellenic, i. e. pagan philosophy, in SA he "reads the law of Moses" and himself preaches that "Christ is to come."<sup>126</sup> Upon hearing this, the Jews "gladly accept him." On the other hand, the Antichrist also blasphemes "the crucified one," preaches that the "redemption of Israel is near," that the Lord will build Jerusalem<sup>127</sup> and gather the dispersed Israelites. But, as the author reassures, this cannot be the Christ, he is simply the Antichrist accepted by the Jews. A unique piece of information is introduced in SA, according to which the Jews "give him silver and gold" for sponsoring his military career in the royal army.<sup>128</sup> When he reaches Constantinople, he continues to surround himself with Jews, but an element of a negatively coloured ambiguity is added when we learn that he acts as a "Christian among the Christians and as a missive of the Jews among the latter."<sup>129</sup> At this stage the Antichrist does not dare to call himself Christ.<sup>130</sup> This situation changes after the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms and the seizure of power by the Antichrist. Upon subduing "the city," presumably Constantinople, he hurriedly goes to Judaea with his "Greek army" and settles in Capharnaum, in direct

**125** M3839 fol. 219–220: Եթէ դու ես Քրիստոս որդին Աստուծոյ, որ ի յերկնից իջեալ ես և ի սրբոյ կուսէն Մարիամայ ճնեալ, տուր մեզ հաց և ջուր, որ ուտեմք և ըմպեմք և հաւատասցուք մեզ, զի կորընչիմք աւասիկ: Ապա թէ ոչ կարես տալ զոր խնդրեմք, ոչ ես դու քրիստոսն այլ մոլորեցուցիչ եւ խաբէբայ սուտ: Եւ ոչ գոյ ի մեզ համարտութիւն: Եւ ես դու համարիտ Նեոն և զաւրական սատանայի, զի նա ի համարտութեան ոչ եկաց: Իսկ Քրիստոսն այն է, որ եկն և էառ մարմին ի սուրբ և յանարատ կուսէն Մարիամայ Աստուածածնէն: Եւ երեսնամեա ժամանակաւ քջեցաւ յաշխարհի Աստուածն իբրև զմարդ: Զմեռեալս յարոյց, զկոյրս լուսաւորեաց, զդէս հալածեաց, և ի հինգ նկանակէն զհինգ հազարս կերակրեաց, և ի վիմէն բժան ազգին ջուր բղխեաց, և հարբս մեր արբին և երկնատեղեաց հացիւն կերակրեաց զնոսս: Իսկ հայրքն մեր խաբեցան և հանին զնա ի խաչ: Եդու ի գերեզմանի և յարեաւ ի մեռելոց: Եւ համբարձաւ յերկինս և զալոց է փառաւ հաւր դասել զկենդանիս և զմեռեալս: \220\ Այն է Քրիստոսն և ոչ դու պիղծ և աղտեղի և աւտարացեալ ի կենացն աստուծոյ:

**126** SA, 90. I have kept "Christ" in my translation, but the text could be translated also as "the Messiah is to come."

**127** This implies that Jerusalem was destroyed.

**128** SA, 92.

**129** The Antichrist here may be intended as a negative version of what happens when boundaries between religious communities break down. Intriguingly, the expression is reminiscent of Col. 3.11.

**130** SA, 94.

reference to the “three woes” tradition.<sup>131</sup> Only at this point he calls himself Christ. The twelve tribes of Israel flock to him from wherever they are. But in SA other nations join them, such as “the sons of Hagar, the Persians, the T‘urk‘estanis and the K‘urds.”<sup>132</sup> The persecution of Christians and tribulations follow, as a result of which Enoch and Elijah descend from heaven in order to console the oppressed and preach about “Christ, the crucified God.” The mission of Enoch and Elijah extends to the Jews whom they are able to convert after three and a half years of preaching.<sup>133</sup> In SA the preaching and conversions performed by Enoch and Elijah are paralleled by that of an Armenian prelate, one from the “race of St. Gregory the Illuminator” – Aristakēs – who wanders in the East and consoles the true believers, exhorting them to resist until the Second coming.<sup>134</sup> He is executed by the “leaders of the impious one.”<sup>135</sup> The narrative returns to the preaching of Enoch and Elijah among the Jews.<sup>136</sup> They manage to move the twelve tribes of Israel to tears who “will raise their voices in unison crying out, ‘we believe in Jesus Christ whom our fathers crucified. He is God and the Son of God. And the one who shamelessly boasts, he is a false Christ and a deceiver and his disciples and prophets are false. Thus, we sinned [against] our God of Israel and his son Jesus Christ since we accepted the wicked one without knowing. But now we recognise our true Lord Jesus Christ and believe in him so that he may redeem us, as well as our fathers, remembering the blessed covenant with them.’” Predictably, the converted Jews are persecuted: twelve thousand from each tribe, i.e. 144 thousand martyrs “baptised with their blood in the death of Christ for the sake of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>137</sup> In this text the execution of Enoch and Elijah occurs after the conversion and the martyrdom of the Jews.

Finally, the *Counsel* of Vardan is aware of a variety of motifs. For example, Vardan adopts the tradition of the Antichrist’s military elevation to the rank of a general like SA. But in contrast to SA, the Jews are not involved in this process. Both in SA and VC the Antichrist is told to follow or teach the Mosaic law. In both texts only after the Antichrist goes from Constantinople to Jerusalem does he call himself Christ. He sits “in the Church of God” and makes himself worshipped as God. The Jews flock to him with joy and accept him as the Messiah. Here Vardan’s text diverges from the others as he inserts an address made by the Jews to the Antichrist. The latter rejoice in having received “Christ among us” and bemoan their ancestors who did not witness this momentous event. The persecution and the trials of the Christians as well as the descent of Enoch and Elijah are also included in the *Counsel*. The conversion of

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131 Ibid, 100.

132 Ibid, 104.

133 Ibid, 106.

134 Ibid, 110–116.

135 Ibid, 114.

136 Ibid, 122–124.

137 Ibid, 128.

the Jews is linked to the preaching of Enoch and Elijah.<sup>138</sup> As a learned churchman, Vardan naturally emphasises the significance of the Scripture and its interpretation. When the Jews realise their error in following the false Christ and that of their fathers in having crucified the real one, they “take the divinely inspired<sup>139</sup> writings of the Prophets and go in front of him and reproach him with accusations and declare him to be false and the son of perdition and the dwelling of Satan and severely rebuke him.”<sup>140</sup> Then they are martyred. But Vardan is the only one to cite specifically Rev. 7:4–8 in relation to their martyrdom, even if all the texts ultimately rely on this tradition.

The “Jewish followers of the Antichrist” is one of the common themes found in apocalyptic texts. However, their eventual conversion and martyrdom is less frequently added. Rather, the motif of the “conversion of the Jews” is one that occurs frequently in the disputation literature.<sup>141</sup> Considering the use and reuse of text-blocks from this genre in others, as well as the permeability of boundaries in open texts like these apocalyptic ones, it is not unusual to find this *topos* in an eschatological context. Still, one may cite other apocalyptic texts that set the Jewish support of the Antichrist in a similar frame as that found in SA, PA and VC. The earliest Christian eschatological text to explore the *topos* of the conversion of the Jews is the *Commentary on the Revelation* of Victorinus of Petovium who, in turn, influenced Commodianus.<sup>142</sup> The motif appears also in an anonymous Syriac *Sermon on the End of Days* ascribed to Ephraem Syrus, to be dated to the seventh century. Here too the initial Jewish support is followed by their denial of the Antichrist and their acceptance of the “crucified one” as the Christ. However, the martyrdom of the Jews is not specifically mentioned, even though it is implied: the Antichrist orders to execute anyone who denies him.<sup>143</sup> The description of the interaction between

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**138** J936 fol. 278–279.

**139** The Armenian word աստուծաւունչ is the same used for the Bible, thus, Vardan eloquently employs a term which is both technical and, at the same time, implies divine origin.

**140** J936 fol. 280: ամնուն զաստուծաւունչ զիրս մարգարէիցն և զան առաջի նորա պարսաւանօք նախատեն զնա և սուտ և որդի կորստեան և բնակարան սատանայի քարոզեն զնա և չարաչար յանդիմանեն.

**141** Külzer, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 283–285.

**142** The relevant texts and commentaries in *L'Anticristo 1*, 370–415.

**143** *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones*. Ed. E. Beck. Vol. 3 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalim 321), (Louvain, 1972), 89–91. The date of the *Sermon* is debated. The text has a clear reference to the rise of Islam and in its final shape is a product of the seventh century. However, earlier material may make up the bulk of it. For analysis cf. G. Reinink, “Pseudo-Ephraems ‘Rede über das Ende’ und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebenten Jahrhunderts,” *Aram* 5 (1993): 437–463; R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*. (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1997), 260–263; and H. Suermann, “The Apocalypse of Ps.-Ephrem” in *Christiam Muslim Relations: A Bibliographic History*. Vol 1 (600–900). Ed. B. H. Roggema and D. Thomas. (Leiden-Boston: 2009), 160–162. This text should not be confused with another *Sermon on the End of Days* ascribed to Ephraem and preserved in Latin.

the Jews and the Antichrist in Agatangel, but extensively abbreviated in the other texts, is reminiscent of a similar narrative block in the *Greek Apocalypse of Daniel*, where the Jews complain to the Antichrist about their oppression by the Christians and, subsequently, assist the Antichrist in becoming King. However, in the *Greek Apocalypse of Daniel* nothing is said about the Jews' eventual conversion or martyrdom. Another text that touches on the problem of the Jews at the End of days along similar lines is the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse*.<sup>144</sup> It includes a singular explanation of the gathering of the Jews in Jerusalem, after they have been “deceived” by the Antichrist: God will allow this to happen so that Jews no longer have an excuse for their non-belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Once they have been assembled in their “native city” they must necessarily believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but, in fact, they do not, according to this Apocalypse. However, the text admits, like Agatangel, that the condition of the Jews under the rule of the gentiles was that of “living in ... distress and in ... ridicule” and their gathering in Jerusalem would signify liberation “from their slavery and their yoke.”<sup>145</sup> Both texts seem to at least attempt to provide an explanation for the Jewish support of the Antichrist. Yet, the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* ends its explanation of the Jewish position on the End-time gathering in Jerusalem rather abruptly and moves on to another topic of discussion, that of the Great Church, i. e. Haghia Sophia in Constantinople, and its fate.

Sure enough, there may be other apocalyptic texts published or not with an analogous narrative sequence on Jews and the Antichrist. Thus, the Armenian texts, starting with Agatangel and moving on to the later ones such as PA, SA and VC cannot be considered as revolutionary. The variations on the theme of the Jews in each composition must be due both to the interests of its final compiler, and those of his commissioner or audience. It is evident that none of the Cilician apocalypses share the keen interest in the main themes of Jewish-Christian polemic preserved in Agatangel. Thus, their conviction that the Jews will convert before the Second coming, whatever their ultimate written or oral source may have been, could well have served a parnetic and didactic purpose, directed at the members of the authors' community – presumably Armenians belonging to the Gregorian Church – against temptations to join the Imperial, Chalcedonian Church, or even worse, convert to Islam.<sup>146</sup> If this is the case, then the “Jews” served as a positive rhetorical devise: even those who previously denied Christ will finally realise their error and accept martyrdom. The author's community, therefore, should remain firm in its ancestral beliefs regardless of external factors. Other specific interests of the authors – or their audience – may be revealed as well. For example, SA is concerned with the actions of the Jews as financiers of the Antichrist in Constantinople. This may be a thinly concealed criticism of the corrupt politics in the Capital, with no bearing on the historical realities

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<sup>144</sup> Rydén, “The Andreas Salos Apocalypse.”

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 210–211 and 223 for translation.

<sup>146</sup> Cases of conversion and attitudes to it are discussed succinctly in La Porta, “Conflicted Coexistence.”

of the Jews there. Vardan Aygekc'i, on the other hand, emphasises the role of the common Scripture (maintained from Agatangel) in understanding the truth of Jesus' messianic significance. This is understandable given his stance as a scholar – a *vardapet* – of the Armenian Church.

But beyond source-critical and rhetorical effects, do these text have a further connection to the contemporary reality? Did their authors or audiences have any contact or direct experiences of Jews and Judaism? These questions can be answered only partially. Let us look again at the historical and geographical context of Cilicia in the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century in search of a plausible answer at least to some of them.<sup>147</sup>

## Armenians and Jews in Cilicia: Did Real Encounters Take Place?

Four out of five apocalyptic texts explored in this paper – VN, PA, SA and VC – were the product of at least a century of re-writing and a final re-editing in the Cilician period. Except for VC we do not know who their authors were and can only guess as to their audiences. In the forms that they are accessible to us, the text of VN seems to have been the least heavily redacted in the Cilician post-Crusade context. The dominant portion of its narrative is best explained as a product of the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, expressing eschatological speculations associated with the advance and settlement of the Seljuqs in Asia Minor, as well as certain meteorological events of the time. Only one sentence – the liberation of Jerusalem by the “Franks” – can be firmly assigned to a later redaction, obviously performed after 1099. *Life of St. Nersēs*, into which VN was inserted, was created in the region of Tarōn as discussed above and the *Vision* too could have been penned in that same area. Thus, except for that one phrase, VN does not express an identifiably Cilician perspective on the events of the End-time. This text, as mentioned above, exhibits the least interest in the Jews and their function in a world history that is bound to come to an end. The same cannot be said about PA, SA and VC all of which are products of the 12<sup>th</sup> or, in the case of VC, early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Cilician Armenian milieu. It is these texts that seem to be concerned with the Jews and their fate at the End of world history. Thus, it is legitimate to ask whether this interest in or concern with the people who followed the religion of the First Alliance had anything to do with possible real encounters between Armenians and Jews in the Cilician milieu.

Of course, the Jewish culture and various Jewish traditions were known to the Armenians, especially the learned clergy, since their conversion to Christianity. Throughout centuries a great number of texts, among which not least the Old Testa-

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<sup>147</sup> For the problem of contextualising anti-Jewish polemic within a verifiable historical reality cf, for example, Déroche, “Forms and Functions.”

ment, but also various apocrypha or pseudepigrapha of Jewish origin were translated into Armenian and many cultural elements of Jewish provenance were absorbed into the Armenian Church.<sup>148</sup> Some Biblical books, such as the Maccabees, became so thoroughly absorbed as to become a model of action and explanation of historical events of great portent.<sup>149</sup> The idea of a “homeland” or a “nation” itself, as elaborated upon in the historian Movsēs Xorenac’i – the Father of Armenian historiography – is heavily influenced by Philo and thus, bears a Hellenistic Jewish stamp.<sup>150</sup> Besides, the procedure of explaining contemporary events in terms of the Old Testament and thus associating the Armenian history with that of the Hebrews is a common feature of the Armenian historical writing. The ultimate result of such a paradigm was to claim that the Armenian people were the “Chosen of God” or the Verus Israel.<sup>151</sup> It has been noted, however, that Jewish traditions reached the Armenian learned culture usually through the mediation of Greek and Syriac Christianities. There is little evidence that any of the translations were made directly from Hebrew, rather than Greek or Syriac.<sup>152</sup> Yet, the fifth century History attributed to P’awstos Buzand mentions deportations of families, among which Jews, from Armenian cities to Persia by Šapuh II in the second half of the fourth century.<sup>153</sup> Movsēs Xorenac’i, whose date is

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**148** Numerous publications of Michael Stone have been fundamental in illuminating these issues. Not all the works can be listed here, but the following collected volumes give a good deal of information: M. Stone, *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha with Special Reference to the Armenian Tradition* (Leiden, 1991) and Idem, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies*. 2 vols. (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 144 and 145) (Leuven-Paris-Dudley (MA), 2006).

**149** R. Thomson, “The Maccabees in Early Armenian Historiography,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S. 26 (1975): 329–341. The influence of the *Book of Maccabees* is especially pronounced on the *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* by Elišē which describes the struggle of Christian Armenia against Zoroastrian Sassanian Iran patterned on that of the Maccabees against Seleucid rulers. Cf. Thomson’s “Introduction” in *Elišē. History of Vardan and the Armenian War*. (Cambridge, MA, 1982).

**150** B. L. Zekiyān, “L’idéologie nationale de Movsēs Xorenac’i et sa Conception de l’Histoire,” *Handēs Amsōreay* 101 (1987): 471–485.

**151** For a general overview of Armenian historiography from this point of view J.-P. Mahé, “Entre Moïse et Mohomet: réflexion sur l’historiographie arménienne,” *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 23 (1992): 121–153; for an analysis of this concept in the fundamental *History of the Armenians of Agat’angelos* cf. Valentina Calzolari, “La Citation du Ps 78 [77], 5–8 dans l’Épilogue de l’Histoire de l’Arménie d’Agathange,” *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 29 (2003/4): 9–27. Of course, the claim to *Verus Israel* was not unique to the Armenians but a common *topos* in Christian literature. A classic work on this is Simon, *Verus Israel*. For the Byzantine point of view M. H. Coungourdeau, “Le Judaïsme, coeur de l’identité byzantine,” in *Les chrétiens et les juifs dans les sociétés de rites grec et latin*. Eds M. Dmitriev, D. Tollet and E. Teiro. (Paris, 2003), 17–27.

**152** Stone, “Jewish Apocryphal Literature in the Armenian Church,” in *Selected Studies*, 3–27, esp. 4–6 for general remarks; and Idem, “The Transmission and Reception of Biblical and Jewish Motifs in the Armenian Tradition” in *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies*, vol. 1, 79–93.

**153** PB IV.4. N. Garsoïan, “The Early-Medieval Armenian City: An Alien Element?” *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 16–17. *Ancient Studies in Memory of Elias Bickerman* (New York: 1984/5). Rpt. Eadem, *Church and Culture in Early Medieval Armenia*, No. VII (Aldershot, 1999), 81 suggests



hotly debated, also mentions Jews in Armenia. Moreover, some Armenian noble dynasties, particularly the Bagratuni (884–1045 as the royal dynasty) claimed their ancestry from King David, even though the historical accuracy of this claim is highly questionable.<sup>154</sup> However, there is little written evidence of sustained direct interactions between Armenians and Jews in the middle ages and thorough knowledge of each others' contemporary cultures, despite the finds of a 13<sup>th</sup> century Jewish cemetery in the historical district of Siwnik'.<sup>155</sup> On the other hand, there are certain historical moments when the Armenian sources seem to be more concerned with the Jews – not the Biblical figures but supposedly a living community or individuals – and in anti-Jewish discourse than at other times. An in-depth exploration into this subject is bound to yield fruitful results. Here one can bring forth a couple of such examples. One time-period worth a note is the years immediately following the Islamic conquests in the Near East. Not unlike other Eastern Christians, a seventh century source attributed to Bishop Sebēos sets the rise of Islam in an eschatological scheme of world history and specifically blames the Jews for their collaboration with the new and awesome power emerging from the Arabian desert.<sup>156</sup> This accusation is repeated by another historian – Łewond.<sup>157</sup> In the latter part of the ninth century the anti-Jewish tendencies resurface again with a greater intensity, particularly in Biblical

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that the urban way of life was a rather 'alien' form in the Armenian society, implying that there was little contact between the multi-ethnic and multi-religious urban dwellers and the majority, i.e. the rural population. The make-up of the rural population in Greater Armenia must have been also diverse at diverse points of history. It is noteworthy that the only archaeological evidence of a Jewish settlement in Armenia (from the 13<sup>th</sup> century) comes from a rural context, thus contesting the suggestion that Jews must necessarily be associated with an urban environment. Cf. D. Amit, "Report of the Survey of a Medieval Jewish Cemetery in Eghegis, Vayots Dzor Region, Armenia," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 53/1 (2002): 66–106 and (2006): 99–135. But even if Armenians and Jews met in the cities, such as in 7<sup>th</sup> century Duin, where a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population is attested by Ibn Maslama (*apud* Garsoïan, "The Medieval Armenian City," 81, fn 99), the Armenian written sources do not talk about such encounters. Admittedly, however, this topic has received very little attention and could benefit from an in-depth exploration into the sources.

**154** The source evidence is presented in J. Neusner, "The Jews in Pagan Armenia," *Journal of the Oriental Society* 84/3 (1964): 230–240, who takes the information in the sources as reliable, but see the remarks of Stone, "The Transmission and Reception," 89. Cf. also A. Topchyan, "Jews in Ancient Armenia," *Le Muséon* 120/3–4 (2007): 435–476. The tradition of the Jewish origin of the Bagratunis is attested in Movsēs Xorenac'i (dated variably between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries) and Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i (10<sup>th</sup> century).

**155** Amit, "Report of the Survey."

**156** Sebēos, *Patmut'iwn* [History]. Critical edition by G. Abgaryan (Yerevan, 1979), 134–140. For an analysis of the eschatological elements in this *History* cf. T. Greenwood, "Sasanian Echoes and Apocalyptic Expectations: A Re-evaluation of the Armenian History attributed to Sebēos," *Le Muséon* 115/4 (2002): 323–397. For placing Sebēos in a larger Near Eastern perspective, as well as comparing the anti-Jewish element in this source with other contemporary Christian sources, cf. Dagron-Déroche, *Juifs et Chrétiens*, and Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 78–87.

**157** Cf. note 31 on the date and recent research on Łewond. *History of Łewond*, 735–736 on the Jews as "insinulators" of the Muslims.

commentaries. This is true for a *Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Nonnus of Nisibis translated into Armenian from Arabic at the behest of the Princess Mariam (daughter of King Ašot I) probably before 884<sup>158</sup> and a native-Armenian Commentary on the *Book of Proverbs* composed by Hamam Arewlec'i also in the second half of the ninth century.<sup>159</sup> The anti-Jewish discourse in these commentaries has been interpreted by modern scholars as a covert criticism of Islam or as an attack on the Chalcedonian doctrinal position which was rebuked for representing a Jewish point of view on Jesus.<sup>160</sup> Of course, such topical references to the Jews – blaming them for diffusing doctrinally problematic ideas or siding with the enemy – were well-established *topoi* in Christian anti-Judaic discourse. Moreover, the modern historians' interpretation of the "Jew" as a simple term of abuse which in reality referred to one's "real" adversaries, such as the Muslims, has been explored even if not universally accepted.<sup>161</sup> Some Armenian practices too, such as that of *matał* or animal immolation, were contested on the basis of being a 'judaising' ritual.<sup>162</sup> As for references to "real" Jews, the evidence is rather sparse also from the Cilician period and appears in rhetorically charged settings. The *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa describes the controversy about the date of Easter in 1007 that broke out between Greeks and Armenians, where a Jew from Cyprus – Musi [Moses] – "skilled in the calendar" took a determining role.<sup>163</sup> According to Matthew, Emperor Basil II first invited a number of renowned Armenian scholars (*vardapets*), among whom the foremost Samuēl Kamrājorec'i, for a disputation with their Greek colleagues in order to solve the problem. When the Armenians came out victorious, the Greek "wise men" asked the Emperor to invite the Jewish scholar Musi from Cyprus, who – contrary to their expect-

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**158** Greenwood, "A Reassessment," 133 for the date.

**159** Hamam, *Commentary*, 24–25 for Thomson's comments on Hamam's continuous attacks on the Jews as "being particularly foolish and impious," and 26–27 for assimilation of the Jews with "heretics."

**160** D. D. Bundy, "The Commentary of Nonnus of Nisibis on the Prologue of John," *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 218 (1982): 123–133. This interpretation is accepted by I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et Byzantins à l'Époque de Photius: Deux Débats Théologique après le Triomphe de l'Orthodoxie*. (Leuven, 2004) (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium Vol. 609, Subsidia tomus 117), 69–79.

**161** This approach is exemplified by D. Olster, *Roman Defeat, Christian Response and the Literary Construction of the Jew*. (Philadelphia, 1994), but is criticised in V. Déroche, "Polémique antijudaïque et émergence de l'Islam," *Revue des Études Byzantine* 57 (1999): 141–161. Cf. also the remarks of R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 83–84; A. Cameron, "Byzantines and Jews," and Eadem, "Blaming the Jews." Furthermore, Déroche, "Forms and Functions," emphasises that these texts served multiple audiences and purposes which makes their one-sided interpretation unacceptable.

**162** An example of apologetics for this practice and refutation of its "Jewish" origin is found in a *Letter* by Nersēs Šnorhali, written before 1173 when he became the Catholicos of the Armenians, *Endhanrakan t'ult'k'Srboyn Nersisi Šnorhalwoy* [General Epistles of St. Nersēs Šnorhali], (Jerusalem, 1871), 252–264.

**163** ME, *Chronicle*, 51–52.

ations – affirmed the Armenian side of the dispute.<sup>164</sup> The historicity of this episode is hardly to be accepted. Rather, the description fits into what has been termed as a minor type of image ascribed to the Jews also in Byzantine chronicles, that of “possessors of knowledge.”<sup>165</sup> However, the opposite *topos*, that of the Jews as “dupes” who are not able to see the truth or exhibit an unhealthy attachment to the letter of the Scripture is also attested.<sup>166</sup> Exactly based on this reasoning, the “Jews” are used as a negative term of comparison by St. Nersēs Lambronac’i in a colophon written in 1197 in Constantinople. He had travelled to the Imperial capital on a diplomatic mission aimed at establishing a dogmatic union between Armenian and Byzantine Churches. Nersēs was disappointed with his Greek peers and expressed his disillusionment in the following terms: “And here, conversing through these Letters,<sup>167</sup> we found them ignorant of these, unclear in speech and attached to material [things] with Jewish intentions, who do not wish to serve God with the renewal of the spirit but with the oldness of the letter.”<sup>168</sup> It cannot be ascertained without further research whether Nersēs was interested in anti-Jewish arguments only for repudiating the Byzantine point of view. He did find at least one such polemical text during his visit to Constantinople – the *Epistle of Barnabas* – and translated it according to another of his colophons.<sup>169</sup> On the other hand, in his *Commentary on the Proverbs* also finished in 1197 Nersēs is not interested in the Jews and in comparison to Hamam his interpretations either tone down Hamam’s diatribe against Jews or lack any reference

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**164** The controversy over Easter date in 1007 is reported also by Yahya of Antioch *Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa’id d’Antioche. Continuateur de Sa’id-ibn-Bitriq.* Vol. 2. *Patrologia Orientalis* 23 (1932): 273–275. While Yahya emphasises the importance of Jewish calendar calculations for the establishment of the date of the Christian Easter, the description of Matthew and the involvement of a specific Jewish wise man in the affair is unique. Here the historicity of the episode is not relevant, but the attitude to the Jewish scholar as the “holder of truth.” The testimony of Matthew is reported (in English translation) in Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire*, 185–186.

**165** R. Fishman-Duker, “Images of Jews in Byzantine Chronicles: A General Survey,” in *Jews in Byzantium*, 777–798, esp. 794. She notes that the image of the Jews as “possessors of knowledge of an important secret” was more common in the Latin West than in Byzantium, however.

**166** For this opposite image and examples from Byzantine chronicles cf. Fishman-Duker, “Images of Jews,” 795.

**167** Various texts, including *Letters* by the Patriarchs Germanos and Photius to the Armenians which Nersēs brought with him to Constantinople. Cf. also Russell, “The Credal Poem.”

**168** G. Yovsēp’eanç’, *Yišatakarak’ jeragrac’* [Colophons of Manuscripts], Vol. 1. (Antilias, 1951), col. 601. Nersēs had expressed a disapproving attitude towards a literal interpretation of the Scripture also in his youth. In his adaptation of Andreas of Caesarea’s *Commentary on the Revelation*, 86 he writes that Hebrews accept the scriptures too literally. Nersēs’ embassy to Constantinople in 1197 is briefly mentioned and the colophon translated (slightly differently than the above) in *Nerses of Lambron Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John*, 12 fn 54.

**169** On the *Epistle of Barnabas*, cf. Simon, *Verus Israel*, 90–91, who considers this to be the first piece of written evidence which envisions a complete separation between Jews and Christians; for a more nuanced analysis cf. W. Horbury, “Jewish-Christian Relations in Barnabas and Justin Martyr,” in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways (A.D. 70 to 135)*. Ed. J. Dunn. (Grand Rapids, 1992), 315–345.

to them.<sup>170</sup> Other important authors of the 12<sup>th</sup> century do not mention the Jews either. For example, the *Lamentation on the Fall of Jerusalem* contains numerous references to the Old Testament and associates Jewish history with the current political events, but does not refer to any actual Jews.<sup>171</sup> Thus, also outside the apocalyptic sources Jews appear in topical settings and defy an easy connection to verifiable historical events. Before any firm conclusion can be made, we are still in need of in-depth studies on the subject among specific authors and their literary production.

Despite the silence of the written sources, it is more than likely that the Armenians who in the 11<sup>th</sup> century settled first in Cappadocia then in Cilicia and the adjacent territories, including the various Crusader States, or Byzantine territories of Asia Minor, had more opportunities to encounter Jews or Jewish communities than in their homeland. A Judaeo-Arabic inscription from 1103 and another one from 1127 found in Rusafa attest the presence of a Jewish community in Edessa at a time when there was also a large and growing Armenian population in the city.<sup>172</sup> According to the *Chronicle ad Annum 1234*, after the conquest of Edessa by Zengi in 1144, he brought 300 Jewish families to settle in Edessa.<sup>173</sup> During the rule of Philaretos, in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the cities of the Isaurian coast were active centres of trade, among which Seleucia, situated in the plain of Cilicia, was of great importance. There is evidence for a Jewish community there at least in 1137, but it probably existed since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. On the east Philaretos' and later Rubenid princes' (later kings') territories extended to Tarsus and Mamistra. These ports actively participated in the trade with Egypt and later with Venice and are thought to have had a Jewish population at least at the time of King Lewon.<sup>174</sup> Jews are attested in other towns of Asia Minor in this period, such as Pylae (11<sup>th</sup> century), Ephesus (11<sup>th</sup> century), Chonae (middle of 12<sup>th</sup> century), Srtobilus (11<sup>th</sup> century), Trebizond (11<sup>th</sup> century) and Gangra (13<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>175</sup> Jews and Jewish economic activity is attested not only in the cities but also in the rural setting.<sup>176</sup> Of course, other prominent locations for the encounter of Armenians and Jews in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries would be Fatimid Egypt and the

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170 Thomson's "Introduction" in *Hamam*, 36.

171 Th. M. van Lint, "The *Poem of Lamentation over the Capture of Jerusalem* written in 1189 by Grigor Tlay, Catholicos of All Armenians," in *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land*. Eds M. Stone and R. Erwine, 121–142. (Jerusalem-Leuven-Paris-Sterling, VA, 2002), 138.

172 A. Caquot, "Inscriptions Judéo-Arabes de Ruşâfa (Sergiopolis)," *Syria* 32 (1955): 70–74.

173 Cited in J. B. Segal. *Edessa 'the Blessed City'*. Oxford, 1970, 251. Segal does not comment on the veracity of this information.

174 S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*. (Berkley-Los Angeles, 1971), 19 fn 108 cites a letter of a Jewish merchant from Seleucia to Egypt. Cf. also Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens*, vol. 1, 109.

175 Vryonis, *The Decline*, 52.

176 D. Jacoby, "The Jews in the Byzantine Economy (Seventh to Mid-Fifteenth Century)," in *Jews in Byzantium*, 219–255, who explores the Jewish presence not only in urban but also rural contexts in Asia Minor.

Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>177</sup> This requires yet another set of data for analysis. That in the Cilician context the Armenians were more aware of the Jewish presence may be inferred from the gloss of Vardan Aygekc'i on the term "Jews" in his *Counsel*. He explains the Armenian *hreyak'*/Jews as *jhutk'*/Jews, the Arabic/Persian loanword that may have been more current in common parlance and which definitely referred to living Jews rather than a long-gone Biblical people.<sup>178</sup> Thus, while more research needs to be carried out in order to better understand the types of contexts and specific geographical locations where Armenians and Jews could meet, the possibility of such encounters in the Cilician milieu is more than plausible. This could be at least one reason why the apocalyptic texts from this period are concerned with the function of the Jews at the End of Times. Certainly, their fate – as described in the Armenian apocalyptic texts – is not an envious one from the point of view of modern sensibilities. But if one considers that the only option left for the Muslims in the same sources was their total disappearance, then one is moved to state, with Frasson,<sup>179</sup> that these texts reserve a sympathetic treatment of the Jews.<sup>180</sup> At least the latter had the possibility of repenting for their fathers' sin and being redeemed at the Second Coming, earning the glorious fate of the martyrs. From a medieval Christian perspective, this was heroic behaviour indeed.

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177 J. Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. (Oxford, 1988), 46–64 for various Jewish communities in Palestine before and after the Crusader conquest. It is noteworthy that prior to the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin, Jewish apocalyptic speculations about a coming Messiah were a wide-spread phenomenon. One wonders if the Armenian texts reflect also a response to these.

178 La Porta, "Vardan Aygekc'i," 518.

179 SA, 313 "Inoltre va aggiunto qui che questo racconto pare voglia destare ammirazione nei confronti di un popolo per il quale il Medio Evo cristiano non nutriva certo simpatie." See a similar treatment of the Jews in a 12<sup>th</sup> century Western author Honorius Augustodunensis in J. Cohen, "*Synagoga conversa*: Honorius Augustodunensis, the Song of Songs, and Christianity's "Eschatological Jew,"" *Speculum* 79/2 (2004): 309–340. Evidence for Armenian-Jewish interactions in Fatimid Cairo is treated in a lively reconstruction of a plausible social milieu, whence a Hebrew-Armenian word-list originated and was once preserved in the Cairo Geniza, by J. Russell, "On an Armenia Word-List from the Cairo Geniza," *Iran and the Caucasus* 17 (2013): 189–214.

180 A final apologetic note must be added. At the beginning of this paper I called for a nuanced study of Christian (Armenian) – Muslim interactions, yet I have treated the Armenians and Jews as monolithic and homogenous groups. To remain within stereotypes but still in plausible contexts of interaction, it is self-evident that an Armenian merchant would have a different experience of interaction with a Jewish colleague than a monk living in or near Edessa with a comparable Jewish scholar or rabbi. However, the sources available to date do not allow such a differentiation. Yet, further research not only into Armenian, but also Jewish sources from this period, something beyond my own competence, will surely shed more light on all of these questions.

## Conclusions

Five medieval Armenian eschatological sources considered in this paper present unique traditions on the Antichrist and ascribe to a particular view on the function of the Jews at the End of the World. Comparative textual analysis of the *Vision of St. Nersēs*, the *Sermo de Antichristo* ascribed to Epiphanius of Salamis, *Prophecies of Agaton* and a *Counsel* by Vardan Ayetkc'i reveal affinities in their depiction of the end-time evil-doer – the Antichrist. Moreover, the last four present a similar scenario on the fate of the Jews at the End of the World. This paper suggests that an important earlier common source for these traditions is a hitherto unexplored text preserved in manuscripts and known as *Agatangel On the End of the World*. Not only the name of the Antichrist and his parents are found in this text, as has been noted by Rosestiehl, but also the role ascribed to the Jews: their original acceptance of the Antichrist, followed by a strong opposition to the eschatological enemy and their eventual martyrdom. While the absence of valid critical editions precludes any firm conclusions as far as direct textual dependences are concerned, *Agatangel* seems to preserve a more archaic text-form and is plausibly older than any of the other sources discussed here. A future study on the dating of *Agatangel* will help us better understand the process of transmission of these *topoi* in Armenian apocalyptic texts in time and space.

The paper also reveals the importance of Hippolytus, but especially of Ps.-Hippolytus *De consummatione mundi*, on shaping certain apocalyptic *topoi* that are commonly found in Armenian texts. My hypothesis is that such themes too were transmitted into Cilician Armenian apocalyptic texts through *Agatangel* rather than directly through Ps.-Hippolytus. But in this case as well the lack of a critical edition of Armenian Ps.-Hippolytus leaves us with preliminary conclusions rather than a fully proven hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is my hope that even these preliminary conclusions will alert scholars working in other Eastern Christian languages, especially Syriac, for researching the impact of Ps.-Hippolytus on the relevant literary production. Textual affinities of *Agatangel* with some Greek apocalypses such as the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* and the *Greek Apocalypse of Daniel* are also worthy of attention, as are some textual units in *Agatangel* that seem to be pieces of anti-Jewish polemic or counter-exegesis of the Bible. These signal knowledge of and answer to Rabbinic interpretations. It is, thus, necessary to explore apocalyptic sources in a wider context of Eastern Mediterranean languages and cultures in order to appreciate a type of cultural exchange and transfer that seems to have been more fluid and is more discernible in the case of such non-canonical texts.

Last but not least, the creation of any text must have some relevance to contemporary concerns and a source-critical analysis alone cannot explain the interest in the Jews and their fate found in Armenian apocalyptic texts, especially from the Cilician period. The immigration of Armenians to Cappadocia and Cilicia and their settlement in these and other territories in the Levante in large numbers could well have brought them into direct contact with Jewish communities residing there. Certainly,

neither of the texts studied here nor other sources imply any kind of real or thorough knowledge of contemporary Judaism. Yet, they at least testify that there was a greater awareness of Jews and a concern to incorporate them into the grand scheme of World History which for a Christian author was necessarily moving towards the eschaton.



Moti Benmelech

## **Back to the Future: The Ten Tribes and Messianic Hopes in Jewish Society during the Early Modern Age**

From the early 1430's, and during the course of the century that followed, Jewish society was rife with tales and reports of the rediscovery of the ten tribes. Rumor had it that the courageous and invincible tribesmen had departed their exilic abode of the previous 2100 years, engaging and conquering their neighbors and adversaries, and were now poised to assume a significant political and military role in the international arena. Since the tribesmen's ultimate objective was the reestablishment of an independent Jewish kingdom in the Land of Israel, these rumors assumed messianic significance. It was further claimed that high ranking political forces in Europe and the Islamic world were aware of this process while attempting to contend with it and that portents observed in various places established and corroborated these reports.

These rumors surfaced in an intensive correspondence comprising 30 letters from the 1430's to the 1530's, exchanged between Italy and the Land of Israel and also circulated within Italy and dispatched to additional countries, dealing with various reports and rumors of the impending redemption.<sup>1</sup> The letters are of diverse character. Composed by 21 authors and conveyed to 28 different addressees, they include family letters, letters to charitable individuals, works of messianic propaganda, letters to community leaders, etc. A number of letters were sent by institutions related to the Jewish community leadership in the Land of Israel; others were authored privately by individuals who either belonged to or were connected with the leading echelons, even official functionaries, while others were composed by simple people unknown to us from other sources. Though many of these letters have been previously published in various places and contexts, no efforts have been hitherto undertaken to examine them as an independent corpus of sources pertaining to a defined subject – messianic anticipation and the expectation of the imminent return of the ten tribes in the context of this anticipation.

### **The Scope of the Messianic Discourse**

These letters were composed in the context of a broad discourse that involved numerous communities and individuals in Italy and in the Land of Israel. Many of the letters contain references to information divulged by previous letters as well as attempts

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<sup>1</sup> For the complete list of letters see my article "Beyond the Sambatyon: The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel in Early Modern Jewish Eyes", *Zion* 77,4 (2012), 491 – 529, appendix 2 [Hebrew].

to confirm or refute this information, such as the attempt to substantiate reports of portents and miracles that occurred at the tomb of the Prophet Samuel,<sup>2</sup> or the rumor regarding the changed angle of the crescent atop the Dome of the Rock, aligned south towards Mecca and now miraculously rotated so as to point eastward.<sup>3</sup> The letters sustained a broad readership, beyond their specified recipients, and reports from the Land of Israel were circulated in locations and among people who did not maintain direct contact with the provenance of the reports. The authors of the letters were themselves aware of their reports' widespread distribution and sought an even broader circulation.<sup>4</sup>

The letters manifest a critical approach toward the rumors and some of the addressees in Italy ask for confirmation of the bulletins arriving from the Land of Israel – illustrative of an inclination to believe the rumors only after consideration and corroboration. These overtones permeate the letters themselves: many authors stress the trustworthiness and credibility of the information that they are providing while others are incredulous, presenting the information as explicit hearsay.<sup>5</sup>

The aforesaid paints a picture of a dynamic, vibrant world of information conveyed between Italy and the Land of Israel that was verified and disseminated so as to form the basis of deliberations and additional investigations. The letters appertain to a broad discourse that encompassed private individuals as well as entire communities and which also impacted the surrounding Christian environment.<sup>6</sup>

## Present Absentees, the Ten Tribes and the Jewish Agenda throughout the Middle Ages

The century spanning the years 1432–1532 was not the first period marked by a proliferation of reports of renewed contact with the lost ten tribes of Israel. The most conspicuous incident of this type occurred during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, with the appearance in Kairouan in North Africa of Eldad HaDani, who introduced himself as a mem-

<sup>2</sup> Abraham David, *Sh'alu Shlom Yerushalayim*, Tel Aviv 2003, pp. 111–119. [Hebrew]

<sup>3</sup> Abraham David, "The Letter of R.Yisrael Ashkenazi to R. Abraham of Perugia", *Aley Sefer*, 16, (1990), pp. 114–115. [Hebrew]

<sup>4</sup> See R. Isaac Latif's words at the conclusion of his letter (David, op. cit. footnote 2, pp. 89–98). Abraham HaLevi's letter of the secret of redemption was also intended for broad circulation and was addressed to community leaders so they might disseminate it further.

<sup>5</sup> See the letters of R. Obadiah of Bartenura to his father and brothers – Menahem Emmanuel Hartom and Abraham David, *From Italy to Jerusalem: R. Obadiah Yare of Bartenura and His Letters from the Holy Land*, Jerusalem 2007, pp. 73–77 [Hebrew]. A letter sent to Perugia in 1520 – Abraham David, "A Jerusalem Letter from the Advent of Ottoman Rule in the Holy Land", in: Amnon Cohen (ed.), *Chapters in the History of Jerusalem at the Beginning of the Ottoman Era*, Jerusalem, 1979, p. 60 [Hebrew]. See also the letters circulated in Italy in 1523, Abraham Neubauer (comp.) "Collections Regarding the Ten Tribes and the Sons of Moses", *Kovetz al Yad*, 4, 1888, pp. 35–37 [Hebrew].

<sup>6</sup> See my article in footnote 1, op. cit. pp. 494–496.

ber of the tribe of Dan, one of the lost ten tribes.<sup>7</sup> That said, it can be demonstrated that Jewish society reacted in a substantially divergent manner to the two phenomena – Eldad HaDani in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and reports of the ten tribes in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and channeled these reports along completely different routes.

Eldad HaDani's appearance in the 9<sup>th</sup> century became a halachic problem within a short matter of time, and reverberations of the affair were preserved most prominently in halachic literature. The questions that troubled contemporaries of that period pertained to the apparent gulf between the halachic practices of the tribesmen as detailed by Eldad to his North African hosts, concerning laws of ritual slaughter in particular, and normative Babylonian halacha both in regard to the content of the halacha and the source of its authority. Why did the dramatic reappearance of a long lost brother, a member of an autonomous Jewish kingdom, after nearly 1600 years of separation become the subject of halachic hair splitting without ever assuming more significant dimensions?

Scrutiny of the historical context within which Eldad debuted renders this fact unsurprising. Eldad appeared in North Africa at the height of the Karaite challenge to the halachic authority of the Babylonian Talmudic academies. The halachic discrepancies revealed between the halachic tradition supposedly represented by Eldad HaDani and the normative Babylonian halacha did indeed touch on minor, perhaps even peripheral issues. Yet the very existence of a different halachic tradition, reliant on a divergent source of authority raised serious question marks regarding the Babylonian halacha's authority and exclusivity and the resultant compliance that these mandated. The new reports of the ten tribes attendant with Eldad HaDani's appearance in the 9<sup>th</sup> century did not, therefore, configure the Jewish agenda but rather vice-versa. They were subsumed by the main issue driving that generation's agenda – the Karaite-rabbinic halachic dispute.

The circumscribed references to the tribes prior to the great awakening of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries also appear within contexts relevant to specific venues and times, rather than in a messianic context. Thus, for example, in Spain, at the close of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, reference is made to the ten tribes in Yehoshua HaLorki's famous letter to his rabbi, Shlomo HaLevi after the latter renounced his faith. In his letter HaLorki proposed a number of reasons conceivably responsible for his rabbi's apostasy and successively disproved them. Among other things, HaLorki claimed that the Jewish people's subjugation to the Christians did not constitute a breach of the Divine prom-

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7 See Abraham Epstein on the story of Eldad HaDani, "The Book of Eldad HaDani," Vienna 1891, reprinted with addition, appendices, remarks and additional formulas in: Abraham Menachem Haberman (ed.), *The Writings of R. Abraham Epstein*, vol.1, Jerusalem 1950 [Hebrew]. Micha Perry, *Tradition and Transformation*, Tel Aviv 2010 pp. 49–113. [Hebrew]. On the link between the story of Eldad HaDani and traditions regarding Prester John see David J. Wasserstein, "Eldad ha-Dani and Prester John", in: Charles Fraser Beckingham & Bernard Hamilton (eds.), *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribe*, Aldershot 1996, pp. 213–236. Micha Perry, 'The Imaginary War Between Prester John and Eldad the Danite and Its Real Implications', *Viator*, 41 (2010), p. 19.

ise that “The scepter will not depart from Judah” (Gen. 49:10), since only a small portion of the Jewish people was subjugated while the lion’s share, the members of the ten tribes, continued to conduct an independent life and were not dominated by any foreign power.<sup>8</sup> That said, though he established the independence of the tribes as an irrefutable fact, HaLorki did not construe this as a foundation for messianic hopes. From his perspective, the pertinence of the ten tribes remained purely theological, insofar that their independent existence provided a rejoinder to assertions of the Jewish peoples’ subjugation and the abrogation of their covenant with their God, and did not constitute a source of messianic aspiration. Here too, the subsuming of the ten tribes within a prominent topic of the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries – the Judeo-Christian disputes in Spain – is evident. The messianic potential of the tribes’ independent existence is not even alluded to.<sup>9</sup> An examination of what then instigated the reinstatement of the ten tribes to Jewish society’s public agenda in the first third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in the messianic context specifically, is therefore requisite.

## The Geography of Hope – the Ten Tribes and Prester John

References to Prester John, portrayed in the letters as the tribesmen’s bitter adversary and the person against whom they were now gaining the upper hand, are instructive regarding the historical background to the modifications of perceptions of the ten

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<sup>8</sup> “The Letter of Yehoshua HaLorki”, in Judah David Eisenstein, *Sefer Otzar Vikuchim*, New York 1928, p. 99. [Hebrew]

<sup>9</sup> Yisrael Yuval pointed out the identification between the Mongols who invaded Europe during the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the ten tribes in contemporary Christian sources and linked them with Jewish millenarian expectations around the year 1240 which, according to the Jewish calendar, ushered in the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium since the world’s creation. This said, none of the Hebrew sources quoted by Yuval in this context relate to the ten tribes and the sole Jewish source that can be linked in any way to the emergence of the Mongols (due to the use of the appellation “gnuzim” i.e. hidden) dates, as Yuval himself conceded, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. See also Israel J. Yuval, “Jewish messianic expectations towards 1240 and Christian reactions”, *Toward the Millennium; Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, Ed. by Peter Schäfer and Mark Cohen, Leiden: Brill, 1998, pp. 105 – 121. The sole reference to members of the ten tribes in connection with the Mongol invasion appears in the poem of the Spanish poet, Meshulam Ben Shlomo Defiara “Ha’Achim HaGenuzim” that apparently refers to the Mongol conquests in the region of the and of Israel during the years 1258 – 1260. See Hayyim Schirman, *HaShira Ha’Ivrit Bi’Sfarad U’Provance*, Tel-Aviv: Dvir, pp. 295, 317 – 318 [Hebrew]. Regarding criticism of Yuval’s assertion of the existence of messianic anticipation around the new millennium, see Avraham (Rami) Reiner, “Exceptional Date Inscriptions on Würzburg tombstones 1147 – 1346,” *Tarbiz*, 79 (2010 – 2011), p. 146, footnote 12 [Hebrew]. Michael Oberweis, “Jüdische Endzeiterwartung im 13. Jahrhundert – Realität oder Christliche Projektion”, *Antichrist: Konstruktionen von Feindbildern*, ed by, Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010, pp. 147 – 158. (I thank Prof. Felicia Schmider for bringing this article to my attention).

tribes and their subsequent transformation into a source of messianic anticipation.<sup>10</sup> Prester John was the fabled monarch of an imaginary eastern Christian kingdom at the heart of the Muslim world, which enjoyed legendary wealth and significant military power.<sup>11</sup> Rumors of this kingdom's existence reached Europe even earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>12</sup> and in 1165 a letter arrived, purportedly sent by Prester John to the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus.<sup>13</sup> The letter elicited tremendous interest, was translated into numerous languages and did much to sustain belief in the existence of the mythical kingdom. The exact location of the wondrous kingdom was unknown other than the general determination that it was in the east. The precise identification of its geographic whereabouts was highly significant for the Jews since, in his letter to the Byzantine emperor, the mythical king related that the lost tribes of Israel dwelled in proximity to his country and paid him tribute. The location of Prester John's kingdom would thus also entail the identification of the dwelling place of the ten lost tribes of Israel.

The geographic determination of Prester John's kingdom fluctuated widely. Though sources pinpointed India<sup>14</sup> as the kingdom's location, India in the Middle

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**10** For references to Prester John in the letters dealing with the ten tribes see Oxford Bodleian Library manuscripts 2585/5 pp. 91:b. and the later version of his letter from 1432 Oxford Bodleian Library manuscript 1743, (Opp 550) p. 31:a. The letter of appointment for a 1454 emissary from Jerusalem, David, op. cit. footnote 2, p. 211 – 213; *ibid.*, pp. 111 – 119, R. Obadiah of Bartenura Letters, Hartom and David, op. cit. footnote 5. The Letter of R. Yisrael Ashkenazi from 1522 David, op. cit. footnote 3, p. 120. The letter of Abraham HaLevi regarding the ten tribes – Malachai Beit Aryeh, “Letter Concerning the Ten Tribes from R. Abraham ben Eliezer HaLevi the Kabbalist from 1528”, *Kovetz al Yad*, 16 (1966) b, pp. 376. et. All [Hebrew].

**11** Regarding Prester John see: Ulrich Knefelkamp, ‘Der Priesterkönig Johannes und sein Reich – Legende oder Realität’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 14 (1988), pp. 337 – 355. *id.*, *Die Suche nach dem Reich des Priesterkönigs Johannes. Dargestellt anhand von Reiseberichten und anderen ethnografischen Quellen des 12. bis 17. Jahrhunderts.* Gelsenkirchen, 1986. Charles Fraser Beckingham, “The Quest for Prester John”, *Bulletin of the John Reynolds University Library*, 62 (1980), pp. 290 – 310. Francisco Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, Cambridge 1961. Francis Millet Rogers, *The Quest for the Eastern Christians*, Minneapolis 1962. Charles E. Nowell, ‘The Historical Prester John’, *Speculum* XXVIII (1953), pp. 435 – 445. Jacqueline Pirenne, *La légende du Prêtre Jean*, Strasbourg 1992. In troubling and critical times Christian Europe looked to Prester John to assist in overcoming religious and military threats by enemies of Christianity. This is demonstrated, for example, in the connection between the expeditions in search of Prester John undertaken in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Mongol conquests and victories in Europe during these years. See also Igor De Ranchewiltz, “Prester John and Europe's Discovery of East Asia”, *The thirty-second George Ernest Morrison lecture in ethnology 1971*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972.

**12** See: Edward Ullendorf and Charles Fraser Beckingham, *The Hebrew Letters of Prester John*, Oxford 1982, p. 2 – 3. (The first explicit mention of Prester John's kingdom appears in the Chronicle of Otto of Freising, *De duabus civitatibus*, that relates that he learned of the existence of this kingdom in 1145 from Hugh, Bishop of Jabala in Lebanon.

**13** Regarding the letter and its possible addresses see: *ibid.*, p. 1.

**14** *in tribus Indiis dominatur magnificentia nostra*. Quoted by Ullendorf and Beckingham, op. cit., footnote 12, p. 5.

Agēs was a somewhat nebulous concept that comprised everything in the east, beyond the Muslim realms.<sup>15</sup> In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the kingdom was thought to be situated in central Asia and a number of expeditions even journeyed there in an attempt to cultivate mutual political and military ties, particularly on the backdrop of the Mongol invasions of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> In later periods it was repositioned southward and westward towards India and from the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the kingdom was identified with the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia.

In 1306 the first official deputation from Ethiopia arrived in Europe.<sup>17</sup> Members of the deputation met with Pope Clement V, residing in Avignon at the time, visited Rome as well as additional places in Italy and possibly in Spain too.<sup>18</sup> In the wake of the delegation's arrival Ethiopia was identified for the first time on a European map as Prester John's kingdom.<sup>19</sup> The nature of the delegation's concrete objective is unclear; nonetheless, it demonstrates, for the first time, interest and mutual awareness between Europe and Ethiopia and the reciprocal desire to forge ties. It is unknown whether additional Ethiopian delegations visited Europe during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, though from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century successive Ethiopian deputations reached Europe, particularly Venice. The first arrived in June 1402, sent by the court of the Ethiopian emperor Dawit I (1382–1413). Venetian sources are explicit in their depiction of the delegation as having been dispatched at Prester John's behest.<sup>20</sup>

Several days following the delegation's arrival, the Jewish community of Ferrara received a letter from Venice with news regarding the delegation's visit and the information that it had conveyed concerning the ten tribes:

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**15** See: Charles E. Nowell, *The Great Discoveries and the First Colonial Empires*, Ithaca 1954, p. 13. Medieval geographers presumed the effective existence of three separate countries known as India: India Major, India Minor and India Tertia. See also: John Wright, *Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades*, New York 1925, pp. 272–273.

**16** See: Ranchewiltz, op. cit., footnote 11.

**17** On the deputation see: Raleigh Ashlin Skelton, "An Ethiopian Embassy to Western Europe in 1306", Appendix III in: Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford (editor), *Ethiopian Itineraries circa 1400–1524*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1958), pp. 212–215. Beckingham points out that the deputation was granted a papal audience by Pope Clement V in Avignon only in 1309, and proceeded to Italy only following this meeting. See: Charles F. Beckingham, 'An Ethiopian Embassy to Europe c. 1310', *Journal of Semitic Studies* XXXIV (1989), p. 340.

**18** The solitary source that refers to this delegation is Jacopo Foresti's book, Jacopo Filippo Foresti, *Supplementum chronicarum*, Liber VIII, Venedig, 1483, pp. 17v–18r. Foresti notes therein that the delegation was on its way to the king of Spain (ad Hispaniarum regem), though there is no known source corroborating its actual arrival there.

**19** Beckingham, op. cit., footnote 17, p. 339. This identification also appears in later maps of the Genovese cartographic school such as the map noted by Angelino Dulcert in Majorca in 1339. See also: Ullendorf and Beckingham, op. cit. footnote 12, p. 6.

**20** "Excellens dominus Prestozane" and see: Matteo Salvatore, "The Ethiopian Age of Exploration: Prester John's Discovery of Europe, 1306–1458", *Journal of World History*, 21 (2010), p. 604.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, in the year 5162 (June 19<sup>th</sup> 1402) emissaries from Prester John came to the authorities in Venice, telling to the gentiles, in the name of the aforementioned lord, how many of the Jews dwelling beyond the Sambatyon river came – with a king and a multitude of soldiers bearing a Torah scroll with them, and fought with him and burned 700 towns, large and small of Prester John's and slaying innumerable people. And Prester John himself escaped and mustered a large army to do battle against the Jews. He cut off their avenue of retreat and struck them a great blow. And the Hebrew king was apprehended, instructed to renounce his faith and when he refused he was smitten with the sword. Then another Hebrew king, even stronger than the first came out, destroyed, burned and devastated even more than his predecessor had done and no one knew how it would all end. And after this I heard that a compromise had been reached, that the Jews are paying him tribute so that he would not engage them in battle on the Sabbath but on other days they do not fear him.<sup>21</sup>

The reports contained in this letter regarding the tribes were indeed new and exciting: they focused, for the first time, on the tribe's political situation, on the wars in which they were involved and on their valor as warriors – a departure from the sparse references to the tribes' existence that characterized preceding centuries. Yet despite all this, the conclusion drawn from the letter concerning the tribes' relations with diaspora Jews or expectations diaspora residents had of them was that the isolation of the ten tribes, cut off from Jewish society by the Sambatyon, persisted and thus their wars and victories were irrelevant to Jewish society. Moreover, to a large extent, they even shared a common destiny: like their brothers in the diaspora, the ten tribes are subordinate to a foreign Christian overlord and thus unable to renew ties with their brothers, much less assist them. As such, nothing had changed in the relationship between the diaspora Jews and their brothers beyond the Sambatyon.

The timing of the letter illustrates cognizance of the link between Prester John and the ten tribes and the identification of Ethiopia as Prester John's domain and elucidates the attempt to endow the Ethiopian delegation's visit with interpretation and implications relevant to Jewish society. This said, from the standpoint of how the relationship and ties between Jewish society and the ten tribes were perceived, the letter echoes the perception of disconnectedness and irrelevance familiar to us from the preceding era.

The visit was an impetus for further deputations. In 1404 an additional deputation arrived to ascertain the fate of the previous delegation that had vanished on its way back to Ethiopia and to receive indulgence and holy relics to be transported to Ethiopia.<sup>22</sup> Other deputations followed in subsequent years, cementing the relationship so that by the beginning of the 1430's Prester John had evolved from a mythical to a genuine figure and was perceived in Italy as a fellow ruler and to a great extent

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<sup>21</sup> I published the manuscript in full, see: Benmelech, op. cit. footnote 1, pp. 491–492.

<sup>22</sup> Kate Lowe, "Representing" Africa: Ambassadors and Princes from Christian Africa in Renaissance Italy and Portugal, 1402–1608', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 17 (2007), p. 102.



as an ally.<sup>23</sup> Relations with Ethiopia, regarded, as stated, as Prester John's realm, differed in no real sense from relations with any other friendly country and included the exchange of letters and diplomatic delegations, valuable gifts,<sup>24</sup> and even papal audiences that articulated the Pope's religious supremacy.<sup>25</sup> Ethiopian representatives even participated in the Ecumenical Council convoked in Basel in 1431 and reconvened later in Ferrara and Florence.<sup>26</sup> Towards the middle of the century Rome supplanted Jerusalem as the Ethiopian church's pilgrimage site and the Pope went so far as to establish a hostel for Ethiopian pilgrims and monks sojourning permanently in Rome at a short distance from the papal palace in the Vatican.<sup>27</sup>

The geopolitical and military components of the diplomatic ties and exchange of official delegations were prominent from the onset: the Ethiopian court's deep seated apprehension over the increasing strength of surrounding Muslim countries joined with similar concerns in Europe in view of what appeared to be a growth in the power of the Muslim world and was further abetted by the crusader mind set and the perception of the east in general and the Holy Land in particular as the destination for an additional and pivotal crusade.<sup>28</sup>

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**23** Salvatore, op. cit., footnote 20, p. 608. The familiarity with Ethiopia is also expressed in maps drawn in Italy during the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century featuring precise geographical depictions based on first-hand knowledge of Ethiopia, as distinct from the geographic depictions of Egypt, for example, based on ancient sources such as Ptolemy's Atlas. See also: Lowe, *ibid.*, note 22, p. 115. On the maps themselves see Laura Mannoni, *Una carta italiana del bacino del Nilo e dell'Etiopia del secolo XV*, Rome: Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di geografia della Reale università di Roma, 1932. Piero Falchetta, *Fra Mauro's Map of the World with a Commentary and Translations of the Inscriptions*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.

**24** Among the gifts sent to Ethiopia were a mechanical clock and a special suit of water proof clothing. See: Osvaldo Raineri, "I doni della Serenissima al re Davide I d'Etiopia (MS Raineri 43 della Vaticana)". *Orientalia christiana periodica*, 65 (1999), p. 373.

**25** Salvatore, op. cit. footnote 20, p. 608. Lowe, op. cit. footnote 22, pp. 103, 105.

**26** Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 22, 324–325.

**27** The church of Santo Stefano degli Abissini, northwest of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. See also: P. Mauro de Leonessa, *Santo Stefano Maggiore degli Abissini e le relazioni romano-etiopeche*, Città del Vaticano: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1929. The Pope even granted indulgences to Ethiopian monks on pilgrimage to Rome. See also Salvatore (op. cit. footnote 20) p. 609.

**28** Salvatore, op. cit., footnote 20, p. 603. Lowe, op. cit., footnote 22, p. 111. Stephen S. Gosch and Peter N. Stearns, *Premodern Travel in World History*, New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 163–164. The discovery of Prester John's kingdom and the institution of ties and diplomatic and military relations were a central objective of the Portuguese exploratory voyages along the coast of West Africa during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. After maritime attempts to reach Prester John's country failed, the Portuguese court sent three overland expeditions in 1487, 1507 and 1520 to locate Prester John's kingdom and establish ties with him. See: Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415–1825*, London: Hutchinson, 1969, pp. 18–19. Peter Russel, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator': A Life*, New-Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 31, 35, 39–42, 123–124. On the overland expeditions see: Abraham Gross, "The Ten Tribes and the Kingdom of Prester John, Rumors and Investigations Before and After the Expulsion from Spain", *Pe'amim*, 48, (1991). p. 9 [Hebrew]. Francisco Alvares, *The Prester*

Then, thirty years later, the letter dispatched from Venice to Ferrara in 1402 resurfaced, now sporting several additions and “revisions”. The first “revision” manifested in the date recorded in the letter’s heading. The new copy of the letter bore the date 5.7.1432 as the date of the letter’s receipt in Ferrara. The body of the letter was transcribed with few deviations, though a paragraph appended towards its conclusion completely altered the tenor of the contents as they appeared in the initial letter. The original letter related that the new tribal king who had come to power upon the death of the first king during the course of the war with Prester John had preferred to reach a compromise with the latter instead of waging war against him. At this point the revised letter’s account diverges:

And at the end, a merchant, a delegate from the deputation, conferred with a Jew by the name of Anshalem Astruk who was his friend and he told him in confidence that the Sambatyon would stop flowing and the Jews who reside there are permitted to leave. He also related confidential information, saying that the second king had declared and relayed to Prester John that he should amass his troops and meet him in battle and for every man he would bring two men. The second king said furthermore that the first king had died for his own sins and that all should know that the time had undoubtedly come that we are all permitted to move.<sup>29</sup>

This segment reveals that the ten tribes, under the rule of the new king, not only had no intention of reaching a compromise with Prester John – they were preparing to engage him in a war the consequences of which would be a resounding victory for the tribes, their departure from the realm of their 2000 year exile and their return to history as an active and influential player. Discernibly then, the objective of the Ethiopian delegation visiting Venice was linked to these occurrences and indeed elsewhere in the letter it is explicitly stated that both the emissaries and their Venetian hosts sought to obfuscate the mission’s objectives.

The copyist attached his own appendix immediately following the letter’s conclusion in which he related that two weeks before the news from Venice broke, rumors had abounded regarding occurrences in the dwelling place of the tribes and that the authorities were attempting to quell these speculations. He also told of supernatural omens observed in various places in Italy and in the Land of Israel that confirmed these rumors and their implications:

And a large shining star appeared and it cast a great deal of light and its dazzling rays were radiating upwards and this lasted nearly 3 months and the entire world observed this every night and we said this is as “A star shall come out of Jacob”. The very same week several Jews observed a large star of fire as they journeyed and it was a large star, like the moon and the entire city of Venice observed it. Later, one Jew arrived in Venice from Gerona relating that letters had

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*John of the Indies*, Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961, pp. 1–2. Francis Millet Rogers, *The Quest for Eastern Christians; Travels and Rumor in the Age of Discovery*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962, pp. 50–70.

<sup>29</sup> For the full version of the letter see: Benmelech, op. cit. footnote 1, app. 1.

arrived from the community in Jerusalem and its environs, telling of similar occurrences and even greater, more tremendous wonders.<sup>30</sup>

All the characteristics that would appear in subsequent correspondence already feature in this letter: news of the tribes' victories and the messianic construal of these events, portents observed in various places corroborating these reports and the acknowledgment by foreign rulers of the rumors' veracity and implications from their perspective. Thus, by the following year, a letter was dispatched from Ferrara to the Nagid (head of the Jewish community) of Egyptian Jewry to elicit further information regarding the rumors;<sup>31</sup> henceforth the letters via which news of the ten tribes and the messianic significance of their appearance were circulated would proliferate. By 1432 and thereafter, the ten tribes had become relevant to Jewish society, constituting a source of hope and messianic expectations.

The elevation of the ten tribes to Italian Jewry's agenda and the topic's popularity did not transpire within a vacuum. It seems clear that the background to this sudden interest at the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century was the enhanced relationship between Italy and Ethiopia and the latter's identification as Prester John's kingdom. The correspondence regarding the tribes reflects, therefore, the political-religious agenda in Italy and constitutes Jewish elucidation of this agenda. While political and religious powers in Italy strove to cement relations with Prester John's domain, recently identified as Ethiopia, for political-religious purposes (containing Islam, embarking on a new crusade), Jewish society transposed these areas of discussion, translating them into its own particular world of concepts and expectations: preempting Prester John with the ten tribes, and replacing the Muslim threat with the reality of Jewish life – inferiority and subordination to the surrounding Christian society. Though the Jewish interpretation imbued the heightened relationship with Ethiopia with new significance, it retained the political-religious framework of the occurrences. Thus, the political aspect features prominently in the letters in the form of frequent references to the recognition by political sources in the Christian world of events in the tribes' domain and their attempt to prepare for contending with the tribes' departure from their land, be it through dialogue or surrender, or preparations for combat.

## **“*Muskeljudentum*” – the Ten Tribes and the Red Jews**

The restoration of the ten tribes to the Jewish agenda of the first third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century was but one change in the perception of the tribes. The transformation of the tribes into a font of messianic hope involved, as aforementioned, the forging of a

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, app. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Yosef Hacker, “R. Eliya from La-Massa in Jerusalem”, *Zion*, 50, 1985, p. 253 [Hebrew].

new personality – a persona of invincible, audacious warriors to comport with the new expectations from them. Though Eldad HaDani had, in the past, noted the bravery of some of the tribesmen, the tribes' chief characteristic associated with Eldad HaDani was their halachic tradition and the fact of its alleged grounding in direct transmission: "Our Rabbi (the prophet) Joshua said in the name of Moses in the name of God". In the letters before us, however, we have seen that the tribesmen's belligerent persona predominated, in their depiction first and foremost as fierce and unbeatable warriors.

The centrality of the tribesmen's warlike image relates to early traditions dating back to the "Alexander Romance",<sup>32</sup> a collection of 3<sup>rd</sup> century legends and tales linked to the character of Alexander the Great. The collection recounts, among other things, that during his eastern campaign, Alexander confined the unclean peoples (*gentes immundas*) – wild nations that jeopardized the very survival of human civilization, to an isolated, far flung area near the Caspian Sea surrounded by steep, untraversable mountain chains.<sup>33</sup>

This legend burrowed deep into the Christian psyche through the "*Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*", that became one of the most widespread and influential apocalyptic works in European Christendom from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>34</sup> This was the first composition to identify the wild nations incarcerated by Alexander with Gog and Magog who would, at the end of the world, join forces with Satan in his war against the "the camp of the saints" and who would be annihilated by Jesus upon his Second Coming.<sup>35</sup> Petrus Comestor, in his 12<sup>th</sup> century book *Historia Scholastica*, claimed that the ten tribes were also imprisoned by Alexander in the same location.<sup>36</sup> Gog and Magog and the ten tribes' shared confinement led to the blurring of any distinction between them and thus the two became bound up in the same entity, characterized by cruelty and inhumanity along with significant military power – a combination that imperiled human survival.<sup>37</sup> In the German speaking areas, these

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<sup>32</sup> The tribes are depicted as audacious warriors in only one of the Hebrew translations of Prester John's letter, printed in Constantinople on 1519. See also: Ullendorf and Beckingham, op. cit. footnote 12, p. 59.

<sup>33</sup> On the Alexander Romance see: Friedrich Pfister, *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman*. Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1976. Daniel Verhelst, "La préhistoire des conceptions d'Adson concernant l'Antichrist", *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 40 (1973), 52 – 103. George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, New York and London: Garland, 1987. Claude Mossé, *Alexandre: la destine d'un mythe*, Paris: Payot, 2001.

<sup>34</sup> On the importance of this composition see: Andrew R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations*, Cambridge (Ma): Medieval Academy of America, 1932, p. 49. Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, New-York: Columbia University Press, 1979, p. 70.

<sup>35</sup> Revelations, 20, 7 – 10. Regarding the identification of the unclean nations with Gog and Magog see Anderson, *ibid.*, pp. 15 – 57.

<sup>36</sup> *Historica Scholastica*, Commentary on the Scroll of Esther, para. 4 – 5 (PL 198, pp. 1486 – 1498).

<sup>37</sup> On the identification between the ten tribes and Gog and Magog see Anderson, op. cit. footnote 34, pp. 58 – 90.

legends coalesced into a mythic tradition that spoke of the “Red Jews”. According to this tradition, the nations confined by Alexander were the Red Jews (also, in effect, Gog and Magog) and the Amazons. At the end of the world, the Antichrist would liberate them from their prison and would attempt to take over the world, wreaking havoc and destruction that would conclude only with Jesus’ Second Coming.<sup>38</sup>

This perception of the ten tribes, Germanic in its inception as aforementioned, reached northern Italy with the large waves of immigration of German Jewish refugees who arrived there during the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup> These waves created a significant Ashkenazi presence that was demographically,<sup>40</sup> economically, socially<sup>41</sup> and religiously<sup>42</sup> conspicuous. This presence was particularly prominent in the realm of messianic expectations; the Ashkenazi component was highly significant in the two major messianic awakenings of the first third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Asher Lamlein, the instigator of a messianic outburst in the Venice area in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, was Ashkenazi as were most of his adherents.<sup>43</sup> Shlomo Molcho, the initiator of the sec-

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**38** On the creation of the legend of the Red Jews see: Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age 1200–1600*, Leiden: Brill 1995, p. 65–92.

**39** On the German Jewish migration to Italy see: Moses A. Shulvass, “Ashkenazic Jewry in Italy”, *Yivo: Annual of Jewish Social Sciences*, 7 (1952), 110–131. Lipot Bato, “L’immigrazione degli Ebrei tedeschi in Italia dal Trecento al Cinquecento”, in: Giorgio Romano, Giorgio Y. Piperno and Salomon U. Nahon (eds.), *Scritti in memoria di Sally Mayer*, Jerusalem: Fondazione Sally Mayer, 1956, pp. 11–18. Ariel Toaff, “Gli insediamenti askenaziti nell’Italia settentrionale”, in: Corrado Vivanti (ed.), *Storia d’Italia*, 11, *Ebrei in Italia*, Turin: Einaudi, 1996, pp. 156–171. Alessandra Veronese, “Migrazioni e presenza di ebrei “tedeschi” in Italia settentrionale nel tardo Medioevo (con particolare riferimento ai casi di Trieste e Treviso)”, in: Gian Maria Varanini and Reinhold Christopher Mueller (eds.), *Ebrei nella Terraferma veneta del Quattrocento*, Florence: Firenze University Press, 2005, pp. 59–69. Robert Bonfil, “Ashkenazim in Italy”, in: Chava Turniansky and Erika Timm (eds.), *Yiddish in Italia*, Milan: Associazione Italiana Amici de’l Università di Gerusalemme, 2003, pp. 219–223. Regarding references to the Red Jews (as a source of hope and anticipation) in a Jewish source see: Sarah Tzfatman-Biller, “A Yiddish Letter from the Late 16<sup>th</sup> Century on the Matter of the Ten Tribes”, *Kovetz al Yad*, 10 (1982), pp. 215–252 [Hebrew]. Rebekka Voß, Umstrittene Erlöser. Politik, Ideologie und jüdisch-christlicher Messianismus in Deutschland, 1500–1600, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, pp. 92–122; idem, “Entangled Stories: The Red Jews in Premodern Yiddish and German Apocalyptic Lore,” *AJS Review* 36,1 (2012), pp. 1–41. Echoes of the “Red Jew” myth are apparent in two of the letters that depict members of the ten tribes surrounded by high, impassable mountains. See Oxford Bodleian Library manuscript 2585/5, op. cit. footnote 11. Also, R. Obadiah of Bartenura’s letter to his father op. cit. footnote 5.

**40** Moses Avigdor Shulvass, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, New York: Ogen, 1955, pp. 5–7 [Hebrew].

**41** On the profusion of Yiddish books published in Northern Italy see: Chone Shmeruk, “Yiddish Printing Presses in Italy”, *Italia – Journal for the Study of the Culture and Literature of Italian Jewry*, 3, 1982 pp 112–175 [Hebrew]. An updated list of Yiddish books published in Italy and Yiddish manuscripts of Italian provenance is included in: Turniansky and Timm, op. cit. footnote 39.

**42** Several prominent Ashkenazi rabbis who operated in northern Italy were R. Joseph Colon, Rabbis Abraham and Judah Minz, R. Shmuel Katzenellenbogen, R. Moshe Bassula, R. Azriel Diena etc.

**43** On Asher Lamlein see Efraim Kupfer, “The Visions of R. Asher bar R. Meir known as Lamlein Reutlingen”, *Kovetz al Yad*, 18, 1976, pp. 385–423 [Hebrew]. Voß, op. cit. footnote 39, pp. 52–

ond messianic awakening in the fourth decade of the century, was the son of Portuguese New Christians but all his followers that are known to us were Ashkenazi.<sup>44</sup>

The elevation of the ten tribes to the Jewish agenda for a period of a century commencing in 1432 was thus the outcome of two main factors. The first was the identification of Ethiopia as Prester John's kingdom in the wake of the arrival in Italy of several Ethiopian deputations during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the institution of closer relations between the two countries. The result of this was Prester John's development into a bona fide figure, an ally of Christian Europe in anticipation of a possible war against Islam. The affinity between Prester John and the ten tribes was established from Prester John's letters also translated into Hebrew.<sup>45</sup> Tales of the ten tribes mirrored Jewish expectations and interpretation of this increasingly close relationship, while preserving the geopolitical framework of this relationship in Christian society and its transposition to the Jewish conceptual world.

Concomitant with this process, Ashkenazic Jewish society embraced the Germanic portrayal of the tribesmen as fierce, insuperable warriors, lending a militant facet to the coalescing picture. Thus the tribes, with whom according to rumor ties had been lately re-established, were not perceived as Torah scholars, engaged in perpetual study, or as dwelling in an environment devoid of impure animals of any sort, basking in an unequivocal, uncontroverted halachic tradition with the answers to all their queries handed down from heaven as depicted for example by Eldad HaDani, but rather as intrepid, invincible warriors who inflict harsh and painful defeats on their enemies.

Christian anxieties fashioned a bellicose representation of the cruel and dangerous Jew articulated by the legend of the Red Jews. About 300 years later, consequential to the inauguration of closer ties with Ethiopia, this portrayal provided a source of hope and consolation for Jews in Italy and Germany. Shortly thereafter this hope precipitated Christian angst as revealed in German pamphlets from 1523 that tell of the tribal army poised to wrest control of the Holy Land while negotiating cooperation with the Ottomans against the Christians.<sup>46</sup> These pamphlets emphasize the

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87. Saverio Campanini, 'A Neglected Source Concerning Asher Lemlein and Parida da Ceresara: Agostini Giustiniani', *EASJ*, 2 (2008), pp. 89–110.

44. Eliyahu Chalfan, Abraham Zarfati, R. Moshe Bassula, R. Azriel Diena. However, Molcho's fiercest adversary, Ya'acov Mantino, was Sephardi as was Joseph ibn Shraga – the opponent of the Ashkenazic Asher Lamlein's.

45. See, regarding this, Ullendorf and Beckingham, op. cit. footnote 12, pp. 13–28.

46. The two pamphlets from Erfurt and Augsburg were published by Otto Clemen (ed.), *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation*, I, Leipzig: R. Haupt 1907, pp. 437–439, 442–444. The pamphlet from Augsburg was also published by Alexandre Sceiber and Louis Tardy, 'L'écho de la première manifestation de David Reubéni dans les brochures de colportage Allemandes de l'époque'. *REJ*, 132 (1973), pp. 595–601 who connected it rather to the appearance of David HaReuveni in Europe a few months thereafter. The red and black (!) Jews referred to in the pamphlet were not imprisoned beyond mountain chains but rather beyond impassable African deserts!

identification between the two adversaries of Christian civilization: the Jews, in the guise of the Red Jews, and the Muslims in the form of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>47</sup>

## Between Expectation and Movement

The extensive scope and intensity of the fixation and involvement with the messianic issue notwithstanding, news of the ten tribes in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries failed to galvanize any significant movement or social mobilization aimed at joining, preparing for or promoting the process. This fact is particularly glaring in view of the rise of significant messianic movements in Christian society towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and into the fourth decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, a significant messianic movement did arise in Jewish society in Northern Italy in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century centered on Asher Lamlein whose messianic tidings in no way alluded to the ten tribes.<sup>49</sup> Despite existing messianic tensions as well as the willingness to take practical action towards its promotion in both Jewish and Christian societies, interest in the ten tribes failed to generate effective organization or a substantial movement that would join or expedite the messianic process.

It seems then that positioning the ten tribes as the locus of messianic anticipation in their role as warriors combating the enemies of the Jews and Judaism, who dispatch an enormous army to conquer the Holy Land while simultaneously negotiating with the Sultan and with other statesmen in an effort to obtain the land through peaceful means, effectively left no room for any type of activity on the part of the remaining Jews – diaspora dwellers for 1500 years. What value or significance could possibly be attributed to the activities of individual Jews or even the rallying of entire communities in Perugia, Zungoli, Castello, Venice or Rome, when the driving force behind the messianic process were the hundreds of thousands of warriors of the ten tribes steered by their leaders and kings?! The fantastical content of the messianic news therefore allowed those who fed off these rumors and bulletins to legitimate-

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<sup>47</sup> On the perception of Muslims in general and the Turks in particular in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe see the collection of articles: David Blanks & Michael Frassetto (eds.), *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999. On the Medieval Western perception of Islam see: Richard W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press 1962. On the situation in Italy see: Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy; A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe: 1453–1683*, Berlin: Klaus-Schwarz, 2001. Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West; Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. (Bisaha deals primarily with the Italian Humanists' attitude toward the Ottomans).

<sup>48</sup> On early modern age messianism see the four volumes of articles edited by Richard Popkin: Richard H. Popkin (ed. et al), *Millenarism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, vols. I–IV, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> On Lamlein see: op. cit. footnote 43.



ly persevere in their passivity, to continue to do nothing since “the work of the righteous is done by others”.

Furthermore, the fact that the political military aspect became the pivotal component of the tribes’ identity alongside their development into a factual, concrete factor in Jewish consciousness constituted a type of projection and is instructive regarding Jewish society’s self-perception. Jewish society, that created the rumors and fed off them, projected upon the tribesmen the very same properties the lack of which they felt most acutely. This projection, however, provided legitimacy for Jewish society to carry on as usual – as a society deficient in political or military power. The Jews viewed the ten tribes as an element that could destroy and fundamentally alter the social, religious and political reality of their lives; by projecting this mission upon the tribesmen, however, they furnished themselves with the legitimacy to proceed with their lives as normal without striving to change reality rather perpetuating it instead.<sup>50</sup>

## The End Has Come

The beginning of the fourth decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the waning of interest and involvement with the ten tribes and of the messianic expectations that their return had spawned. The timing is not accidental; it is linked with a number of events and processes that occurred within Jewish society and outside of it. The twenties and thirties of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were the years favored by prognosticators at the start of the century. That these years elapsed with no visible progress attained vis-à-vis the messianic process must certainly have roused feelings of disappointment, undermining the expectations generated in previous years.<sup>51</sup>

A series of concomitant historical events at the start of the fourth decade created the impression that it was the Christians who were on the road to recovery, en-route to success; during the winter of 1529 the Ottoman army besieging Vienna hastily withdrew and the erstwhile clear and present Ottoman threat was removed. Some two years later, in February of 1532 Pope Clement VII crowned Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor,<sup>52</sup> an event that terminated the personal and political tensions that had inhered between these two personalities, generating the popular feeling

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<sup>50</sup> There is but one reference, by a private individual, to preparations for the arrival of the tribes. See Benmelech, op. cit. footnote 1, app. 2, no 29.

<sup>51</sup> Isaac Abravanel, R. Joseph ibn Shraga, Abraham HaLevi and Shlomo Molcho foresaw that events central to the redemptive process would occur during these years.

<sup>52</sup> On the coronation and the messianic symbolism of the embellishments undertaken in its preparation and of the various ceremonies conducted in association with it see: Bonner Mitchell, *The Majesty of the State; Triumphal Progresses of Foreign Sovereigns in Renaissance Italy (1494–1600)*, Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1986, p. 139. On the Imperial myth woven around the personality of Charles V see: Frances A. Yates, “Charles V and the Idea of the Empire”. In: id., *Astraea*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 1–28.

in Europe, particularly in Italy, of a new beginning and of renewed forces acting in unison to usher Christian (Catholic) Europe into a new and promising age.<sup>53</sup> The enhanced ties between Italy and Portugal and Ethiopia during the twenties and thirties ultimately revealed Ethiopia's real situation insofar as it could not be counted on as a significant ally in the struggle against Islam. Prester John forfeited his status as Europe's future savior and this apparently informed Jewish society's anticipation of salvation through the ten tribes.

A further significant factor was the resounding failure of Shlomo Molcho who traveled to Regensburg in 1532 where he met Emperor Charles V in an attempt to jump-start the messianic process, was arrested by the Emperor and executed shortly thereafter in Mantua. Molcho was a messianic herald, a magician and a charismatic preacher operating in Italy in the early 1530's and his messianic tidings were widely disseminated. The fact that he departed for Regensburg together with David HaReuveni who introduced himself as an emissary from the land of the lost tribes of Israel intensified the messianic failure but also the ineffectualness of the ten tribes.

The convergence of factors from various directions: disappointment over the failure of Jewish messianic predictions and expectations during the thirties, Molcho and HaReuveni's resounding failure versus the uplifted and revitalized mood of the Christian side along with the removal of Prester John from the European agenda led to the waning of interest and involvement in the ten tribes in the early 1530's.

Even when the ten tribes returned, conjured up in later periods, they did so in detachment. This, for example, is manifested in a letter purportedly sent from the ten tribes to Jerusalem in 1646. In the letter, members of the ten tribes recount their propitious situation, relating that they are not subjugated nor are they forced to endure the sufferings of their brothers in the diaspora, yet immediately thereafter they elaborate:

Why do we not do battle with the nations? You shall know that we, the tribes of the sons of Moses, are unable to cross the river until the end of days when the Lord will say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.<sup>54</sup> And also the seven other tribes do not have permission to depart their borders except when kings come to wage battle with the seven kingdoms surrounding them. And you, holy nation, trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord is everlasting strength.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> An explicit manifestation of this was the end of popular prophesying that was very conspicuous in the Italian experience of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and which included mainly anti-establishment messages and prophesies of destruction and decline vis-a-vis the Ottomans, but which waned in the early 1530's. See also: Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1990.

<sup>54</sup> Isaiah 49, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Isaiah 26, 4. Quoted from Elyakim Kermoli, *Mevasseret Zion*, Brussels 1841, p. 20.

The ten tribes, from the 1530's and thereafter, were not only taken off the Jewish agenda – they were also shelved and returned to their former situation: present absentees and in any case irrelevant, in any practical sense, to their brothers.

The political and martial image of the ten lost tribes that I described above reflects the tensions and complications of 16<sup>th</sup> century Jewish identity. The lost tribes were perceived as Jewish brothers, but also as others, other Jews, and a model for other Jewishness. In a paradoxical way these “other” Jews were imagined in the form of the ultimate “other”, the Christian neighbors, as having a political and martial power and authority, and as equal participants in the European power struggle. That way, although the discourse about the lost tribes was primly a discourse of segregation and separation, it became, paradoxically, a discourse of assimilation or emulation enabling the Jews to conceive themselves as equal participants in the contemporary European discourse of geographical discoveries and power struggle.



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## **IV Muslimische Perspektiven / Muslim Perspectives**



Anna Akasoy

# Al-Andalus and the Andalusis in the Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition

## Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād’s *Kitāb al-fitan*

At some point during the first quarter of the ninth century, Abū ‘Abdallāh Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād, a scholar of prophetic traditions from Merv (in modern-day Turkmenistan), arrived in Egypt and remained there, until, sometime during the caliphate of al-Mu‘taṣim (833–842), he was taken to Iraq and questioned about his view of the created or eternal nature of the Qur’ān. Having refused to accept the doctrine propagated by the ‘Abbasid caliphs, i. e., that the Qur’ān is created, Nu‘aym died in jail in Samarra in 844.<sup>1</sup>

Modern historians of medieval al-Andalus have taken an avid interest in Nu‘aym’s *Kitāb al-fitan*. This *Book of Tribulations* is one of the earliest Islamic texts on eschatology and the apocalypse and contains a number of traditions about the Iberian Peninsula and its inhabitants. Although the *Kitāb al-fitan* is nowadays particularly appreciated for its otherwise unpreserved Syrian traditions, Nu‘aym had probably collected the material related to the Muslim West in Egypt, the motherland of Andalusi historiography.<sup>2</sup> According to some of these traditions, a group of Andalusis – variably identified as Muslims or as non-Muslims – will come over the sea and fight the Egyptians who, in some variants, receive support from Syrians. Some of these predictions have a more typically apocalyptic ring and suggest that Egypt will be destroyed by Turks, Byzantines, Ethiopians and Andalusis. Like Gog and Magog, it is as peoples that Andalusis play a role here in the last days, but unlike

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I would like to thank Chase Robinson for his comments on an earlier draft of this article.

1 For Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād see Jorge Aguadé, *Messianismus zur Zeit der frühen Abbasiden. Das Kitāb al-fitan des Nu‘aim b. Ḥammād* (PhD thesis, Tübingen, 1979); Michael Cook, ‘An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52/1 (1993), 25–29, and David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, 2002), 24 for the significance of Nu‘aym for the Islamic apocalyptic tradition, 82–83 for invasions of Egypt from the West. For the tradition discussed here see Jorge Aguadé, ‘Algunos hadices sobre la ocupación de Alejandría por un grupo de hispano-musulmanes’, *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas* 12 (1976), 159–180; Michael Cook, ‘Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions’, *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992), 23–47.

2 The observations of Maḥmūd ‘Alī Makki are still valid. See his ‘Egipto y los orígenes de la historiografía árabe-española. Contribución al estudio de las primaras fuentes de historia hispanomusulmana’, *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid* 5 (1957), 157–220. Wilferd Madelung has discussed the Syrian side in ‘Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ in the Umayyad Age’, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31 (1986), 141–185 and ‘The Sufyāni between Tradition and History’, *Studia Islamica* 63 (1984), 5–48.



Gog and Magog, their apocalyptic function is not limited to mere appearance. Hence, unlike Gog and Magog too, there are historical antecedents of their apocalyptic warfare and both contemporaries and modern-day historians can align events described in history books with those ‘predicted’ in apocalyptic traditions. Furthermore, the identity of the Andalusis seems unambiguous, whereas the mythical people of Gog and Magog were often identified with a historical people such as the Turks or the Mongols. Aligning predictions and history in order to identify those made *post eventum*, scholars tend to assume that the traditions about the invading Westerners in Egypt were inspired by incidents which took place in the early ninth century, when a group of Andalusis became involved in the struggle for power in Alexandria.

Although the medieval sources do not offer an entirely coherent picture, events started during the tumultuous reign of the Umayyad Andalusī emir al-Ḥakam I (reg. 796–822). After a failed revolt in Cordoba, a considerable number of his opponents were exiled to the East. About a century later, the Andalusī historian Ibn al-Qūṭīyya (d. 977) described the events following the rebellion in these words: ‘A large group of them, some 15,000, separated and made for Alexandria by sea. During the early reign of al-Rashīd [Ḥārūn al-Rashīd (170–193/786–809)] they seized Alexandria and savagely attacked its inhabitants, putting many to the sword.’<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Qūṭīyya may very well have been mistaken with this early date, which suggests that more accurate chronological knowledge was already lost by the time he wrote. Alternative estimates of the number of Andalusis as around 3,000 are also more realistic. Other accounts of the Andalusis’ activities in the Egyptian city, however, confirm the grim picture presented by the historian. The rampageous Andalusis were rather unpopular among the locals of Alexandria and thus it is hardly surprising that both Muslims and Copts committed reports about them to writing. To quote again Ibn al-Qūṭīyya, after order was restored, ‘they were allowed to choose where they wanted go – any province of Egypt or any island in the Mediterranean. They chose the island of Crete, where they stay, until this day.’ The departure of the Andalusis to Crete has been dated to the third decade of the ninth century, when Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād, the compiler of traditions about the last days, was probably in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> The unusual incident may have inspired religiously loaded reports such as the apocalyptic tradition quoted above that the scholar recorded. In the words of Michael Cook, ‘the lack of precedent for such an event, and its intrinsic unlikeliness, make it hard to believe that the tradition and the event arose independently.’<sup>5</sup>

3 Ibn al-Qūṭīyya, *Early Islamic Spain. The History of Ibn al-Qūṭīyya*, trans. David James (Abingdon, 2009), 89.

4 For a discussion of the date of their departure from Egypt and further details see Vassilios Christides, *The Conquest of the Crete by the Arabs (ca. 824). A Turning Point in the Struggle between Byzantium and Islam* (Athens, 1984), 81–95. Christides also discusses traditions which suggest that the Egyptians deliberately directed the Andalusis towards Crete, which they had tried to conquer in the past.

5 Cook, ‘Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions’, 26.

## Andalusis as conquerors of the East

Michael Cook was right. Despite this incident, it would have been rather unlikely for Andalusis to launch a major attack or even to conquer Egypt. To be sure, a conquest from the West was entirely possible. The Fatimids, who had first established themselves in modern-day Tunisia, claimed control over Egypt in 969. The Umayyads in al-Andalus, however, were in a different position. It was difficult enough for them to maintain control over the parts of the Iberian Peninsula that were under Muslim rule. The prediction about an Andalusis invasion of Egypt thus represents a common feature of apocalyptic traditions about calamities and extraordinary events. In order to be effective signs, they cannot be ‘normal’ occurrences. Yet, in the early ninth century, an Andalusis military expedition may not have seemed quite as improbable as in later times. After all, the Umayyads had successfully established a second emirate in al-Andalus in the mid-eighth century after the Abbasids had ended their rule in Syria and it was to the East that, at least in theory, they wanted to return. Historical sources preserve the odd reference to such plans of the Andalusis Umayyad ruler ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I (reg. 756–788),<sup>6</sup> but the likelihood of such a campaign ending in a Western triumph may just have been too small to give rise to corresponding expectations in the East. Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād’s own anti-Umayyad position also helps to put the tradition about the Andalusis into perspective. Jean-Pierre Filiu, for example, suggested that Ibn Ḥammād ‘sought to heighten popular anxieties over the prospect of a Berber insurrection originating in the west and advancing eastward behind a line of yellow standards’ as part of his anti-Umayyad agenda. While similar intentions may have formed the backdrop to the prediction about the Andalusis, there is no need to assume that that was the case, especially since Ibn Ḥammād compiled traditions of contradictory tendencies.<sup>7</sup> The Iberian Peninsula was a far-away place and unlikely source of conquerors of Middle Eastern territories. Despite the fact that the Andalusis who ended up in Alexandria had rebelled against the Andalusis Umayyad emir, Ibn Ḥammād may have associated their provenance with the house that ruled that region.

There are thus two ways in which we can assess ‘unlikely’ predictions in apocalyptic contexts. Independent sources may be adduced to establish that they were composed *post eventum*. But the tradition about the Andalusis invasion of Egypt may also have been just an apocalyptic prediction. Indeed, on the basis of the

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6 Maribel Fierro, *La heterodoxia en al-Andalus durante el periodo Omeya* (Madrid, 1987), 126. For a brief list of further cases see Jorge Aguadé, ‘La importancia del “Kitāb al-fitan” de Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād para el estudio del mesianismo musulmán’, in *Actas de las Jornadas de cultura árabe e islámica* (1978) (Madrid, 1981), 349–352, 352.

7 Jean-Pierre Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam* (Berkeley, 2011), 20. For contradictions in Ibn Ḥammād’s compilation see Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahīrā. Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden, 2009), 75 and the articles by Madelung listed in note 2 above.

style in which the predictions have been composed, Michael Cook suggested that they were in fact older and did not reflect any 'real' events.

## The conquest of al-Andalus and apocalyptic traditions

Rather than identifying a specific historical incident which inspired the prediction about the Andalusí invasion of Egypt or dismissing incidents which have been identified in such a way, in what follows I would like to discuss the tradition as part of the broader literary representation of the Iberian Peninsula and its inhabitants and as a function of other themes, which define the image of al-Andalus throughout its history.<sup>8</sup> (I do not mean to operate with a crude distinction between 'merely literary' and 'real' here – the distinction is rather between apocalyptic traditions insofar as their *post eventum* character is suggested by historiography, and insofar as this is not the case.)

The tradition of the Andalusí conquest of Egypt is a curious inversion of a more popular and not necessarily apocalyptic theme which makes al-Andalus the object in conquest narratives. It is not uncommon that these narratives are projected back into the earliest history of Islam where they appear as future events. Muhammad's prediction of the Muslim conquest of 'Syria and the west' in Ibn Ishāq's/Ibn Hishām's *Sīra*, for example, reflect a more general pattern of areas conquered during the first century or so of Islamic history.<sup>9</sup> Depending on the significance one attributes to expectations of an imminent end of the world as a driving force of early Islam and the Arab conquests one might already consider this an apocalyptic notion of al-Andalus. Unlike Syria or Egypt, however, the Iberian Peninsula remained a battlefield and it is also not surprising that there are no early traditions which 'predict' a conquest of territories to the north of Spain. In other words, Muhammad could 'predict' the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, but he could not 'predict' Muslim rule over territories which later became France. In Islamic literature, al-Andalus is distinguished as a land of jihad where believers are either fighters (*murābiṭūn*), if they are alive, or mar-

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<sup>8</sup> The following survey relies on Julia Hernández Juberías, *La Península imaginaria. Mitos y leyendas sobre al-Andalus* (Madrid, 1996); Mercedes García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform. Mahdis of the Muslim West* (Leiden, 2006); Maribel Fierro, 'Cosmovisión (religión y cultura) en el Islam andalusí (siglos VIII-XIII)', in: José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte (ed.), *Cristianidad e Islam en la edad media hispana, XVIII semana de estudios medievales, Nájera, del 30 de julio al 3 de agosto de 2007* (Logroño, 2008), 31–79; Nicola Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia. Medieval Arabic Narratives* (London, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> *The Life of Muhammad*, a translation of Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, with introduction and notes by A. Guillaume (Oxford, 1967), 452.

tyrs, if they are dead.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, according to traditions with a more clearly apocalyptic character, the inhabitants of the Muslim West are said to be the last to uphold Islam. The Andalusis' vulnerability to a counter-conquest from the north gave them the privilege of defending their religion under threat, as the Prophet had done.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, other traditions predict that Christians will eventually conquer the Iberian Peninsula and that the Muslim population will have to leave and seek refuge in North Africa. If we assume that the default for apocalyptic predictions with parallels in historiography was that they were created *post eventum*, one would probably date such traditions to the twelfth and thirteenth century, but the prediction of an Andalusis defeat and exile in North Africa already appears in Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād's *Kitāb al-fitān* and seems to have circulated earlier in Egypt.<sup>12</sup> Like much of Andalusis historiography and as mentioned above, such traditions were introduced in the Iberian Peninsula from this part of the Muslim world. The apocalyptic portrait of al-Andalus was thus at least also an external projection, but it gained new meaning among its Andalusis readers.

Examining the role that al-Andalus and Andalusis play more strictly speaking in Islamic eschatology and the apocalypse, we can adopt two different points of view: that of the religious tradition ('how significant is al-Andalus for the apocalypse'), and that of the region and its inhabitants ('how significant is the apocalypse for al-Andalus'). Regarding both perspectives, we can distinguish different themes with different functions. In Islamic apocalyptic literature, Andalusis sometimes appear as one of the 'Völker der Endzeit', as we have seen from the example of the peoples who attack Egypt. In the company of Turks, Byzantines and Ethiopians, the Muslim character of the Andalusis is somewhat put in doubt. This suggests an interesting and rather unusual parallel to the fate of the Spaniards in early modern Europe where Protestants dismissed them as Jews and Moors – a polemical strategy that exploited past (and, supposedly, enduring) realities of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>13</sup> In the Islamic world, however, religiously heterogeneous societies were much more common and would not have attracted similar suspicions, although it is curious that traditions about invading Andalusis sometimes present them as Muslims and sometimes as non-Muslims. Generally speaking though, in Arabic literature, Andalusis are instead presented as

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**10** Fierro, 'Cosmovisión', 32–40; Justin Stearns, 'Representing and Remembering al-Andalus. Some Historical Considerations Regarding the End of Time and the Making of Nostalgia', *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009), 355–374, 363–364.

**11** For a discussion of how traditions related to this notion were used in al-Andalus see Maribel Fierro, 'Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism: The *ḡurabā'* during the Sixth/Twelfth Century', *Arabica* 47 (2000), 230–260.

**12** For older traditions concerning Christian conquest which were cited when this conquest actually took place see M<sup>a</sup> Isabel Fierro and Saadia Faghia, 'Un nuevo texto de tradiciones escatológicas sobre al-Andalus', *Sharq al-Andalus* 7 (1990), 99–111, 100.

**13** For a recent study on the subject see Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation. Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia, 2009). See also in this volume Pečar, "Englands Heil und die Gottesfeinde Gog und Magog".

strict and orthodox Malikis as, for example, in the tenth-century traveller report of the geographer al-Muqaddasī. He famously observed that should the Andalusis ‘detect a Hanafite or a Shāfi‘ite they expel him; but if they light upon a Mu‘tazilite or a Shī‘a or anyone heterodox such as these, they may kill him’.<sup>14</sup> This impression finds a parallel in the tradition promoted in al-Andalus that Westerners are the last to defend Islam, although their success against an external enemy may be considered a different matter. The mixed religious nature of al-Andalus may have had a different effect on apocalyptic traditions, as Mercedes García-Arenal argued. ‘In Iberia, religious confrontation favoured the creation of an apocalyptic atmosphere and the messianic expectations of one religion contributed to the setting in motion of those of the other two.’<sup>15</sup> The historian highlights the significance of an internal dynamics rather than an attribution from outside of al-Andalus.

## Lasting marginality

The apocalyptic dimension of al-Andalus was intertwined with the region’s geographically, politically and culturally marginal character. In the early days, its liminal position was defined by wonders and riches. Writing about the *Chronicle of 754*, Nicola Clarke, who detects an ‘otherworldly’ component in Iberian conquest narratives that somewhat sets them apart in Islamic historiography, observes that the ‘effort to aggrandize the position of Iberia ... by playing up invented legendary and scriptural connections and making it the site of mythic-scaled occurrences, became a pronounced trend in Muslim writings about the conquest.’<sup>16</sup> Apart from being a classical feature of regions distant from the centre, these traditions probably had the function of attracting conquerors. Some of these attractions have apocalyptic implications and were inspired by similar traditions about the extreme East of the early Islamic world. Thus, Alexander the Great is frequently said to have ventured far east into Asia, but according to some traditions, he also travelled to the far west and reached the Iberian Peninsula. While it is rare to find Gog and Magog transplanted to the west, Alexander’s feats are more frequently located there, where, for example, he is said to have built a bridge across the Straits of Gibraltar.<sup>17</sup>

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**14** Al-Muqaddasī, *The Best Division of Knowledge of the Regions*, 211 and 236 (Arabic). See also Jorge Aguadé, ‘Some Remarks about Sectarian Movements in al-Andalus’, *Studia Islamica* 64 (1986), 53–77, 55; Fierro, ‘Cosmovisión’, 51–60; Maribel Fierro, ‘Proto-Malikis, Malikis, and Reformed Malikis in al-Andalus’, in Peri Bearman, Rudolph Peters and Frank E. Vogel (eds), *The Islamic School of Law. Evolution, Devolution, and Progress* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 57–76 and 227–233.

**15** García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 82.

**16** Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia*, 11 and 18. See also García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 81.

**17** Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia*, 74–75 and Hernández Juberías, *La Península imaginaria*, see index.

But while al-Andalus became integrated into the Islamic world and its imaginary geography fairly early, its military and political liminality continued. The topographical situation between the Atlantic, the Christian realm and North Africa meant that al-Andalus remained exposed to the Christian foe in ways that could not be easily remedied and which eventually helped spell the end to Muslim Spain. As Hanna Kassis and Maribel Fierro have shown, an Andalusī sentiment of vulnerability became particularly prominent in the Almoravid period (1086–1147 for the Iberian part).<sup>18</sup> Ibn Asbāṭ was one of many Andalusīs who tried to persuade the Almoravid leader Yūsuf ibn Tāshfīn to cross over from North Africa and defend the Muslim cause on the Iberian Peninsula. Addressing the Almoravid, the Andalusī described the precarious state of his home: ‘You should know O Prince that al-Andalus is an island cut off from the rest of the world. It is confined and straitened; indeed, it is a prison for whoever lives in it.’<sup>19</sup> Ibn Bassām (d. 1147) offered a similar impression of the land and pointed out similar implications for its inhabitants: ‘On account of their location in this clime, close to the Christians, in a land which is at the extremity of those conquered by Islam and quite removed from the influence of Arab traditions, surrounded by the vast sea, by the Christians and the Goths – they (i.e. the people of al-Andalus) reap nothing but perdition ... and drink of a torrential sea.’<sup>20</sup> As an island, al-Andalus was also somewhat cut off from the main lands of the Islamic world and this geographical liminality was compounded with other kinds of religious, cultural and intellectual marginality.

Indeed, apocalyptic traditions exacerbated the multiple marginalities of al-Andalus and the Andalusīs. There are, to be sure, examples of Andalusī pride in some of their cultural traditions, notably their poetry, but in other areas it seems more likely that they felt inferior.<sup>21</sup> Andalusīs travelled to the centre of the Islamic world not only to perform the pilgrimage, but also to study with authorities in the religious sciences. Eastern authorities were consulted from the West in matters religious and political. Only a small number of scholars, however, are known who travelled to the West in

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**18** Hanna E. Kassis, ‘Muslim Revival in Spain in the Fifth/Eleventh Century. Causes and Ramifications’, *Der Islam* 67 (1990), 78–110; Maribel Fierro, ‘Christian Success and Muslim Fear in Andalusī Writings during the Almoravid and Almohad Periods’, *Israel Oriental Studies* 17 (1997), 155–178.

**19** Kassis, ‘Muslim Revival in Spain in the Fifth/Eleventh Century’, 83. Source: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Ḥulal al-mawshīyya*, new ed. by ‘Abd al-Qādir Zammāmah and Suhayl Zakkūr (Casablanca, 1979), 49. I did not have access to this source at the time of writing.

**20** Kassis, ‘Muslim Revival in Spain in the Fifth/Eleventh Century’, 83. Source: Ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī, *Kitāb al-dhakhīra fī maḥāsīn ahl al-Jazīra*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1979), I, 14. I did not have access to this source at the time of writing.

**21** Alexander E. Elinson, *Looking Back at al-Andalus. The Poetics of Loss and Nostalgia in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature* (Leiden, 2009), 117–150; Anna Akasoy, ‘Al-Andalus in Exile. Identity and Diversity in Islamic Intellectual History’, in Matthias Tischler and Alexander Fidora (eds), *Christlicher Norden, Muslimischer Süden. Ansprüche und Wirklichkeiten von Christen, Juden und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter* (Münster, 2011), 329–343.

search of knowledge.<sup>22</sup> It may seem counter-intuitive that Andalusis should have wanted to perpetuate the apocalyptic notions of their homeland and to grant themselves the role as an apocalyptic people insofar as such a role reflected marginality, but it may also have corresponded to the position in which they saw themselves within the Islamic world. Furthermore, the role that a place played in the apocalypse featured prominently in *faḍā'il* treatises which presented the virtues of a region or city and may have been understood as distinguishing it in a positive sense.<sup>23</sup> Then again, unlike Jerusalem, al-Andalus was not the place where key players of the last day were supposed to appear. It rather seems to represent the military strength of the Islamic world as a whole insofar as it marked its western borders.

## Literary apocalypticism and political mahdism

In recent years, scholars have worked on assembling surveys of apocalyptic themes connected with al-Andalus in medieval Arabic literature.<sup>24</sup> There are certainly a number of interesting questions regarding the provenance of these traditions, the ways they developed over centuries and the responses from different audiences. If, however, we want to explore the social and political functions such traditions had, another aspect of the apocalyptic al-Andalus needs to be taken into consideration.

On the one hand, due to the image created in the conquest period, Andalusis were stock characters, extras in an apocalyptic film. This early Islamic al-Andalus survived in literature, while it changed fundamentally on the ground, and it was sufficiently well-connected to other regions of the Arabic-speaking Islamic world for authors there to notice that this was the case. Not least when the Umayyads established their emirate in the Iberian Peninsula, the region became a contentious part of the political history of the Middle East. It was only a more distant area of the same playground as Umayyad Syria and 'Abbasid Iraq and later Fatimid Egypt. Indeed, some apocalyptic traditions make al-Andalus part of a larger Mediterranean and Middle Eastern landscape such as the case recorded by Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 854) in his *History*. According to this prediction, which may also originally stem from Egyptian material, Umayyad rule in Iberia will come to an end and power will shift from one Andalusī city to another. Eventually, the Dajjāl will appear and a descendent of Fatima will enter al-Andalus. Its inhabitants will hand over power to this Fāṭimī, Constantinople will be conquered and all the Christians of Cordova will perish. Likewise, al-Mas'ūdī

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<sup>22</sup> This position of al-Andalus as a land of travellers to the East, but not a destination for scholars forms part of a coherent picture of the marginal regions of the Islamic world. See, for example, Monique Bernards, 'Ṭalab al-'ilm amongst the Linguists of Arabic during the 'Abbasid Period', in James E. Montgomery (ed.), *'Abbasid Studies. Occasional Papers of the School of 'Abbasid Studies, Cambridge, 6–10 July 2002* (Leuven, 2004), 33–46; María Luisa Ávila, 'The Search for Knowledge. Andalusī Scholars and their Travels to the Islamic East', *Medieval Prosopography* 23 (2002), 125–139.

<sup>23</sup> García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 80, for al-Andalus and Syria.

<sup>24</sup> See the publications cited in note 8 above.



reports that in the year 324 of the hijra (936 CE) he saw in Syria a 300-page long book about the Umayyad claims for leadership over the Muslim community. Traditions recorded in this book announced that the Sufyānī would appear in Syria and that the Andalusī Umayyads would conquer this land.<sup>25</sup> Here, al-Andalus does not appear as the home of a barbarian people who came to devastate Muslim lands, but rather as a community of Muslims defined by their regional, political and sectarian affiliations.

Despite its marginality in several important respects, al-Andalus was thus right from the time of the conquest also clearly part of a Middle Eastern cultural sphere. This was not merely a matter of the apocalyptic image. Andalusī political and religious leaders played an active role in the preservation, creation and transformation of apocalyptic themes. In fact, the apocalyptic dimension of al-Andalus was not limited to an image which existed in various literary genres and which formed part of the imaginary geography of the medieval Islamic world. The apocalypse was a significant part of the political culture of the Muslim West. It is thus important that we extend our perspective here from al-Andalus to encompass the entire region. It was in North Africa where the Fatimids established themselves, and it was here where the likewise messianic movement of the Almohads arose in the twelfth century, and it spread from there to the Iberian Peninsula. Some of the policies the Almohads implemented, most notably the expulsion of non-Muslims, have been explained as reflections of their apocalyptic expectations.<sup>26</sup> They may in fact have seen themselves as part of the unfolding of the events which lead to the last day. Fatimids and Almohads seem to be only the most impressive examples of a popular trend. As Mercedes García-Arenal has shown, this messianism or mahdism was a feature of political culture in the Muslim West throughout its history and the conflict with the Christian northerners may have triggered the underlying apocalyptic expectations. It is difficult to tell to what extent these may have been standard rhetorical features which do not necessarily betray fears of an imminent end of the world. Maribel Fierro, for instance, has pointed out the presence of eschatological terms such as *ḥaṣhr* (i.e., the gathering at the Last Hour) in a letter ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (reg. 912–961) composed in 934 to summon his troops.<sup>27</sup> A solar eclipse which occurred in the same year may have confirmed the urgency of the situation. One can speculate that the advance of the Chris-

25 For the first reference see ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta’rīkh (La Historia)*, ed. Jorge Aguadé (Madrid, 1991), n. 452, trans. 89–90 (quoted according to Fierro, ‘Cosmovisión’, 76); for the second reference al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa’l-ishrāf*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden, 1894; repr. Frankfurt, 1992), 336–337. See also García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 85–86 for Ibn Ḥabīb.

26 For such an explanation of Almohad attitudes to non-Muslims see Maribel Fierro Bello, ‘A Muslim Land without Jews or Christians. Almohad Policies regarding the “Protected People”’, in Tischler and Fidora (eds), *Christlicher Norden, Muslimischer Süden*, 231–247.

27 Maribel Fierro, ‘The Battle of the Ditch (al-Khandaq) of the Cordoban Caliph ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’, in Asad Q. Ahmed, Behnam Sadeghi and Michael Bonner (eds.), *The Islamic Scholarly Tradition. Studies in History, Law, and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allan Cook* (Leiden, 2011), 107–129, 113.

tian armies from the eleventh century onwards also increased such an impression of urgency and that Andalusis in fact believed that the end of the world was near.<sup>28</sup> What remains uncertain is whether the apocalyptic traditions we can find in geographical literature fulfilled any functions within this messianic context. Was Alexander's expedition to the West, for instance, connected with the defense of Muslim rule over Iberia? Or was it rather the case that both the 'miraculous' literary themes and the political and religious ambitions of movements such as the Almo-hads operated against a similar backdrop of Andalusis vulnerability and marginality? The existence of several relevant genres certainly plays a role. Mercedes García-Arenal points out that 'the so-called moral apocalypses can ... be seen as related to another genre of ancient apocalyptic literature, the apocalyptic stories or literal predictions of what will occur at the end of all time.'<sup>29</sup> How these themes, literary genres and religious traditions were related, however, is the question which is difficult to answer.

Another question which is difficult to answer is whether Easterners saw any connection between the literary traditions around al-Andalus and its current inhabitants. For centuries, numerous Andalusis visited Egypt, often on their way somewhere else. Did the locals ask them about the wonders described in geographical texts? Did they suspect they had anything to do with the Andalusis who were going to come across the sea and fight them? And what did they make of the mahdism which modern historians suggest is so characteristic of the West? A rare response to the phenomenon comes from the scholar Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) who attacked Western Sufis for their messianic claims which he associated with Christianity, and which others identified as characteristic of Shiism.<sup>30</sup> He did not see them as a sign of the apocalypse though.

## Conclusion

Within the Islamic apocalyptic tradition, Andalusis constitute a curious case which allows interesting insights into the relationship between literary traditions and politico-religious movements. They were not an ethnic community with their own lan-

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**28** David Cook suggests that this was the case for the historian al-Qurtūbī (d. 1272) who witnessed the advance of the *reconquistadores* and, albeit not directly, the Mongol conquest of Baghdad. 'Early Islamic and Classical Sunni and Shi'ite Apocalyptic Movements', in Catherine Wessinger (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism* (Oxford, 2011), 267–283, 270.

**29** García-Arenal, *Messinism and Puritanical Reform*, 14. See also Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia*, 82, for differences between historiographical and geographical writing.

**30** See my 'The *Muḥaqqiq* as Mahdi? Ibn Sab'īn and Mahdism among Andalusian Mystics in the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Centuries', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen* (Berlin, 2008), 313–337, and 'Niffārī: a Sufi Mahdi of the Fourth/Tenth Century?', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Antichrist. Konstruktionen von Feindbildern* (Berlin, 2010), 39–67.

guage, but – like Syrians and Egyptians – they were defined by their native region and the political and sectarian tendencies which prevailed there. Throughout its history, al-Andalus was marginal and this marginality defined its people and the role they played in accounts of the last day. At the same time, Andalusis were actively involved in creating and perpetuating such apocalyptic traditions. They perpetuated them as literary traditions, but they also made apocalyptic expectations an important feature of their political culture. It may be naïve to ask whether medieval people actually believed the world was going to end soon given the frequency of such predictions. It becomes even more difficult to address such a question if we look at a larger and more diverse body of evidence.



David Cook

# The Image of the Turk in Classical and Modern Muslim Apocalyptic Literature

## Introduction and classical materials

Some of the earliest descriptions of the Turks in Arabic literature are located within the apocalyptic heritage of classical Islam (and that of eastern Christianity as well). Both Muslims and Christians were very concerned with placing the Turks within the proper genealogical framework, usually employing a variation of the Table of Nations located in Genesis 10. Thus they are said to be descendants of Noah's third son, Jafeth, who is also the ancestor of the Slavs and other peoples dwelling to the north of the lands of Islam, while Arabs are descendants of the eldest son, Shem.<sup>1</sup> It is clear by this identification that the Turks are being stamped as barbarians, along with most of the other northerners. Other peoples the Arabs came to respect, such as the Persians and the Byzantine Greeks, eventually also became "descendants of Shem" – clearly an attempt to confer upon them the rank of "civilized."

However, more importantly for the apocalyptic literature, the Turks were closely identified with the monstrous peoples of Gog and Magog (mentioned in Gen. 10 and Ezekiel 38–39). According to the Qur'an 18:94 Dhu al-Qarnayn or Alexander the Great built a barrier to keep these peoples penned into the lands of the east; they will only be freed by God to destroy the world at the end of time. Reading the Christian apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (from approx. 680) the Turks are listed as one of the 24 tribes of Gog and Magog.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the other tribes of Gog and Magog trapped behind this barrier, the Turks are not said to be confined. They were out raiding while Alexander built the barrier and could not rejoin their fellow Gog and Magogians after it was built; hence they are free to roam and raid the earth before the release of the other tribesmen. The activities of the Turks are thus something of a precursor to the future destruction to be wrecked upon the world by Gog and Magog.

This interpretation of the function of the Turks and their place within God's genealogical and eschatological framework was widely accepted by Muslims, Christians and Jews. Rav Sa'dia Gaon (d. 936), for example, in his translation of the Table of Nations in Genesis into Judeo-Arabic, changes one of the names of the descendants of Jafeth to "the Turks and Magog;" associating the Turks with the peoples of Gog and Magog. Sa'dia expands extensively upon this interpretation in his com-

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1 See Ibn Wahb al-Qurashi, *Jami'*, i, p. 64 (no. 25); Ibn Qutayba, *Fadl al-'Arab*, p. 50; al-Mas'udi, *Muruj*, ii, p. 33; idem, *Akhbar al-zaman*, pp. 76–77; al-Isfahani, *Aghani*, i, p. 17; Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-buldan*, i, p. 266; Muqatil, *Tafsir*, iii, p. 610, iv, pp. 452–453; and al-Majlisi, *Bihar*, xi, p. 5.

2 Pseudo-Methodius, p. 134.

mentary on the book of Daniel.<sup>3</sup> The Judeo-Persian translation of Genesis (both Gen. 10, 14:1) and that of the book of Ezekiel make this change as well; it would be interesting to know what the as yet unpublished Judeo-Persian *tafsir* to Ezekiel would add to this picture.<sup>4</sup> The early Muslim apocalypticist Nu‘aym b. Hammad al-Marwazi (d. 844) actually cites in part the list of Turkish tribes mentioned previously by Pseudo-Methodius in his description of Gog and Magog.<sup>5</sup>

One of the standard traditions describing the Turks appears in the early collection of Nu‘aym:

The Hour will not arrive until you fight the Turks, red of face, with small eyes, flat noses, as if their faces were beaten shields.<sup>6</sup>

Other versions read:

The Hour will not arrive until you (the Muslims) fight a group with small eyes, wide faces, as if their eyes were the pupils of locust, as if their faces were beaten shields, wearing shoes made of hair, taking up leather shields until they fasten their horses on a palm tree [in Iraq].<sup>7</sup>

Other traditions add details to this description, such as having ruddy faces and small noses.<sup>8</sup> Most of these descriptions are pejorative in nature, and some such as “faces like beaten shields” (*al-mijann al-mutraqa*) are frequently used as euphemisms for Turks by authors or narrators who do not wish to state outright their dislike of Turks. Indeed many of the early apocalyptic descriptions of the Turks, from the ninth and tenth centuries well before the Seljuq conquest in eleventh century, describe the end-times invasions of these nomadic warriors. It seems that the Turkish invasions were designed to remind the believers of the much more destructive invasions of Gog and Magog at the end of the world.

According to the apocalyptic accounts, most of the lands east of the Euphrates will be devastated by them before the end of the world. Again, from the collection of Nu‘aym:

The Turks will descend upon Amad, and will drink from the Euphrates and the Tigris, expanding over the Jazira [central Iraq], while the people of Islam are in confusion, not able to do anything

<sup>3</sup> See Sa‘dia Gaon, *Tafsir al-taj*, commentary Gen. 10:2 (Gomer = al-turk), note that Tubal is glossed as al-sin (Chinese).

<sup>4</sup> See Herbert Paper, *A Judeo-Persian Pentateuch*, pp. 6–7 (Gomer = Turkha).

<sup>5</sup> Nu‘aym, pp. 359–360.

<sup>6</sup> Nu‘aym, p. 415.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by al-Hindi, xiv, p. 206 (no. 38407).

<sup>8</sup> Nu‘aym, pp. 413–414; al-Hindi, xiv, pp. 205–206 (nos. 38407), 571 (no. 39630); al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan*, ix, pp. 175–176; Ibn Abi Shayba, xv, p. 175 (no. 19430); al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, iii, p. 337 (no. 2312); al-Baghawi, *Sharh*, xv, pp. 36–37; Ibn al-Athir, *Jami‘*, xi, pp. 72–73; al-Tabarani, *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, i, p. 87 (no. 120); ‘Abd al-Razzaq, xi, p. 380 (no. 20798); and al-Haythami, vii, pp. 310–313.

to them. God will send a weighty snow, in which there will be frost with a bitter freezing wind, and suddenly they will take shelter, and stay that way for a number of days. Then the commander of the people of Islam will rise among the people and say: O people, is there not a group who will give themselves to God, seeing what these people [the Turks] have done? Ten horsemen will be deputized to cross over to them, when they were taking shelter, and will return saying: God has caused them to perish, has been sufficient for them, and all who are around them have perished.<sup>9</sup>

There are frequent descriptions of rape and desecration of mosques on the part of these Turks.<sup>10</sup> The Christian apocalypse of Bahira, probably dating from the 9th cen., says when describing the invasions of the end of the world, “the Turks, who are like wolves, will come [to attack].”<sup>11</sup> Historically it is difficult to ascribe these depredations to anything other than the imagination of the apocalyptic writers, as the Turks during this period, while occasionally achieving political and military authority in the name of the ‘Abbasid caliph, were usually not free agents and not present in large enough numbers to wreck the destruction ascribed to them in the texts.

Uniformly the Turks of this period are described in the apocalyptic literature as non-Muslims, which again was not the case for the most part. Turkish slaves were brought in great numbers to the Muslim world by the caliphs of the ninth century and turned into soldiers. They were, however, converted to Islam previous to their military instruction – a system which persisted for generations and found its fullest expression during the Mamluk period in Egypt (1250 – 1517). The supposed irreligiosity of the Turks is exemplified in several ways. First, they are usually grouped together with the Byzantines as the deadly foes of Islam, and the apocalyptists predict that both of these unlikely allies will attack the Muslims in tandem. However, it is unclear to what extent the Byzantines and their Turkish allies will be cooperating as allies. In the tradition cited above, one should note that while the Muslims are said to fight the Turks before the end of the world, there is nothing said at all about who will be victorious. No indication is given in any classical tradition during this early period that the Muslims will defeat the Turks on the field of battle. The second way in which their irreligiosity is shown is that the Turks along with the Jews and other despised groups, will constitute the bulk of the followers of the Dajjal, the Muslim Antichrist.<sup>12</sup>

However, not all of the traditions dealing with the Turks in classical Muslim apocalyptic literature are negative. The Turks are also said to be the agents of God in judgment upon the Muslims for their evil:

God most high says: ‘When My servants have disgraced My sanctity, declared lawful the things prohibited by Me, [and] broken My commandments, then I gave them into the hands of an army

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<sup>9</sup> Nu‘aym, p. 412.

<sup>10</sup> Nu‘aym, p. 412, 413.

<sup>11</sup> Gottheil, “A Christian Bahira legend,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 14 (1898), p. 230 (Syriac).

<sup>12</sup> See David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, p. 99 note 40.



from the east called the Turks. They are My horsemen, and take vengeance on those who rebel against Me. I have removed mercy from their hearts: they take no pity on those who weep, and do not answer those who complain, killing the fathers and the mothers, the sons and the daughters'...<sup>13</sup>

Obviously according to this viewpoint, while the Turks are a destructive force, they are also a purifying one working the will of God. Among the more positive characterizations of the Turks, Shu'ayb b. Salih, one of the most prominent followers of the Mahdi, the messianic figure, is probably meant to be a Turk. The description given of him is that of a short man, with minimal facial hair, who is from either the area of Khotan or Samarqand. Shu'ayb figures very prominently in the future battles between the Mahdi and the Syrian Sufyani, and is the former's general and agent. It is also interesting that the Iraqi apocalyptic collector Ibn al-Munadi (d. 336/947–948), whose *Kitab al-malahim* is the most comprehensive of all Iraqi early collections, barely mentions the Turks. This is all the more perplexing given the fact that the author's affinities are most likely Shi'ite, and that Iraq during his lifetime was not dominated politically by the Turks.

In other Sybilline traditions the future of the Turks seems to be more of vengeance because of Muslim conquests:

The Byzantines will take what was taken from them and more, meaning the coast [of Syria] and in that area, the Turks will take what was taken from them, meaning Kashgar and Transoxiana, the Qufs will take what was taken from them, meaning Tiflis and that area, the Qulqul<sup>14</sup> will take what was taken from them...<sup>15</sup>

This type of apocalypse usually describes a process of rolling back the early conquests of the Muslim Arabs. According to the perception of the writer, the Turks were the legitimate possessors of the area of Transoxiana, and would in the future come to control it once again. There does not seem to be any negative feeling associated with this reconquest; indeed it seems to be entirely justified, although what the ultimate purpose of it inside the apocalyptic scheme is unclear. It should also

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<sup>13</sup> al-Sulami, pp. 117–118 (no. 86).

<sup>14</sup> Vocalization is uncertain, but this could be a people inhabiting the area of Kuhistan: Dih-Khuda'i, Lughat-i nama, XXX, p. 442.

<sup>15</sup> al-Majlisi, xli, p. 321 (possibly the fulan here is same as the zindiql from Qazwin, who fills the area of the Jibal with fear in al-Majlisi, lii, p. 212–213; and al-Hurr al-'Amili, vii, pp. 408–409). On p. 319: "From among them is the youth with the yellow thighs whose name is Ahmad. The munadi will cry out: The wounded are preferred to the killed! and the men are [will be?] buried. The Hind will overcome the Sind, the Qufs will overcome the Sa'ir, the Copts will overcome the edges of Egypt, the Andalus [= Vandals, probably Spanish Christians] will overcome the edges of Ifriqiya, the Ethiopians will overcome the Yemen, the Turks will overcome Khurasan, the Byzantines will overcome Syria, the people of Armenia will overcome Armenia, and the sarikh will shout in Iraq: The veil is rent, the virgin is ravished, and the flag of the cursed Dajjal will appear, and then he described the appearance of the Qa'im."

be noted that this apocalypse is from a very late source, and so it is unclear to what extent its subject material is dependent upon earlier apocalypses.

## Mamluk and Ottoman apocalyptic

A fairly major change gradually comes over Muslim apocalyptic literature with reference to the Turks after the Mongol invasions. Previously, as we have noted above, the general attitude was that the Turks represented a barbarian, non-Muslim invasion and were hostile. With the advent of the Mongols, a much more plausible candidate for the position of Gog and Magog presented itself. One can dispute the extent of the destruction wrecked by the Mongols upon the Muslim world – whether millions of people were really killed and so much of the area of Transoxiana and Iran was really devastated, as the sources say. However, one cannot dispute the universal loathing of Muslim writers, with the exception of those in the pay of the Il-Khanid empire, towards the Mongols. This feeling is shared by apocalyptic writers. While much of the above apocalyptic writing concerning the Turks during the first six centuries of Islam shows a noticeable time-lag between the reality projected in the texts and what we know of Turks from historical and literary sources, prophecies were immediately circulated about the Mongols. Their identification with Gog and Magog promptly appears in contemporary apocalyptic writings, history books such as Minhaj al-Din al-Juzjani's (d. 1260) *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* and Ibn Kathir's (d. 1378) *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya* – both of which have a strong apocalyptic bent – and *tafsir* literature. For example, the Spanish Qur'anic commentator and apocalyptic writer al-Qurtubi (d. 1272) makes the Mongol = Gog and Magog identification no more than ten years after the destruction of Baghdad.

The negative focus of the apocalyptic material was deflected from the Turks by virtue of the fact that they were so obviously the protectors and aggrandizers of Islam during this period; also probably because Turks themselves were writing *tafsirs* and books on apocalyptic traditions. For these reasons, we see a reinterpretation of some of the above material, and a neglect of that which could not be easily explained. As an example of reinterpretation, Ibn al-Zubayr al-Thaqafi (d. 1295–1296), states concerning Gog and Magog that they will attack firstly “...the people of Khurasan, the Turks, the Daylamites, and the Quttan, who are next to the barrier [of Gog and Magog, mentioned in Qur'an 18:94].”<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Ibn al-Zubayr, although he leaves out the name “Turk” when citing the traditions about them, overlays their history with that of the Mongols apocalyptic significance. He states that they will attack Baghdad, and destroy it, then advance to Damascus, from which its people will flee, whereupon the Turks will be defeated by the Egyptians, and then expelled from Syria

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<sup>16</sup> Ibn al-Zubayr al-Thaqafi, *Kitab ta'yin al-awan wa-l-makan li-l-nasr al-maw'ud akhir al-zaman*, p. 94 (on p. 96 he emphasizes that the Turks are Muslims).

back to Iraq.<sup>17</sup> All of this account is historically in accord with the attack of Hulegu upon the Mamluks, which led to the former's defeat at 'Ayn Jalut in 1260.

Ibn Kathir, writing a half a century later in his highly influential book on the end of the world, *al-Nihaya fi al-fitan wa-l-malahim*, does not mention any of the anti-Turkish traditions. Other prominent collections such as al-Qurtubi's (d. 1272) *al-Tadhkira fi ahwal al-mawta* and al-Barzanji's (d. 1691) *al-Isha'a li-ashrat al-sa'a* mention only a few (just "the Hour shall not arrive until the Muslims fight the Turks..."). For example, al-Barzanji, covering the selection of anti-Turk traditions, focuses them entirely upon the Mongols by citing the tradition "the Hour shall not arrive until the Muslims fight the Turks..." with the addition of "and they are the Mongols."<sup>18</sup> The Ottoman Qur'anic commentator Isma'il Haqqi al-Brusawi (d. 1724–1725), on Qur'an 18:94 denies the Noahite genealogy of Yajuj and Majuj altogether, and states that they came from seed spilled from Adam in a wet dream.<sup>19</sup> Most probably this creative interpretation was designed to remove Gog and Magog entirely from the human equation and to thus deny the possibility that they could be Turks.

However, in apocalyptic writings from Muslim India we still find a number of these traditions being cited or even expanded upon during this period. For example, the great encyclopedaist of *hadith*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in his *Kanz al-'ummal*, cites a number of traditions describing the Turks as the followers of the Dajjal. In the later commentary on the *Sunan* of Abu Da'ud by the Indian Muslim al-Mubarakpuri (19<sup>th</sup> century) we find that Uzbeks are added to the list of the Dajjal's followers as well.<sup>20</sup> Some of the conquests of the messianic period are directed against the Turks; for example the 17th century apocalyptic writer al-Saffarini records unique traditions describing the Mahdi plundering the cities of the Turks and bringing the kings of the Turks back to the lands of Islam in chains,<sup>21</sup> a punishment usually reserved for pagan enemies of Islam.

The relative disappearance of anti-Turkish traditions among Sunni Muslims, however, was countered by an exaggerated hostility among Shi'ite writers, as the Shi'ite Safavid empire vied with the Turkish Ottomans for mastery during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Earlier, Shi'ite apocalyptic writers and commentators do not expand upon the position of the Turks at the end of the world. From Shi'ite writers during the 'Abbasid, Buwayhid and Seljuq periods we occasionally find the Turks mentioned, but always without any real detail; the latter are simply perceived to be one of the groups in the society, but not a major or a malevolent one. By the time of al-Majlisi (d. 1700), we find comments such as "Turks are those

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 103–104.

<sup>18</sup> al-Barzanji, *Isha'a*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Bursawi, *Tafsir ruh al-bayan*, v, pp. 297–298.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri, vi, p. 411.

<sup>21</sup> al-Saffarini, *Ahwal yawm al-qiyama*, p. 19.

who stand between you and your faith,”<sup>22</sup> and rewards offered to those Shi‘ites who will fight the Turks under the future command of the Mahdi. These people are said to be the best of all the Shi‘a.<sup>23</sup> However, this attitude among Shi‘ites does not persist beyond the Safavid period.

## Modern perceptions of the Turk and of Turkey

As we have seen in the first section of this paper, classical Muslim apocalyptic literature produced a large quantity of anti-Turk traditions and interpretations. These were watered down somewhat during the centuries of Ottoman rule; however, as Arab Muslims became independent there was a reservoir of ill-feeling toward the Turks. However, for the most part this did not seep into apocalyptic literature until the 1990 s and early 2000 s. As the modern state of Turkey turned more and more to the west, and concluded alliances with Israel during the 1980 s and 1990 s, various conspiratorial interpretations of Turkish history became more and more prevalent in the Arabic language-apocalyptic literature, and apocalyptic writers began to sift through the tradition for prophecies hostile to the Turks.

Constantinople came under the rule of the atheist Mustafa Ataturk, a creature of Zionism and imperialism, and affairs in Turkey have gone from bad to worse, until they have made a pact with the Jews, opened their land to them and fallen in love with them.<sup>24</sup>

One of the expressions of this hostility has been the reassessment of the Turkish Muslim conquest of Constantinople in 1453. This is surprising at first glance, because this victory, which brought the ancient Christian Byzantine empire to a close, is prophesied in the earliest Muslim apocalyptic literature and was one of the primary goals of the Muslim apocalyptic writers of the seventh and eighth centuries. The problem is that, according to the most common time-table, the appearance of the Dajjal (the Muslim Antichrist) is supposed to happen seven years after the fall of Constantinople.<sup>25</sup> As it is obvious that the Dajjal did not appear in 1460, there must be something wrong. For centuries, Muslim apocalyptic writers have continued to cite traditions containing this prophesy without making any attempt to reconcile it with the fact of the Ottoman conquest.

Arab Muslim apocalyptic writers of the 1990 s, who were usually profoundly dissatisfied with the direction taken by Turkey, made an effort to explain this problem. The explanation chosen was that the Turks are not Muslims at all, and therefore, Constantinople has yet to be “conquered” by the Muslims! Thus, Jamal al-Din, a popular Egyptian apocalyptic writer, says “... the Messenger of God said truly: ‘You will

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<sup>22</sup> al-Majlisi, c, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., ii, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Tawila, *Masih al-Dajjal*, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> Cook, *Studies*, pp. 103–104.

conquer Constantinople...’ Yes, they deserve a conquest.”<sup>26</sup> He was backed up by many others. It is only fair to add that, although this opinion is the one put forth by most of the apocalyptic writers of the 1990 s, others have proposed an alternative solution to the problem: the Constantinople of the Prophetic tradition is really Rome, which has of course, not yet been conquered by Muslims. Even in the most explicit of the current rash of apocalyptic scenarios the actual conquest of modern-day Turkey is not described, unlike the graphic and bloody descriptions of future conquests of Israel, Europe and the United States. Apparently, according to these writers the apocalyptic war with the Turks will be one of liberation rather than of extermination.

All-in-all the feeling of contemporary Muslim apocalyptic writers have made an enormous shift during the recent past vis-a-vis Turks. The positive accomplishments of Turks in Muslim history overall, including the defense of Islam against the Mongols and the glory of the Ottoman empire are seldom recalled. If these accomplishments are mentioned, they are usually accompanied by a conspiratorial commentary emphasizing the role of the Shabbatai Zvi sect of the Donmeh, which is held to have penetrated the Ottoman state at the highest levels for its nefarious purposes. Most of the sultans of the later part of the Ottoman empire (from the 1700 s onward) and all leaders of modern Turkey are said to be secret Jews. It would be interesting to see as a result of the more recent positive attitudes of Arab Muslims towards Turkey whether these hostile interpretations of Turks at the end of the world will be modified, and how in that case will the writers deal with the traditions about the conquest of Constantinople at that time.

## Conclusions

There is a sizable quantity of material about Turks in Muslim apocalyptic literature. For the most part that of the first period, until the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, is characterized by respect for the military prowess of the Turks. It is also uncertain as to their ultimate loyalty towards the cause of Islam and fearful of its unrestrained nature (from their point of view). Thus, while the Turks were useful in fighting the Byzantine enemy, the apocalypticist has not lost sight of the fact that there is no armed force in the lands of Islam to forbid the Turks from doing what they want to the populace after the Byzantines are defeated. It is clear that the image of the Turk improved greatly as the Seljuq Turkish dynasty proved its loyalty to Sunni Islam, and as the Mamluk Turks defend Islam from the Mongols. However, the Muslim apocalypticist was left in something of a quandary by these actions which seem to be contradictory to the image of the Turks established in the first and earliest period of the genre. For this reason, the second period is characterized by a great

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<sup>26</sup> Jamal al-Din, ‘Umr ummat al-islam, p. 74, compare idem, Qawl, pp. 113–114; Bayumi, ‘Alamat yawm al-qiyama al-kubra, p. 27; al-Faqir, Thalatha, pp. 68–69; ‘Arif, Nihaya, p. 191; idem, Dajjal, pp. 99–100; Salim, Asrar, pp. 120–121; and ‘Abd al-Hakim, Mahdi, p. 196, idem, Harb, pp. 23–26.

deal of commentary and effort to reinterpret certain popular traditions or to downplay and ignore ones which resisted reinterpretation. This effort shows the Muslim apocalypticist at his best: the accurate weathervane of popular opinion.

There is no question but that anti-Turkish traditions were not popular during the Ottoman period. On the other hand, many of these traditions were adopted into Shi'ite collections under the patronage of the Safavids. Until this time, Shi'ites had not noticed Turks very much in their apocalyptic literature; henceforward there was now an extensive anti-Turkish tradition to be found, most of it cited from Sunni sources. In the third period, the contemporary situation, conspiracy theories abound in Muslim literature. Many of these conspiracy theories have been directed at Turks, who since the foundation of modern Turkey have been on a generally pro-western course, and have apparently turned away from their Muslim heritage (at least until the very recent past). Therefore, it is hardly surprising that much of the negative apocalyptic heritage of the first period of Muslim apocalyptic literature has been re-dredged up and called into service by elements which would like to see Turkey change course and rejoin the Arabic-speaking Muslim world.

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## **V Protestantische Lesarten / Protestant Variants**



Pavĺína Cermanov

## Gog and Magog: Using Concepts of Apocalyptic Enemies in the Hussite era

Little was certain about Gog and Magog in the Middle Ages. It was generally agreed that they were distant, evil and inhuman. Interpretations of Gog and Magog pointed both to a real people, however it may have been ethically defined, to which they assigned geographical coordinates in the then horizon of the world, and an image of apocalyptic destroyers announcing the fulfilment of history. Medieval society imbued their descriptions with its fears and at the same time, its boundaries. The story of Gog and Magog was a story of the expectation of a terrible ravaging army which would augur the end of history, and the ultimate enemy of the Christian world, into which society's anxieties and fears were projected. At the same time, it was a story of defining oneself vis--vis the unknown, determining what was generally right and what was dangerous and unacceptable. The characteristics ascribed to the Gog and Magog people therefore included cannibalism, infanticide, sexual perversion, and lack of restraint. Gog and Magog represented throughout the Middle Ages a metaphor of danger, an enemy of the Christian world, at first mainly external, then, as the church reform movement gathered strength, an internal threat. In the last case they frequently moved from the original periphery of the land to the centre of Christian society.

Gog and Magog, enemy people which will, according to the apocalyptic prophecies, destroy the world alongside Antichrist in the last moments of history, posed a thorny interpretation problem. Even the medieval authors often failed to grasp and name them unambiguously. In the sources the notions of Gog and Magog moved on a thin borderline between reality and an allegorical construct. As part of the biblical text Gog and Magog were subjected to classic exegetic techniques and hermeneutic interpretations. In their notions of the world system they arrived to areas on the geographic periphery, which lay at the greatest distance from the centre of the world and the main scene of the history of salvation, inhabited by diverse monsters.<sup>1</sup> Texts of medieval travellers, but also theologians, associated them with

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1 John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, Cambridge – London 1981, p. 37. Of the Czech scholars who paid attention to human monsters in the medieval sources see for example Jana Rozehnalov, *Lidsk monstra ve stedovekch pramenech. Promeny evropskho vztahu k "jinmu"*, in: *Nboenstv a telo*, eds. Iva Dolealov – Eleonra Hamar – Lubo Belka, Brno 2006, pp. 95 – 108; J. Rozehnalov, *Za obzory dobovho poznn. Tradice a empirie ve stedovekch zprvch o Asii*, in: *Frantiknstv v kontaktech s jinm a cizm*, ed. Petr Hlavcek, Praha 2009, p. 48 – 52. Gog and Magog often lived in immediate vicinity of human monsters. Alexandrian Legends, Pseudo-Methodius or the so-called *Epistula Prudenti viro* traditionally included among the twenty two nations and kings enclosed in the Caspian Mountains Gog and Magog. They encountered Kynocephalos, a nation with a dog's head, Sirens and monopods, a people with one leg only. Gog and Magog were associated in *Epistula prudenti viro* with the Mongols (Tatars), sent in the last phase of

a number of nations and people – the Huns, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, Magyars, Scythians, Khazars, Jews, and others.<sup>2</sup>

From the late antiquity the Gog and Magog tribes were associated with Alexander the Great and his Eastern campaign. In the first century after Christ Titus Flavius Josephus noted in his *History of the Jewish War* that Alexander closed with an iron gate a mountain pass to stop Scythians passing through it and endangering the civilised world. The motif of the enclosed nations gradually became an important element of the medieval Alexandrian legend, and Alexander's imprisonment of "unclean nations in the far north"<sup>3</sup> became an integral part of the apocalyptic prophecies from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This was due to a large degree to *Revelationes* of the so-called Pseudo-Methodius,<sup>4</sup> originally written in Syriack then translated into Greek and afterwards Latin, a text that ranked among the most influential prophetic writings of the Middle Ages, after the biblical books, of course.

Pseudo-Methodius brought the characteristic of nations enclosed in the mountains which became a defining description for the following centuries. The dominant feature is cannibalism, showing the outright perversity and danger posed by this people. He described the unclean nations imprisoned by Alexander behind a gate of gold between two mountains as descendants of the biblical tribe of Japheth,<sup>5</sup> "who frighten the whole world, eat human flesh and drink blood of beasts as if it was water. They also eat all that is abhorrent and unclean, such as dogs, mice, snakes, scorpions and everything that crawls on the ground. They do not hesitate to eat unborn

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human history to punish mankind for its sins, *Epistola Prudenti viro*, ed. Charles Burnett, in: Ch. Burnett, An Apocryphal Letter from the Arabic Philosopher Al-Kindi to Theodore, Frederick II's Astrologer, concerning Gog and Magog, the Enclosed Nations, and the Scourge of the Mongols, *Viator* 15, 1984, p. 166. Similarly cf. *Mirabilia mundi*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 2035, fol. 46v–49v, where is an identical enumeration.

<sup>2</sup> Their enumeration is brought in what is today a classic and fundamental work on the topic Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Enclosed Nations*, Cambridge 1932, pp. 12–14.

<sup>3</sup> The north was associated in the Middle Ages with cold and dark, and in the Christian tradition it was also regarded as the place of the reprobate, cf. *Hugo de Sancto Victore, Libellus de formatione archæ*, CCCM 176, ed. P. Sicard, Turnhout 2001, cap. 11, p. 157. Hugo of St Victor placed the cursed nations Gog and Magog on an island in the north of Asia, in the proximity of "Amazonia". Cf. Patrick Gautier Dalché, *La "Descriptio mappae mundi" de Hugues de Saint-Victor: texte inédit avec introduction et commentaire*, Paris 1988, pp. 82–83. For details of the northern areas on medieval maps see Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae. Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*, Hannover 1992, pp. 167–171.

<sup>4</sup> For textual relations between Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Kallisten's version of the Alexandrian theme cf. Ernst Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, Halle 1898, pp. 34–35. The new edition of Pseudo-Methodius in: *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, eds. W. J. Aerts und G. A. A. Kortekaas, Bd.1: Einleitung, Texte, Indices Locorum et Nominum; Löwen 1998 (Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium 569= Subsidia 97).

<sup>5</sup> Magog appears in the Bible for the first time as one of the sons of Japheth, son of Noah. In later expositions he was regarded as the forefather of all the pagan, i.e. non-Jewish nations.

*babies cut out of their mothers' wombs, and take children away from their mothers to eat them.*"<sup>6</sup>

In a similar vein Gog and Magog were described on medieval maps of the world which incorporated spatial visualisations of the medieval cosmology and theology, depicting the history of salvation in a geographically defined space. World maps were frequently attributed the same degree of weight and authority as the texts of the Church Fathers.<sup>7</sup> The Ebstorf map of the world (1234) shows both nations in the northern hemisphere enclosed behind a wall near the Caspian Sea. An inscription identifying the two drawn figures reads that they are the unclean nations of Gog and Magog, servants of Antichrist, who eat human flesh and drink human blood, enclosed by Alexander.<sup>8</sup> A similar scene as on the Ebstorf map, two figures living on human flesh, is found on the Hereford map, though there is some confusion and combination of the existing motifs. From the explanatory inscription we learn that they are Esseans from Scythia who do not bury their dead relatives but eat them during a ceremony. It can be added here that this custom was recorded in another context and described by John Mandeville in his travelogue.<sup>9</sup> On the edge of the map they are depicted on the island of Terraconta<sup>10</sup> "*Turks (Turchi) from the generation of Gog and Magog*", described as unclean barbarians who eat the flesh of children and unborn babies. We find the Caspian mountains (Caucasus) on the Hereford map without further explanation in the east, not far from the earthly paradise.<sup>11</sup>

In the Middle Ages also the problematic approach to the Jews in society was projected into the image of Gog and Magog. Jews appeared in the traditional stories about Antichrist as his loyal allies and gradually they came to be directly identified

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6 Pseudo-Methodius, Sancti Methodii episcopi Paterensis Sermo de regnum Cantium et in novissimis temporibus certa demonstratio, in: *Sibyllinische Texte*, pp. 72–73.

7 *Mappae mundi* as a source of equal value as the works of Saint Augustine or Isidor of Seville is mentioned in *Historia orientalis* by Jacques de Vitry, for example. On this theme cf. J.B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races*, p. 42.

8 *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte. Kommentierte Neuauflage in zwei Bänden*, ed. Hartmut Kugler, Berlin 2007, Bd. I, p. 58–59, Bd. II, p. 105. For the Ebstorf map cf. Ann-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae. Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*, Hannover 1992, p. 91–93. The relation between medieval cartography and theology Felicitas Schmieder, *Edges of the World – Edges of Time*, in: Gerhard Jaritz u. a. (ed.), *The Edges of the Medieval World*, Budapest 2009, 4–5.

9 *Cestopis tzv. Mandevilla*, ed. František Šimek, Praha 1963, pp. 114–115.

10 Island "Tarracanta" in the northern parts of the world was portrayed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Heinrich of Mainz on his map, which was drawn as "illustration" for the work *Imago Mundi* by Honorius of Autun, one of the most prolific authors of that time. His description of the land became, along with Isidor's *Etymologies*, the fundamental work of its kind. Honorius places Gog and Magog quite traditionally in the context of Alexander the Great and the areas around the Caspian Sea, here made part of India. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago Mundi*, ed. Valerie I. J. Flint, Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age 49, 1982, p. 55.

11 Scott D. Westrem, *The Hereford map. A Transcription and Translation of the Legends with Commentary*, Turnhout 2001, p. 101, 137.



with the Gog and Magog tribes. Doubtless the dissemination of the outlined model was due to a large extent to Jacques of Vitry, who listed in his *Historia orientalis* tribes of Jewish origin and included those enclosed by Alexander in the Caspian mountains. Thence would they set forth and return with Antichrist to the Holy Land. The people of Gog and Magog, described immediately afterwards in terms of the traditional motifs of perverse eating habits, took up a position in their close vicinity, though separately.<sup>12</sup> An important step on the way to the identification of the two groups was the well-known fictitious *Letter of Prester John*, addressed before 1165 to European rulers, the Byzantine emperor and the pope.<sup>13</sup> In the first Latin versions of this letter ten Israeli tribes figure as subjects of Prester John living behind a stone river.<sup>14</sup> The description of the tribes of Gog and Magog is directly linked to Pseudo-Methodius and his characteristic of “unclean” cannibal nations. In the Latin version of this letter the apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog have not yet merged with the Jewish tribes, but in later, especially German language versions, the groups overlapped each other completely. The Jews thus moved to the position of the greatest apocalyptic threat and destroyers of the world.<sup>15</sup> The outlined combination of the individual apocalyptic narratives, the Alexandrian stories and their linkage to the legend about the ten lost Israelite tribes were conserved for a long time by widespread and popular compendia of knowledge, such as *Historia scholastica* by Petrus Comestor, which ranked among the most frequently used works of its type. During the 13<sup>th</sup> century the story of the ultimate threat to Christendom was enriched with various details, Queen Amazonia appeared in it as ruler over the nations of Gog and Magog,<sup>16</sup> a conspiracy theory was developed with clearer outlines, according to which the Jews expected with hope that the enclosed nations would come to Jerusalem with Antichrist as their Messiah before the end of the world, and together with him would destroy the entire Christian church. In this form the narration of the people

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**12** Jacques de Vitry, *Histoire orientale. Historia orientalis*, ed. Jean Donnadieu, Turnhout 2008, cap. LXXII, p. 328. The Gog and Magog people, separate but in the immediate neighbourhood of the other Jewish tribes, also appeared on some maps. A case in point from a later period is the so-called *Geneva Sallust map*, which does not include profuse detail but does describe both Bohemia and Prague. In the area to which the legend of the enclosed nations applied it is possible to find a caption saying that here are “Magogi. Gogi. Iudei inclusi”. Konrad Miller, *Mappae Mundi. Die ältesten Weltkarten*, Bd. III, Stuttgart 1895, p. 142. A summary of the cartographic sources is given by Ulrich Knefelkamp, *Die Suche nach dem Reich des Priesterkönigs Johannes. Dargestellt anhand von Reiseberichten und anderen ethnographischen Quellen des 12. bis 17. Jahrhunderts*, Gelsenkirchen 1986, pp. 96–100.

**13** The discussion about the form and language versions of the letter is summarised by Jean Delumeau, *Dějiny Ráje. Zahrada rozkoše*, Praha 2003, pp. 82–83.

**14** For the fusion of the two myths Jean Richard, *L'Extrême-Orient légendaire au Moyen Age: Roi David et Prêtre Jean*, *Annales d'Ethiopie* 2, 1957, pp. 228–229, here p. 236.

**15** For details of this topic see Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews. Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age 1200–1600*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1995.

**16** For the geographical fusion of the two elements see David Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden. Vorstellungen und Fremdheitskategorien bei Rimbart, Tietmar von Merseburg, Adam von Bremen und Helmold von Bosau*, Berlin 2005, p. 310–311, 316–317.

Gog and Magog also appeared in *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, which became one of the principal sources of knowledge for the late medieval adaptations of Antichrist's life, including a pictorial Antichrist cycle, which was part of the richly illuminated Velislav Bible, created at the Prague court after the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

The apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog equally became a natural part of the projected world of medieval travel books. A case in point is a tract by the so-called John of Mandeville.<sup>18</sup> When the author of this travel compilation reached in his descriptions the Caspian Sea, he had knowledge whose scope and information content corresponded to the present tradition.<sup>19</sup> In the mountains by the Caspian Sea John Mandeville sought the ten Israelite tribes enclosed there by Alexander to protect the surrounding countries. There the Jews would remain under the rule of Queen Amazonia until the last events of the world, and according to their own prophecies, they would come out alongside Antichrist, liberate all their brothers in the faith from the pagan and Christian power, and slay all those who would not accept the Jewish faith. This story appeared in a Czech translation of Mandeville, which was made at the behest of King Václav IV by Vavřinec of Březová, known in particular as the author of the *Hussite Chronicle*: “those Jews are to come out and liberate the Jews from the clutches of the pagans and the Christians and are to exterminate all those who will not have their faith; and this will happen in times of Antichrist”.<sup>20</sup> The association between the apocalyptic nations and the Jews was only one of the possibilities for describing them and placing them in the context of the ordering of the world and of history. Most authors and chroniclers saw the threat of an apocalyptic army in the Arabs and a little later, in the Mongols.<sup>21</sup> This was the case of Marco Polo whose trav-

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17 Hugo Argentinensis, *Epitome alias Compendium theologiae veritatis, non minus publicis concionatoribus quam scholasticis proficuum*, Coloniae 1503, cap. 11.

18 A possible link between Mandeville's travelogue and Hussite historiography was pointed out by Petr Čornej, *Ráj na ostrově aneb prostor pro adamity*, *Táborský archiv* 13, 2007, pp. 41–46.

19 For the main models used by Mandeville in this point see Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences. A Study on the Reception of the Book of Sir John Mandeville (1371–1550)*, Aldershot 2003, p. 145.

20 *Cestopis tzv. Mandevilla*, pp. 144–145. The Czech translation of Mandeville's travelogue was modelled on a German version by Otto von Dimeringen. It moreover stated in several variants that the Jewish tribes Gog and Magog, who call themselves Red Jews. Cf. *Reysen und Wanderschaften des [...] Johannis de Montevuilla*, Köln 1600, p. 211. The issue of the Red Jews is analysed in detail by A.C. Gow, *The Red Jews*, passim. Gow does not mention Mandeville's travelogue among his examples. Klaus Ridder, *Jean de Mandevilles 'Reisen'. Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der deutschen Übersetzung des Otto von Diemerungen*, München – Zürich 1991. The cited print was not included by Ridder in his enumeration.

21 Cf. Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, Jews. Making Monsters in Medieval Art*, Princeton – Oxford 2003, pp. 236–238. A valuable work in this respect is by Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Sigmaringen 1994, pp. 258–285. Charles Burnett – Patrik Gautier Dalché, *Attitudes towards the Mongols in Medieval Literature: The XXII Kings of Gog and Magog from the Court of Frederick II to Jean de Mandeville*, *Viator* 22, 1991, pp. 153–167.

el book was translated around 1400 into Old Czech. However, Marco Polo does not mention any connection with the last events of the world in this place.<sup>22</sup>

If we ask the crucial question what images were associated with the nations of Gog and Magog in the Hussite era and part of what discourses they became, we have to answer first from what sources the knowledge of these questions could be drawn in medieval Bohemia, and hence on what foundations were the images made. The literature that was available in Bohemia in the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> century made it possible, given the interconnection of information, to create a relatively homogenous idea of the threat and nature of the apocalyptic nations. Repeated information proceeded in several directions of exposition although it agreed about the completely negative characteristics of the nations of Gog and Magog. Interpretations by most Czech authors associated the apocalyptic people of Gog and Magog most often with the Jews or Christian leading dissolute lives. Associations with Arabs, Mongols, and other exotic nations, if it was even present in the Czech consciousness, were limited to travel writings.

Of the above-mentioned works the stories about Alexander the Great were doubtless read in Bohemia, although in the extant passages of the old Bohemian version, the so-called *Alexandreis*,<sup>23</sup> written at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there is no mention of nations enclosed in the mountains. In 1426, at the time of the “terrible Hussite persecution”, a former cantor of Kutná Hora Jan made for an honourable Brno citizen, Jindřich, a copy of *Tractatus Methodii Episcopi*, which included a depiction of terrible cannibal nations freed from captivity in the mountains just before the coming of Antichrist. The author of this tractate compressed the apocalyptic events into one image: he placed the nations of Gog and Magog in the context of the coming of the Last Emperor and the subsequent appearance of the Son of Damnation.<sup>24</sup> In the same manuscript as the copy of Pseudo-Methodius we find one of the copies of the pseudo-Joachim exposition of *Super Isaiam*, a work which is also relevant to the variability of the exposition of the apocalyptic figures, including Gog and Magog. In the manuscript collections of Czech libraries we also find a number of transcripts of *Letter of Prester John* to Emperor Friedrich, most dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and at least one, Ms. VIII D I NL Prague, to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> *Letter of Prester John* is abridged here and ends with a depiction of the “unclean” nations, which were driven, according to this transcript, by Alexander of Macedonia from their orig-

<sup>22</sup> Marko Polo, *Milión*, ed. Miroslava Mattušová, Praha 1961, p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Alexandreida*, Praha 1947. Prokop Lang, Co asi bylo obsahem ztracených částí *Alexandreidy* staročeské? *Listy filologické* 1883, p. 69, p. 275, p. 398.

<sup>24</sup> Zemský archiv Olomouc, Cod. 280, fol. 196v.

<sup>25</sup> The manuscripts are enumerated by Bettina Wagner, *Die “Epistola presbiteri Johannis” lateinisch und deutsch. Überlieferung, Textgeschichte, Rezeption und Übertragungen im Mittelalter*, Tübingen 2000, p. 712.

inal lands and were subjugated by John.<sup>26</sup> The Alexandrian motifs were thus interwoven with stories related to John's empire and the cartographic version. An anonymous map of the world dated to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which is unfortunately lost, originally kept in the Scientific Library in Olomouc, copied the narrative of the cited version of *Letter of Prester John* and depicted the nations of Gog and Magog twice; once enclosed, with a reference to Alexander the Great, and another time in the neighbourhood of India, where tradition had placed John's empire.<sup>27</sup>

An exemplar of one of the primary sources that formulated the image and the concepts of the apocalyptic nations, *Historia Orientalis* by Jacques de Vitry, was one of the oldest acquisitions of the Prague University library. The local scholars had at their disposal writings by Roger Bacon, and could naturally find information about the nations of Gog and Magog in the theological compendia, such as *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, *Historia scholastica* by Petrus Comestor, translated into Czech at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>28</sup> or *Speculum historiale* by Vincent of Beauvais. Another category of sources in which one could find information about the apocalyptic nations and their character was travel literature. The Mandeville's travelogues and Marco Polo's *Million* were evidently so popular in medieval Bohemia that they were translated into Czech and this in a period just before the Hussite wars. A question arises here, however, whether the narrative of the travel sources was reflected in any way in the reformist rhetoric, polemical discourse and reformist apocalyptic thinking of the pre-Hussite and Hussite time, or whether these were two different and unrelated planes of text and thought.

In the formation of the expositions of the apocalyptic nations and the figures of Gog and Magog in the Czech milieu an important component was the influence of the concepts of Joachim of Fiore, respectively the tradition of Joachitic interpretations.<sup>29</sup> Although we can only speculate about the presence of direct transcripts of Joachim's writings in medieval Bohemia, a non-negligible influence must be conceded to authors who started from the teachings of the Calabrian abbot, in the Czech medieval

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**26** NL Prague, Ms. VIII D 1, fol. 244<sup>r</sup>.

**27** The map is known from photographic documentation published in Anton Mayer, *Mittelalterliche Weltkarten aus Olmütz*, in: K. André, *Kartographische Denkmäler der Sudetenländer*, Bd. 8, Prag 1932, Figure 1. The first inscription states: "hic inter montes caspÿ inclusit allexander gog et magog gentes immundas"; the other "gog et magog". As for the customary methods used to draw medieval maps, see Evelyn Edson – Emilie Savage-Smith – Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Der mittelalterliche Kosmos. Karten der christlichen und islamischen Welt*, Darmstadt 2005, pp. 67 – 68.

**28** Petra Comestora-Manducatora, *Historia scholastica*, ed. Jan V. Novák, Praha 1910–1920. The translation of Comestor's *Historiae scholasticae* was probably made for the Emmaus monastery in Prague, where in the reign of Karel IV one of the centres of old Slavonic culture was created. This explains the fact that fragments of the translation written in Glagolitic script have survived. Cf. Ludmila Pacnerová, *Staročeský hlaholský Comestor*, Praha 2002.

**29** In accordance with the scholarly literature on this theme I designate as Joachitic writings texts by pseudo-Joachim or those whose ideas were directly related to Joachim of Fiore.

intellectual world Johannes von Rupesciss in the first place;<sup>30</sup> also the above-mentioned pseudo-Joachim *Super Isaiam* is extant in several transcripts.<sup>31</sup>

Joachim's work meant a shift from the above-mentioned projection of medieval anti-Judaism to the image of the apocalyptic nations and at the same time, showed a new way of approaching the significance of Gog and Magog in the theology of history. Joachim replaced the existing model of the Antichrist-Jew with an image of Antichrist-Christian (tyrant, emperor, pope, in every case a member of western Christendom). In contrast, he ascribed to the Jews a positive role, seeing their conversion to Christianity as one of the central moments on the way to perfection of the third age of the Holy Spirit. The fulfilment of the words from *Epistle to the Romans* (Rm 11, 24–25) became however problematic in Joachim's system as against the previous tradition. He did not expect in the perfection of the age of the Holy Spirit only conversion of Jews to Christianity, but also return of Christians to Judaism and hence achievement of unity of the spiritual people.<sup>32</sup>

To expose the complex of the eschatological enemy Joachim of Fiore used a picture of a dragon from the twelfth chapter of the *Apocalypse of John*. To him, the seven dragon's heads designated Antichrist and his predecessors, while the dragon's tail symbolised the last Antichrist – Gog – who will appear in the world at the very end of history.<sup>33</sup> This concept was adapted also by author of the above-mentioned pseudo-Joachitic exposition *Super Isaiam*. The origin of at least one copy of this tract (Olomouc Chapter library, codex 280) can be sought according to the character of the other texts in the anti-Hussite milieu (including a *Tractate against the Hussites*

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**30** In the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Rupesciss *Vade mecum in tribulatione a Liber secretorum eventum* is likely to have been known in Bohemia. We find a reference to reading Rupesciss writings in a fragment of record of an inquisition trial held around 1400, cf. Ivan Hlaváček, Zur böhmischen Inquisition und Häresiebekämpfung um das Jahr 1400, in: *Häresie und vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelalter*, eds. František Šmahel – Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, München 1998, Fragment A, p. 124–125. Cf. also Kurt-Victor Selge, Handschriften Joachims von Fiore in Böhmen, in: *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*, eds. František Šmahel, Alexander Patschovsky, Praha 1993, pp. 53–60. On the same topic Zdeňka Hledíková, Pelhřimovský školmistr Konrád a jeho rukopis, in: *Septuaginta Paulo Spunar oblata (70+2)*, ed. Jiří K. Kroupa, Praha 2000, pp. 249–252.

**31** Library of National Museum Prague, XIV B 17; Library of Metropolitan Chapter Olomouc, cod. 28 and cod. 280.

**32** Robert Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham. Medieval Millenarians and the Jews*, Philadelphia 2001, s. 31–37; cf. ib., Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore, *Speculum* 60, 1985, p. 561. On Joachim of Fiore Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought*, New York – London 1985. As the diagrams in Joachim's *Liber Figurarum* indicate, he attached much importance and a positive role to the descendants of Shem (*populus Judaicus*) and Japhet (*populus Gentilis*). Both generations were to achieve the greatest florescence in the third age of the Holy Spirit, cf. Marjorie Reeves – Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore*, Oxford 1972, pp. 170–173; Figure 18, 19.

**33** Joachim of Fiore, *Expositio Apocalypsim*, Venice 1527, fol. 196v, his concept of Antichrist R. Lerner, *Antichrists*, p. 567. For the dragon picture in Joachim of Fiore M. Reeves – B. Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae*, pp. 146–152.

by Mařík Rvačka and another anonymous tractate also oriented against the Hussite and Wycliffian heresy). We find here Gog and Magog on the tail of an apocalyptic dragon, just like in Joachim of Fiore, in the role of a hitherto undefined enemy – Antichrist, who will appear at the end of time. Finally, into the recorded diagrams whose character was close to one of the types of medieval maps of the world was entered a description of the land of *Magogia*, neighbouring Amazonia, and incorporated into the complex ‘Ethiopia’, where the Middle Ages placed India and with it Prester John’s empire.<sup>34</sup>

Of Joachim’s followers the idea of the positive role of the Jews in the apocalyptic events was taken farthest by the French Franciscan John of Rupescissa, whose writing are most likely to have been read by a well-known Prague preacher of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Milíč of Kremsier. In the tractate *Liber secretorum eventuum* Rupescissa presaged that after the defeat of Antichrist a miraculous conversion of the Jews would take place, and they would become literally paragons of Christian faith in an empire of a thousand years. Also, the new ruler, having the characteristic of the Last Emperor, was to be from the house of Abraham. Apocalyptic attacks of the Gog and Magog people at the end of time were interpreted by Rupescissa as a pagan onslaught directed against the converted and now ruling Jews.<sup>35</sup> These prophetic notions percolated demonstrably to the Czech milieu. The Dominican Konrad of Halberstadt, who lived at the court of Karel IV, brought from a trip to Avignon a transcript of *Liber secretorum* and included a summary of an important part of it into his chronicle dedicated to the Prague archbishop.<sup>36</sup> If Rupescissa spoke in this context of a people of an apocalyptic time, those who would populate period after Antichrist’s defeat, he did not associate them in any case with Gog and Magog. He connected their coming with the final coming of Antichrist and envisaged it in the future.<sup>37</sup>

The line of Joachim’s followers, who adopted the idea of the establishment of a third age of bliss before the end of history, was only one of the paths where those who drew inspiration from the constructs of the Calabrian abbot went. The second set of texts consisted of biblical expositions which sought a nexus between concrete historical events and a corresponding sequence of biblical, mainly apocalyptic vers-

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34 Library of the Metropolitan Chapter Olomouc, cod. 28, fol. 168v; cod. 280, fol. 36r, cf. *Scriptum super Isaie*, BAV, Vat. Lat. 4959, fol. 28r. The same picture is in Library of the National Museum, Prague, XIV B 17, fol. 34r. Inspirational insights on the diagrams in Joachim’s writings are brought by Gian Luca Potestà, *Geschichte als Ordnung in der Diagrammatik Joachims von Fiore*, in: *Die Bildwelt der Diagramme Joachims von Fiore. Zur Medialität religiös-politischer Programme im Mittelalter*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky, Ostfildern 2003, pp. 115–145.

35 Johannes de Rupescissa, *Liber secretorum eventuum*, ed. Robert E. Lerner – Christine Morerod-Fat-tebert, Fribourg 1994, p. 177–179. On this issue see R. Lerner, *The Feast*, pp. 79–82.

36 Konrad von Halberstadt O.P., *Chronographia Interminata 1277–1355/59*, ed. Rainer Leng, Wiesbaden 1996, pp. 223–224. On dissemination of knowledge of the texts of Rupesciss in Bohemia, Robert Lerner, “Popular Justice”: Rupescissa in Hussite Bohemia, in: *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*, hg. František Šmahel – Alexander Patschovsky, Praha 1996, pp. 42–43.

37 Cf. this passage in the chronicle of Konrad of Halberstadt, *Chronographia Interminata*, p. 224.



es. Thus they understood the text of *Apocalypse of John* as a temporal linear prophecy on the course of history. A prime example of this category was *Expositio in Apocalypsim* by Alexander the Minorite. His treatise even circulated in several transcripts under Joachim's name.<sup>38</sup> With support in the expositions of the Holy Fathers Jeremy and Augustine and a reference to the legend about the tribes enclosed by Alexander the Great in the Caucasian mountains, Alexander the Minorite enumerated nations who might torment the Christian world under the name of Gog and Magog in the final phase of history.<sup>39</sup> The manuscript collection of the Prague Metropolitan Chapter of Saint Vitus is one of the transcripts of Alexander's exposition, where the text is accompanied by a number of illustrations. It is however very unlikely that this manuscript, whose writing dates to Avignon in the 1430s, had no influence on the creation of the corpus of knowledge and the picture of the apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog in the Czech milieu. Its presence in Bohemia is only evidenced as property of the administrator of the Prague archbishopric, Václav of Krumlov, who was active around the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup>

The picture of the apocalyptic nations provided the medieval society with an ideal tool for denigration and demonization of an adversary. Bringing the prophecies, including the apocalyptic ones, up to date and linking them with the reality they explained and made more comprehensible for the contemporaries, was a frequently used practice of medieval authors. Naturally, the prophecies came into play predominantly in times that needed an explanation, times of historical turns, crises and social chaos. Also, pre-Hussite and Hussite Bohemia was to a great extent permeated by the apocalyptic rhetoric, which provided an interpretation patterns for understanding and describing the events gathering momentum within the framework of the valid theological interpretation of history, and became to a great extent their catalyst. The period authors explained their own presence as part of the prophecies being fulfilled, and the interpretation of the apocalyptic pictures and their connection with the current events comes to the fore in their texts. A frequent theme of the pre-Hussite and Hussite theologians was the appearance and deeds of Antichrist, whom they often saw all around. Mathias of Janov, a distinguished Czech theologian and reformer of the pre-Hussite generation, was after all the author of the most extensive treatise on Antichrist ever written in the Middle Ages.<sup>41</sup>

Apocalyptic pictures were among the pre-Hussite and Hussite reformist authors a frequently used tool for describing and interpreting the course of events. In particular, the theme of definition of Antichrist and manifestations of his activities in the

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**38** On the text tradition and the manuscript preservation of the treatise Sabine Schmolinsky, *Der Apokalypsenkommentar des Alexander Minorita. Zur frühen Rezeption Joachims von Fiore in Deutschland*, Hannover 1991, pp. 15–23, pp. 31–52.

**39** Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, ed. Alois Wachtel, Weimar 1955, pp. 450–451.

**40** Library of Metropolitan Chapter Prague, Ms. Cim 5. On the manuscript history S. Schmolinsky, *Der Apokalypsenkommentar*, pp. 18–20.

**41** Mathias of Janov, *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti III*, ed. Vlastimil Kybal, Innsbruck 1911.

world were very appealing and topical for the intellectuals from the milieu of the University of Prague. In relation to Mathias of Janov this question was examined in detail by Jaacob of Mies, Stanislav of Znojmo or Štěpán of Pálež, who adopted Stanislav's treatise on Antichrist for his *De Ecclesia*. In the same manner Jan Hus had to come to terms with this highly topical problem.<sup>42</sup> Given the frequency with which the name of Antichrist was heard in Bohemia at this time, even in relation to concrete persons or groups, it is somewhat surprising that Gog and Magog appear relatively seldom among the rhetorical devices and in the symbolic identifications. This does not mean, however, that they did not have in the period sources a place of importance, in different types of depositions and on different discourse planes, which had a common denominator in the reference to the last events in world's history. The interpretations of Gog and Magog were naturally dependent on which possibility of explanation and conception of the last events in the world a given author chose in a specific situation and in which tradition he followed. The apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog, as well as the other elements of the apocalyptic concept, came together with reality on three levels of exegetical hermeneutical exposition. In the broadest sense they related to the course of church history as a whole. In a narrower sense, we find them as a means to describe the current ills in church and society. Third, they were presented as a necessary part of the path to a higher perfection in the history of salvation.

Prague preacher and pre-Hussite "prophet of Antichrist's coming" Milíč of Kremsier,<sup>43</sup> for whom the prophecies on an apocalyptic note were a natural part of the world of ideas, moved in his "reading" of Antichrist and the apocalyptic nations on two interpretation levels. In the treatise *Sermo de Die novissimo* of 1367 he describes the ultimate phase of the world's history as a story populated by real characters and set at a concrete time and space. In a long tradition the entrenched ideas of Antichrist and his actions in the world come to life here, constituting a whole narrative with protagonists and own dynamic. He introduced Antichrist, Son of Damnation, following in the previous tradition, as a man of flesh and blood, born in Babylon, seducing people with false miracles and riches, and defeated in the end by an intervention of Archangel Michael.<sup>44</sup> Into this depiction of the events he put the in-

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<sup>42</sup> The relevant manuscripts are listed by Jan Sedlák, *Studie a texty k náboženským dějinám III/1*, Olomouc 1916, p. 30, note 1. A basic study of Jacob of Mies's tractate *De Antichristo* was written by Vlastimil Kybal, M. Mathias z Janova a M. Jakoubek ze Stříbra, *ČČH* 11, 1905, pp. 22–38. For Hus's notion of Antichrist see František J. Holeček, "Ministri dei possunt in dampnationem perpetuam papam male viventem detrudere ..." (Hus a problém Antikrista), in: *Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí*, ed. Miloš Drda – František J. Holeček – Zdeněk Vybíral, Tábor 2001 (= HT Supplementum 1), pp. 219–245.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Pavlína Cermanová, Il profeta Elia e l'Anticristo nell'apocalittica boema fra XIV e XV secolo, in: *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 2010, s. 189–214.

<sup>44</sup> The basic characteristic of the historical interpretation line of Antichrist is in Curtis V. Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards. Apocalypticism in Late Medieval and Reformation England*, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, pp. 19–29. Literature on the theme and relevant sources I give in the



formation that Antichrist would release the Jews who were enclosed until then, and they would accept crowns from him and would worship him as Messiah.<sup>45</sup> This passage where Milíč associated the apocalyptic nation with the enclosed and re-released Jews indicates his knowledge of the topic and the previous literature. We can see here a reference to the nations of Gog and Magog, whom Alexander of Macedonia enclosed in the Caucasian mountains lest they cause danger to the world. A practically identical course of those events is described in the text and pictures of the *Velislav Bible*, where Jews appear in most scenes as followers of Antichrist, as indicated by the characteristic Jewish hats and the explanatory inscriptions. Liberated from captivity in the mountains and from the yoke of Queen Amazonia, Gog and Magog are shown in an illustration wearing royal crowns, which is a possible indication of the connection between the Milíč interpretation and the *Velislav Bible*.<sup>46</sup> Reading the Milíč's interpretation of the last events and their principal actors, as described in *Sermo de Die Novissimo*, let us stop at another moment which will suggest the reception of the ideas and constructs of Joachim of Fiore or his followers. This is a dual eschatological role of the Jews. While Antichrist lived and his forces were preponderant, the Jews were considered his main followers and members of "Antichrist's nation". After his defeat the situation changed and with it the role of the Jews in the general eschatology. According to Milíč, those were the Jews converted to Christian faith who assumed spiritual dominance and helped hesitant Christians to find again unshakeable faith and led them to penance.<sup>47</sup>

In the same year (1367) Milíč wrote a tractate on Antichrist, where the exposition of Final enemy and his followers shifted to a new plane and acquired other functions. Gog and Magog ceased to be a designation for a distant people enclosed somewhere far in the mountains. They moved to the centre of Christian society and became designations for concrete events and groups, which was to the pro-reform Milíč a thorn in his flesh. The principal characteristic of Gog and Magog was to be hypocrisy, a characteristic that associates the biblical symbol with "all weeds that have to be removed", pointing to heretics, false prophets, hypocrites, Beguines, and schismatics. To support his interpretation, Milíč cited the etymological argumentation passed on since the times of the Church Fathers Jerome and Augustine, when he said that Gog meant "cover" or roof in translation (*tectum*) and Magog meant "un-

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study Pavlína Cermanová, *Die Erzählung vom Antichrist und seine Funktion in der religiösen und politischen Imagination im luxemburgischen Böhmen*, in: *Antichrist. Eschatologische Feindtypisierungen und Identifizierungen*, eds. Wolfram Brandes – Felicitas Schmieder, Berlin 2010, pp. 159–178.

<sup>45</sup> Milíč of Kroměříž, *Sermo de Die Novissimo Domini*, in: *The Message for the Last Days. Three Essays from the Year 1367*, ed. Milan Opočenský – Jana Opočenská, Geneva, 1998, p. 36.

<sup>46</sup> *Velislav biblia picta*, NL Prague, XXIII C 124, fol. 134v.

<sup>47</sup> *Sermo de Die Novissimo*, p. 40, "Tunc current et predicabunt perversis christianis penitentiam, ut sicud per eos perversi, ita conversi."

cover” (*de-tectum*).<sup>48</sup> This explanation, which was very much disseminated in the medieval texts, found firm ground in the interpretations of Gog and Magog by Czech medieval authors, also by Jacob of Mies in his huge *Výklad na Zjevení svatého Jana (Exposition of Saint John’s Apocalypse)*.<sup>49</sup> The very designation therefore predestined to hypocrisy and included hypocrisy. The image and definition of Gog and Magog, who had the function of proxy symbols for the current problems of the church, suggested at the same time a way to reach a state of salvation again (*ut reducat ecclesiam in statum salutis*).<sup>50</sup>

While Milíč of Kremšier followed in part the interpretation line based on the contrast between the lives of Christ and Antichrist, where Antichrist’s story was built as a mirror perverse reflection of Christ’s life, and placed within his framework the role of the apocalyptic nations Gog and Magog, Mathias of Janov applied the dual principle to the entire social reality of the day. On one side he put the couple Gog and Magog, representing general decadence and chaos, on the other side Enoch and Elijah, apocalyptic witnesses who appealed as preachers for atonement and unveiled the true face of the church tarnished by hypocrisy, already controlled by Antichrist and his allies.<sup>51</sup> The surrounding word was evaluated by Mathias as filled with perverse values, holiness was replaced by desire for bodily pleasures, love by hypocrisy, Christ’s spirit by that of Antichrist. Where there were formerly martyrs, prophets, followers and virgins, he saw the Great Harlot of Babylon and the terrible people of Gog and Magog announcing the grave crisis of the end of time.<sup>52</sup> He elaborated two patterns of duality: Christ–Antichrist and Enoch, Elijah–Gog, Magog on a wider plane when he applied it to the necessity to name facts with real names, not concealing lapses and, naturally, preaching the necessary amends which was the only way to salvation. Gog and Magog appear here as a symbol of concealment and silence, which had taken control over the contemporary church and were the cause of the woes it was to experience in the last phase of its history.<sup>53</sup> If Mathias of Janov thought about important mileposts in the church history and by extension in the history of Salvation, he made use of Daniel’s prophecy and outlined a clear connecting line between the beginning of Antichrist’s activities on earth and the abandonment of the practice of frequent holy communion in which he saw the fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecy about the withdrawal of the everyday sacrifice and the desolation caused by odiousness.<sup>54</sup> It was not an original idea and he probably found his inspiration in the treatise on Antichrist penned by Jean Quidort, whose ideas were going in the

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48 Milíč of Kroměříž, *Prophetia et Revelatio de Antichristo*, in: *The Message*, p. 68. Cf. Hieronymus, *Commentariorum in Hiezekielem libri XIV*, CCSL LXXV, p. 526.

49 Jakoubek of Stříbro, *Výklad II*, p. 273.

50 Milíč of Kroměříž, *Prophetia*, p. 68.

51 Mathias of Janov, *Regulae*, l. III, tr. 5, dist. 11, cap. 5, p. 351.

52 *Ibid.*, dist. 11, cap. 3, pp. 343–344.

53 *Ibid.*, dist. 11, cap. 2, p. 338; cap. 3, p. 342.

54 *Ibid.*, dist. 9, cap. 9, p. 168.

same direction.<sup>55</sup> A similar interpretation based on Daniel's prophecy was applied by Mathias of Janov to the sudden silence that fell when the voices warning against the coming of Antichrist were silenced in the church. Prophets and preachers revealing this danger since the times of the Apostles fell silent and made place for the terrifying nations of Gog and Magog, where symbolised the silence that descended on the last events in the world and made the church completely unprepared.<sup>56</sup> It is necessary to view in this light the role ascribed by Mathias of Janov to Milíč of Kremsier as a second Elijah, who broke the vow of silence and became the prophet of Antichrist's coming.<sup>57</sup> Because Mathias of Janov defined both, Antichrist and Gog and Magog in a wider sense as a currently existing community of those who suffer from an excessive partiality for the material world and for hypocrisy (both completely within the bounds of the medieval exegesis), their defeat consisted in a general return to spiritual values, overcoming desire for property and restoration of the ideals of the Early Church. This reformist intervention was to defeat Antichrist and the nations of Gog and Magog were to be slain, which would mean salvation of the true believers whose way to taking control would open in a more advanced age.<sup>58</sup> It is not for nothing that these words evoke the chiliastic speculations about the establishment of a new age of spiritual bliss after the defeat of Antichrist.

"Who are Gog and Magog?" is a question asked in his *Exposition of the Apocalypse* by Jacob of Mies, one of the principal creators of the Hussite theology and a leading representative of the Prague Hussite party.<sup>59</sup> As stated above, Jacob used as the foundation Jerome's etymological interpretation of Gog and Magog. Within the framework of the general apocalyptic concept of good and evil he applied the notion of Antichrist, accompanied by Gog and Magog, to a broad spectrum of negative phenomena in society and enemies of the true church. When he was clarifying these terms, he gradually uncovered the individual planes of the hermeneutic interpretation of the biblical symbols. On the basic plane he started from the interpretation of Saint Jerome, when he compared Gog to "a roof that honours hypocrites [...] and under the cover of justice does all things, anger, hate, jealousy and ire". Magog "out of the roof" are those who lose no time as hypocrites but come out of their hiding places as open enemies of the church, as cruel tyrants. One complements the other in the destructive work. Gog leads people astray with his lies and heresies from the true faith, while Magog liquidates the true followers of Christ physically.<sup>60</sup> In his *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, Jacob quite ignored the line in which the Jews

55 Jean Quidort de Paris, *Tractatus de Antichristo*, ed. Sara Peters Clark, *The Tractatus de Antichristo of John of Paris: A critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Cornell University 1981, p. 49.

56 Mathias of Janov, *Regulae III*, tr. 3, dist. 11, cap. 2, p. 338.

57 *Ibid.*, l. III, tr. 5, dist. 11, cap. 6, p. 356, "alius Helyas, id est vir habundans spiritu Helye requiratur, qui diutinum rupit silentium de adventu Christi ultimo et Antychristi."

58 Mathias of Janov, *Regulae*, l. III, tr. 4, dist. 4, cap. 21, (vol. II, Innsbruck 1909), pp. 218–219.

59 Jakoubek of Stříbro, *Výklad II*, p. 273.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 273–274.

figured in the role of the apocalyptic threat. He reached in this case for a time-tested inspiration, the *Glossa ordinaria*, which also had an earlier model, the interpretation of the Apocalypse by Haimo of Auxerre.<sup>61</sup> We also find the same argumentation as in Jacob in a Lollard tractate, *Opus arduum valde*, which copies have survived in the Czech medieval milieu: “*Gog. Id est tectos oculos et latenter impugnantes doctrinam Christi. Et Magog, id est detectos, iam aperte persequentes defensores Evangelii veritatis.*”<sup>62</sup> The agreement between the Jacob of Mies and the Lollard interpretation may stem from the use of the same text source, perhaps Haimo, *Glosses*, and in the first place the theological *Compendium*, where the text accord is most marked.<sup>63</sup>

Jacob of Mies’s barb in the interpretation of the apocalyptic threat of Gog and Magog, as Antichrist’s henchmen and soldiers, was not directed, as it might seem at first sight, at the ranks of the Catholics and crusaders. It is much more likely he had in mind radical Hussites deluded by chiliastic notions. When Jacob spoke of Gog, which “*spreads evil things and heretical ideas*”, his thoughts were evidently levelled at preachers preaching the establishment of Christ’s empire of a thousand years. In his words about Magog, which “*makes threats, imprisons and murders*” we can see a reference to the radical Taborite army. This interpretation is in line with a declaration that “*Magog has already incited peasants, courtiers, burghers to murder those who do not follow Gog and who stay with Christ, but it is good that the saints are in the tents as in a town*”,<sup>64</sup> which does not refer to the crusader armies rather than to radical Hussite hosts, which in the name of chiliastic purification, as a true Army of Christ, killed and destroy those who did not belong in their eyes among the chosen ones. The reference to “tents” (Apc 20, 9) in which saints (orthodox Christians) enclosed themselves would be in Jacob’s conception directed against the Taborite custom of celebrating masses in the open air. At the time when he was writing *Exposition of the Apocalypse* Jacob had definitely drifted apart from the party of Taborite preachers and in many places gave vent to his opinions and his indignation. Not only did he condemn adventism and chiliasm, refusal of sacraments, confessions, purgatories, Eucharistic heresies and other ideas being spread by the followers of early Tábor; he also mounted an opposition to the Hussite way of waging wars, burning churches, murders and robberies. The supposition that Jacob saw in the destructive hordes of Gog and Magog the Hussites is borne out by his interpretation of

61 Haimo, *Expositio in Apocalypsis in, lib. VII*, PL 117, col. 1187 A-C.

62 Library of Metropolitan Chapter Prague, Ms. A 163, fol. 113r. On *Opus arduum* (OAV) cf. Curtis van Bostick, *The Antichrist and the “trewe men”: Lollard apocalypticism in late medieval and Early Modern England*, Dissertation, University of Arizona 1993, p. 154. Basic research into the dissemination of OAV in medieval Bohemia was conducted by Anne Hudson, *A Neglected Wyclifite Text, JEH* 29, 1978, pp. 259–262.

63 *Compendium theologicæ veritatis*, Coloniae 1503, Lib VII, cap. XI, “Per Gog enim secundum Glosam, illi per quos latenter diabolus persequetur fideles, designantur. Per Magog illi per quos aperte Ecclesia opprimetur”.

64 Jakoubek of Stříbro, *Výklad II*, p. 275.

Chapter 13 of the *Apocalypse* where he employs similar turns of phrase and leaves no room for doubt as to who is the beast of prey and who is the false prophet. Accusations of hypocritical motives are heard here: “*Today’s soldiers prefer to listen to false prophets rather than to good and true ones, and brutally and cruelly, like beasts of prey, ravage, murder, pillage, and those that should be Christ’s party as if they take vengeance and murder out of love and loving. Others reject all Holy Communion, others dissolve marriages, yet others reject the Lord’s reverent Communion in both kinds.*”<sup>65</sup> The radical Hussites find themselves in Jacobs’s interpretation of the contemporary events placed in the context of the apocalyptic prophecy in close proximity to Antichrist, among the worst enemies of the true church, the Prague Hussites. At length, Jacob shifted his interpretation of Gog and Magog to another plane when he associated the true church, in which he referred to Hussite Prague, with the picture of Jerusalem. Gog and Magog appear there in the position of God’s Trial, which is to separate the wheat from the chaff, reveal who belongs to which camp, and help true Christians to a higher wisdom and perfection. On this interpretation plane Jacob interpreted the feud between the individual elements of the Hussite movement as an important moment on the way to salvation of the chosen ones. We find in Jacob’s interpretation another interesting moment which brings into play again the question of the influence and dissemination of the Joachim and Joachitic treatises and concepts in medieval Bohemia. Just like Joachim of Fiore and the related authors Jacob associated Gog and Magog with the image of the apocalyptic dragon’s tail.<sup>66</sup>

Like the references to the faith and intransigence of the Maccabees,<sup>67</sup> at the time of open military clashes the determining motive for the use of the picture of Gog and Magog recalled the fact that in the history of Salvation God often posed a challenge to his chosen ones and a fighting trial with an enemy outnumbering them. The final crushing defeat of Gog’s armies in Ezekiel’s prophecy fulfilled an appealing model extrapolated to the Hussite experience. This was the direction taken, for example, by the Tábora elder and principal theologian of the radical Hussite wing, Nicolaus Biskupec of Pilgrim, in his Latin *Exposition* of the *Apocalypse*. Connecting the current events and the prophetic text with the whole of Hussite enemies, crusading armies, but also the church yielding to worldly life, were cast in the role of Antichrist’s numerous host that troubled the true church, but was to be defeated in the final battle.<sup>68</sup> The message borrowed from Ezekiel’s prophecy<sup>69</sup> was clear: however threat-

<sup>65</sup> Jakoubek of Stříbro, *Výklad I*, p. 509.

<sup>66</sup> Jakoubek of Stříbro, *Výklad na Zjevení sv. Jana II*, ed. František Šimek, Praha 1933, p. 273.

<sup>67</sup> Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe 1400–1536*, Oxford 2008, p. 109; Pavlína Rychterová – Pavel Soukup, The Reception of the Books of the Maccabees in the Hussite Reformation, in: *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith. Old-Testament Faith-Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in historical Perspective*, ed. Gabriella Signori, Leiden 2012, p. 202.

<sup>68</sup> Mikuláš of Pelhřimov, *Postilla super Apocalypsim*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien, Nr. 4520, fol. 207v.

ening and numerous the enemy, God will guarantee the victory of his chosen people in the end. Such argumentation strategies based on an interpretation of the prophetic words was after all pursued by the Catholic party. In 1422 Andreas of Regensburg included in his *Hussite Chronicle* an account of a prophecy, according to which the Christians had ahead of them a great bloodshed and suffering in the fight against the heretics, and presage of decline of many kingdoms. In the end everything would be well and everyone would return to the Catholic faith.<sup>70</sup> To Andreas the prophecy was a welcome means to boost the morale of the Catholic party disheartened by many a defeat, but he did not conceal his mistrust in similar texts, which he called objectionable for the Christian faith and worthy of forgetting.<sup>71</sup> Such a contradictory approach was no exception in the Middle Ages. The embarrassment that many authors felt over the prophetic texts was in a sense natural as the character of the prophecies frequently crossed the narrow boundary between orthodoxy and heresy. Andreas of Regensburg also mentioned the nations of Gog and Magog and described them in the then classic form as destructive tribes enclosed in the Caspian mountains by Alexander the Great. Although he picked up in details the well-known story of the enclosed tribes, its use lost apocalyptic relevance in the given situation. They appear as part of the depiction of one of the events where God put his people to the test without necessarily wishing them victory. In the biblical and fictitious histories Andreas sought parallels to the repeated defeats of the Catholic party in the wars against the Hussites and their justification.<sup>72</sup>

Texts of different genres, be they travelogues, chronicles or theological treatises, and contemporary maps of the world, intimate to us where the Middle Ages positioned the tribes of Gog and Magog as destroying peoples postulated by biblical prophecies which would play their role in the last events in history. Gog and Magog became symbols of a world out of reach, a distant world in terms of time and territory, unknown but at the same time perceived as unseemly and dangerous. Czech authors of the Hussite period went along the paths of allegorical interpretation and the picture of

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69 Ezekiel's prophecy in Chapter 38 and 39 presaged the coming of Gog from the land of Magog as an apocalyptic horde which would appear at the end of time, destroying the world, but in the end it would be defeated.

70 Andreas von Regensburg, *Chronica Husitarum*, in: *Andreas von Regensburg. Sämtliche Werke*, hg. Georg Leidinger, München 1969 (reprint of 1903 edition), p. 385. Another well-known example of the use of the prophecy by the Catholic party was a text in which Ondřej of Brod interpreted the prophecy ascribed to Jan of Jenštejn, cf. *Visio Johannis Jenstein archiep. Pragensis a. 1392*, Národní knihovna ČR Praha, XIII G 10, fol. 101v–102v, published from manuscript by Josef Truhlář, ČČH 8, 1902, pp. 188–189, and subsequent interpretation by Ondřej of Brod, *Tractatus de origine hussitarum*, ed. Jaroslav Kadlec, Tábor 1980.

71 Andreas von Regensburg, *Chronica Husitarum*, p. 384.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 684. See Norman Housley, Jak vysvětlit porážku? Ondřej z Řezna a křížové výpravy proti husitům, in: *The Crusades and the military orders. Expanding the frontiers of medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi – József Laszlovszky, Budapest 2001, p. 217.

the apocalyptic destroyers became an important component in the reformist, polemic and self-interpretation discourse. They interpreted their own presence as part of the prophecies being fulfilled and used the apocalyptic pictures as an argument to proclaim the necessity of reform and to name and define the enemy. As they did not hesitate to designate the materialised Antichrist in their neighbourhood, Gog and Magog became an instrument for describing the current course of events and its interpretation. For Hussites, the apocalyptic labelled negative *figures* of enemies were a tool how to describe not only the opposite party of Catholic church, the crusades and The Emperor Sigismund, but also the fraction inside the Hussite themselves. The reference framework and social function of medieval travelogues, prophetic texts and biblical interpretations from the workshops of church pro-reform authors were naturally different. Whereas in the writings of the church reformers the actors of the latest events were part of the present in the allegorical sense, the travelogues shifted the apocalyptic nations to the edge of the world and the end of time, where author's and reader's imagination could reach but direct experience could not.<sup>73</sup>

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Frances Courtney Kneupper

## The Wirsberger Brothers: Contesting Spiritual Authority through Prophecy

In 1467, Livin Wirsberger, a nobleman from the region of Egerland, was apprehended and brought to Regensburg to be tried for heresy. (Egerland is today located in the far north west of the Czech Republic. It was at the time part of the Holy Roman Empire, situated on the border of Bavaria and Bohemia. This was a politically and religiously significant area in the fifteenth century, as it lay on the border between orthodox Germany and Hussite Bohemia, where the Hussites had violently rejected the Roman Church.) Livin was prosecuted for heresy, condemned as a heretic, and sentenced to life in prison. He died within the year.

Although Livin was the only one to stand trial, he had not been acting alone. Throughout the 1460s, Livin, along with his brother Johannes (nicknamed Janko), had been busy writing prophetic letters spreading their interpretation of the Gospels, calling for the reform of Church and society, and announcing the imminent End Times.<sup>1</sup> The writings of the Wirsberger brothers, though highly unorthodox, borrowed from contemporary eschatological thought to create a radical narrative of the approaching End of the World. Perceiving themselves as men with a message, the brothers sent ominous and incendiary communications to various authorities in the Empire, including members of the German nobility, cities of the Reich, the Franciscan Provincialminister of Saxony, and the theological faculties of the universities of Erfurt, Leipzig, and Vienna.<sup>2</sup>

Very few of these communications survive, and therefore most of our knowledge of the brothers and their ideas has come from their persecutors: the inquisitors and religious authorities who condemned their writings.<sup>3</sup> However, in 2001 Günter Hägele

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1 On the Wirsbergers, see Günter Hägele, “Wirsberger-Prophezeiungen” in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserslexikon*, eds. Kurt Ruh, et al. (Berlin-New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 2004), Vol. 11. See also Alexander Patschovsky, “Die Wirsberger: Zeugen der Geisteswelt Joachims von Fiore in Deutschland während des 15. Jahrhunderts,” in *Il Profetismo Giochimita tra quattrocento e cinquecento*, Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Studi Giochimiti. S. Giovanni in Fiore, 17–21 settembre 1989, a cura di Gian Luca Potestà (Genoa, 1991), 225–257. As Patschovsky points out, it is difficult to identify the original creator of the eschatological program disseminated by the Wirsbergers. Did they invent this program or copy it from another? To what extent did the writings reflect the beliefs of both brothers? These questions remain unanswered. Another person named Johannes de Castro Coronato also appears to be connected to the Wirsbergers, although the nature and extent of this connection is uncertain at this point. I am very grateful to Alexander Patschovsky for his scholarly generosity in sharing his own notes and thoughts about the Wirsberger brothers.

2 See Patschovsky, 234–235.

3 A critical source for the Wirsbergers is the “denunciation letter” written by the papal legate Rudolf of Rüdeshheim, Bishop of the Lavant – who was in Breslau organizing the struggle against the Bohemian king Georg von Podiebrad – written to the Bishop of Regensburg Heinrich von Absberg. There exists a list of sixteen errors from Livin Wirsberger’s trial process. On the hostile sources, see Heinrich

discovered two new communications in the manuscript library of Augsburg.<sup>4</sup> These were copied by an unknown scribe in 1465 from originals held in the Nürnberg city archives. One was addressed to “my friend from of the East,” later called Hans, and the other to the city of Nürnberg itself.<sup>5</sup>

In many ways the communications are bizarre and obscure in their meaning. The grammar is broken, the phrasing strangely repetitive, and the declarations punctuated by strange outbursts of what appear to be laughter. One passage declares, “Noah, Noah, when comes the flood? Lot, Lot, when will we drown? Hy hy hy ha ha ha.”<sup>6</sup> The repetition and peculiar phrasing has led some to conjecture that the author was in fact insane. Certainly, the style of the communications suggests psychological disturbance, and the recipients must have been taken aback by the strangeness of the messages. In fact, the scribe introduces the letter to Nürnberg,

Below are written words that have such an obscure meaning that neither the author is known, nor the words understood. No one can tell what they mean and some think that a great heresiarch wrote them. Copied 1465.<sup>7</sup>

Yet for all their eccentricities, these communications reveal a perceptible, articulated eschatological program, as well as a conscious campaign to spread this program and to obtain the ear and approval of the people of the Reich. These communications, when fully studied and analyzed, will contribute greatly to our knowledge of the Wirsbergers’ activities. This paper represents a preliminary investigation of the communications.

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Gradl, “Die Irrlehre der Wirsperger,” in *Mittheilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen*, XIX (1880–1881). The *Quaestio quodlibetalis de tertio statu mundi contra errores abbatis Joachim de Fiore*, presented in 1465 at the university at Erfurt by Johannes von Dorsten, an Augustinian Hermit and member of the theological faculty, has been considered by scholars as a commentary on the errors of the Wirsbergers, although upon further study this appears unlikely. For now, see Ruth Kestenbergladstein, “The Third Reich: A Fifteenth-Century Polemic against Joachimism, and its Background,” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 18 (1955), 245–295.

<sup>4</sup> Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, previously Wallerstein-Öttingen, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fols. 190r–220v. For the manuscript catalog, see Günter Hägele, *Lateinische mittelalterliche Handschriften in Folio der Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg* (Wiesbaden, 1996), p. 326.

<sup>5</sup> The author is anonymous, but appears to be Janko von Wirsberger.

<sup>6</sup> Augsburg UB Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 203v: “Noe noe wann kumpt dÿe sintflüß. Loth loth wen werde wir versincken hyhyhyhahaha.”

<sup>7</sup> Augsburg UB Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fols. 190r: “Hec scripta infra notata tam occultam sensum habent quod nec auctor scitur nec scripta intelliguntur. Et nemo hactenus novit quid designent aliqui putant quod quidam heresiarcha composuit acta sunt 1465.”

## Historiography

Historiography regarding eschatological thought in the Middle Ages has tended to concentrate on educated, Latin-literate clergy as composers and patrons of prophetic material. This is largely a result of the nature of the sources available. Educated clergy tend to leave more discernable and more abundant paper trails. With regards to the Wirsberger brothers, scholarly discussion has centered on the brothers' relationship to recognized heretical movements and in particular their relationship to Joachimite thought (associated with learned Franciscan circles). This discussion is extremely useful for a picture of the events surrounding these enigmatic brothers, and sheds much light on the concerns of the Church authorities, as well as the larger political issues in play. However, it cannot substitute for the words of the accused.

My research focuses not on elite eschatological material and its spiritual and intellectual aspects, but on popular prophecy.<sup>8</sup> In this case, I define popular as works created and accessed by all literate levels of society. My investigation of popular prophecy in late medieval Holy Roman Empire has revealed that Germans from every literate sector of society, both lay and clerical, acted as readers, owners, translators, and copiers of prophetic material. (It is very likely that illiterate people engaged with this material as well, but the evidence is scant.) This “popularity” rests to a large degree on language, as a significant amount of prophetic material circulated in the vernacular in the late medieval Empire.

My work emphasizes the intersection of eschatological thought with the topics of political identity, criticism of the clergy, and the practical government of the Church. An investigation of the manuscript contents, contexts, owners, readers, and copyists, as well as the authors of the popular prophecies circulating in Germany, reveals strong connections between prophecy and contemporary discourses on the spiritual and political identity of the German Empire. It appears that late medieval Germans used prophecies as a medium in which they spoke to and about themselves. Prophecies acted as a space in which to explore a political and spiritual identity for the German people. They helped to create a new German identity, allowing late medieval German readers to visualize themselves as necessary leaders in an apocalyptic reform of the Church and transformation of society.

## The Communications

The Wirsbergers' communications represent samples of original eschatological thought produced by people operating outside the Church. In fact, these communications are among only a handful of prophetic writings that we can directly attribute

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<sup>8</sup> For a full treatment of this subject, see my recently completed book on popular prophecy in Late Medieval Germany, Frances Courtney Kneupper, *The Empire at the End of Time: Identity and Reform in Late Medieval German Prophecy* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

to lay people in the Middle Ages. Thus, the communications represent a significant opportunity to consider what some lay people thought about the End Times, what they knew or believed they knew, and how this relates to other popular eschatological material circulating in Germany.

## Knowledge and Power

I have argued elsewhere that prophecies of the End Times became a contested space in the Late Middle Ages, in which educated clerics competed with ordinary people for access to knowledge of the future. One aspect of this contest concerns language. The translation into and composition of prophecies in the vernacular brought up questions about authority. In the late medieval Empire, there was some controversy over the wisdom of allowing people to read about any religious matters in the vernacular. Concerning devotional texts (much less volatile material than prophecies), Geiler von Kaisersberg, himself a prolific author of vernacular religious prose, warned, “it is dangerous to give children the knife with which to cut their own bread.”<sup>9</sup>

The question of who had access to knowledge of the future and what it meant for knowledge of the future to escape the control of learned priests was even more vexed. Since prophecies purported to send a divine message, they were considered at the least as supernatural material and perhaps even as the word of God. Traditionally such material would (in theory at least) be handled with care by educated clerics who controlled the laity’s access to the ideas and had a firm monopoly on the interpretation of God’s word. For supernatural material to fall directly into the hands of those untrained in theological interpretation was itself a threat to the established authority of the Church. To cite just one example of a concerned theologian, the Carthusian writer and reformer Johannes Hagen, trained at the University of Erfurt, wrote treatises meant to serve as a comprehensive guide for clerics on how to deal with an eschatologically excited population.<sup>10</sup> He detailed how preachers “should preach to the people, since it was not known by whom the prophecies were created ... and how the prophecies should be interpreted and how the spirit of prophecy should be

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<sup>9</sup> Cited in Robert James Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden, 1997), p. 12, from the collection of Johannes Jannsen, *Die allgemeine Zustände des deutschen Volkes beim Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Vol. I (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1880), p. 609.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Klapper, *Der Erfurter Kartäuser Johannes Hagen: ein Reformtheologe des 15. Jahrhunderts* Vol. I (Leipzig, 1960), p. 75: “Item duos tractatos de propheciis, que fuerunt communes in Franconia de futuris malis ad annum 1460 vel citra, quid tenendum sit et qualiter populo de his predicandum sit, cum nesciatur, a quibus sint producte iste prophecie, et quomodo est quedam propheta predeterminacionis et quedam comminacionis, et quomodo quelibet est intelligenda et quomodo propheciarum spiritus sunt intelligendi, an sint a deo et an a diabolo, et quomodo diaboli prophete dicunt sepe verum.”

understood, whether from God or from the devil, and how prophecies from the devil can also speak the truth.” Hence the danger of prophetic material to the public: those untrained in such matters would not know how to interpret the prophecies. Even worse, as the prophecies did not come from a trusted authority, they might be from the devil! It is worth noting that Hagen wrote these words in the 1460s in response to an upsurge of eschatological thought in Southern Germany. At the same time, not far away in Egerland, the Wirsbergers were industriously producing their own apocalyptic communications.

The Wirsbergers’ writings embody this push and pull over knowledge and authority. First of all, the two brothers, laymen with no special claims to theological education or sacred authority, presumed to inform various secular and religious entities about the future and imminent End Times. They boldly set forth their time-line for the End Times: the End was to come in 1471. These claims brought them into perilous territory. The Church, following the teachings of St. Augustine, condemned any attempt to calculate the exact date of the End Times. The brothers also presumed to offer their own interpretation of the Gospels, although such interpretation fell strictly within clerical jurisdiction. Simply the act of writing such letters was astonishingly brazen and potentially dangerous.

The brothers well understood their position and its danger. They combined their boldness with abject humility. At the same time that they openly promulgated their vision of the future, they humbly petitioned various authorities to “question and prove” this vision. They showed themselves to be aware of the proper channels and hierarchy in such matters, by petitioning the head of the Franciscan province of Saxony, as well as the theological faculties of the German universities, to review their writings.<sup>11</sup> In their own words, they sent their writings “to the high learned and religious at the great collegium, who desired that they send their communication to the highest head.” In an age of tightening Church control concerning the validity of visions, the brothers clearly perceived that their only chance for legitimacy lay in the approval of a significant religious authority.

They also understood the arguments made at this time regarding the danger of lay access to prophecy: that lay people did not possess the theological training to distinguish between visions sent by God or by the devil. The brothers openly acknowledged that this designation lay within the authority of the Church. Considering Livin’s end, it is rather heartbreaking to read the repeated pleas to be informed, “whether this matter comes from God or the devil.”<sup>12</sup>

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**11** Gradl, “Die Irrlehre,” p. 273: “Dergleich mer den eyn hoch gelarter und geislicher in grossen Collegia..., dopey ich... persönlich gewest pyn... an mich pegert das ich dy sach an dy hohen haubet prengen sul.” They met with repudiation.

**12** Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>o</sup> 85, fol. 190r: “Darumb es seÿ nun gewant umb sollich sach von got oder von den tewfel kummen. So berürt die doch auf daß reich und wir lassen unß sagen wie die sach hand daby an euch von nürenberg ertfurd und regensburg gelanget seÿ und demie der auch

## Language

The vernacularity of popular prophetic texts was significant for the way it limited the audience. Prophecies composed or adapted into German could only be meant for a regional audience, not an international one. This German-centric inclination is repeated in the content of the prophecies. The eschatological narratives as well as the wording are aggressively pro-German. It therefore seems that the writers, copiers, and translators of prophetic works in German saw these prophecies as having a specifically German message as well as a specifically German audience.

The Wirsbergers are perfect examples of this trend towards the vernacular and Germanness. They write in highly inflected German to communicate their message, but cite frequently from scripture in Latin. Indeed, the communications cite extensively from various passages in the Gospels, the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the book of Revelation. This suggests a moderate knowledge of Latin: enough to read and understand biblical passages, and also to copy them. Their original prophetic passages, as well as their glosses, however, are all composed in High German.

The brothers' use of the vernacular, with Latin accents, reveals their intended audience. They understood that the high religious authorities whose approval they sought preferred Latin. But their other audience, perhaps the more significant one, was the people of the Reich, who would understand best in German. Indeed, numerous passages reveal that Wirsbergers' message was intended especially for German readers. It was written by, for, and about inhabitants of the Reich.

Indeed, the choice of language (though perhaps driven by necessity) reflected their disdain for Latin speakers. The communications contain an anticlerical message, with special enmity directed at educated Latin speakers. They repeatedly express distrust for the highly educated and those literate in Latin. Regarding clerical interpretations of scripture, they write, "He who glosses and interprets the Latin and the scripture in fantastical ways is a fool. He says, 'It shall be that this and that will happen.' But it has not happened yet. We have not experienced the suffering yet, etc."<sup>13</sup>

The brothers' communications, like many contemporary prophecies, go even farther, fantasizing violence against learned clerics. They state, "I pray, I fast, I celebrate

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schribt sey von nymet antwort widerfaren dar durch er möchte wissen ob die sach erlernet geachtet und erkennet biß her war ward. Item."

13 Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2^85, fol. 203v: "Der boßet und gelegt die latein und schrifft wunderlich auß vn[de] ist ain narr. Es soll wor dz dises und genes geschechen. Es geschicht noch nit. Wir erleben der stich nit etc. Anima mea, habes multa bona etc. Luc 12,19. Nonne in nomine tuo prophetamus demonia eiecimus et multas veritates fecimus etc. Domine domine. Matth 7,22. Ich pet, ich fast, ich feyr, ich halt recht regement ret orden observantz und gericht und pyn des gelauben deß haupt sant peters und der gemainschafft der heyligen cristenlichen kirchen deß römischen stuoles dy well anders wissen wuellen lesen finden und guotte latin die recht reden und auß legen un[de] sagen etc. Man solt disen mit der sag pennen."

the saints' days, I hold to the rules of the order and to justice and to the beliefs of the head of Saint Peter and the community of the holy Christian Church and the Roman seat, who know, read, find, and speak the laws with good Latin, and who interpret and communicate them. They with their speeches should be burned."

They also cite biblical passages to imply that the clergy are guilty of false teaching and leading Christians astray. For example, one passage cites Matthew 24:3, "And when he was sitting on Mount Olivet the disciples came to him privately, saying: Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of your coming and of the consummation of the world? And Jesus answering, said to them: Take heed that no man seduce you." This is followed by a quote from Psalm 146:4, "in that day all their thoughts shall perish." The author then explains, "Cursed is all their seeing and hearing and speaking of salvation... and their speechmaking, studying, teaching, understanding and recognizing."<sup>14</sup> It continues, citing Matthew 23:34–35, "Therefore behold I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify: and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city," and Luke: 21:16, "And you shall be betrayed by your parents and brethren and kinsmen and friends: and some of you they will put to death." The passage concludes, "They will be strangled by the noose of evil and deceit that they have made, to their eternal death! Ha ha ha hy hy hy."<sup>15</sup> Thus, the brothers appear to use Gospel passages to threaten learned clerics with murder.

Furthermore, the brothers imply that the clergy are actually part of the being of Antichrist. Another passage states, "In the birth, deeds, and character of Antichrist they will not recognize themselves and yet by their harsh, unyielding manners they may bring down the holy community and the head of Saint Peter."<sup>16</sup> A citation from 1 John 2:18 follows, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that Antichrist comes, even now there have become many Antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us: but that they may be manifest, that they are not all of us." This is followed by 2 Peter 2:1–2, "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be among you lying teachers who shall bring in sects of perdition and deny the Lord who bought them: bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their riotousness, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

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<sup>14</sup> Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 199v: "Item verflu<sup>^</sup>cht ist alle ir sehen hören und reden der selikeit pißher und noch heutiß unter iren reten studiren leren weißhetten erkentlichaiten und vers-ten."

<sup>15</sup> Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 199v: "Item Sy werden laider in der strick des ubels und der poßhait den sy in gemacht haben erworren das ewigen todes, der weys, ha ha ha hy hy hy."

<sup>16</sup> Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 199v: "Und ainen sust dem andren so von der gepurt und sach Antichristi aÿgenschaftt und wellen sich selb nit erkennen und doch by irrer so stiefflichen weiß mercken das sÿ de heylgen gemeinschaftt und das haubt sant peters nidert besten damit magen und vor an lain auß in gegangen sein als sich canonica johannis von in gezuget fundet."



The passage from 2 Peter appears frequently throughout the communication in conjunction with criticism of the learned clergy. In one passage, they affirm, “We are known by our fruits and our works. We recognize nowhere the existence of the hand of God in the holy priests of Saint Peter. Here is what is meant by the hand of Saint Peter... ‘even as there shall be among you lying teachers... through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.’ Should the community of saints be among us and our ways, then so may the devil laugh. Indeed, I write and lament that never can there be a community of saints, wisdom, ways, deeds, appearances, fruit or works. He (Antichrist) is us and their community, he is in us and among us mingled over all of Christendom and the world and their witness will die the eternal death.”<sup>17</sup>

As these passages demonstrate, the Wirsbergers exhibit a fascinating combination of attitudes towards the learned clergy. They recognize the special authority and ability of clerics to determine the spiritual validity of visions, but they also resent the clerical monopoly on interpretation and spiritual authority. At several points in their communication, they attack the clergy for false interpretation. It is a case, they maintain, of the blind leading the blind. They lament, “Woe, woe, and woe! See here how we allow ourselves be made fools with blind, senseless interpretations, sayings, and deeds. How one after the next has incorrectly spoken the bad text and still today we dogs and we swine do this. How we let ourselves be blindly tricked and confused into the eternal damnation. God laments that his words are not accepted, recognized, or accomplished... and no one exhibits any reason or virtue.”<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, they express the belief, common in popular German prophecy, that the clergy will meet a bloody and warranted end. This conviction is bolstered by their belief that the false prophets and teachers warned of in the bible, who will lead Christians to damnation, are the learned clergy. For the Wirsbergers, this is proof that Antichrist already exists in the world and has infiltrated the Christian Church and community.

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17 Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 197r: “Item Es fündet sich oder an unsern fruchten und werken nündert daß wir der aygenschaft des hant deo häylichen sant peters pristen kennen. Item welch solt sant peters hand maÿnen in seiner canonica vor berürt Item sic et in vobis erunt magistri mendaces... Item per quos via veritatem plasmabatur... Item sol dem also under unß unser weÿß gemeinschaft der hailigen sein so mecht eß woll der tüfel lachen. Doch so schreib und schreÿ ich do daß nündert kain gemeinschaft der haylgen weÿß weg willen sach erscheinen fruchten noch werken und er unß ist und ir gemeinschaft in unß und under unß ver mischet uber alle Cristenhäÿt und werlt und uß in und iren getzugung getötet deß ewigen todeß wirt.”

18 Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 198r: “We we und we. Wie lassen wir unß toren mit plinten ungruntlichen ußlegen sagen und sachen wie eÿne sust die andren so doch vor den schlechten text nicht recht ußgesagt haben und noch heütiges thun sin wir hund und wir swein wie gar laß wir unß alle plintlingen in die ewigen verführung petören und verwürn. Nu ist doch gar bedeutlich zü mercken daz got clagt wie sein wort nicht gen erkennet noch getan werden und eß isst dar zü in aller menglich yeder glauben weiß sich syten wercken für augen und im niemand kain grund.”

## The German Empire at the End of Time

The brothers also lay the matter of examination at the feet of the imperial cities. This is rather surprising, as imperial city councils had no claim to spiritual authority or right to judge the validity of prophetic writings. Yet the brothers repeatedly put the matter before the Empire and its cities, for, as they explain, “this matter directly impacts the Reich.” Receiving no response, they complain, “and we must say that the matter has been sent to the emperor, king, princes, *studia*, and learned men, and also to you Nürnberg, Erfurt, and Regensburg. And yet he who wrote this has received no answer, so that he might know whether the matter has yet been learnedly considered and recognized.”<sup>19</sup> The second communication written to the city of Nürnberg declares, “Nürnberg, oh Nürnberg, woe Nürnberg, I have already sent you three copies of this highest communication... and as yet I have received no answer... as to whether these things come from God or from the devil.” Another letter from Janko apparently sent to Bürgermeister und Council of Eger, makes a similar statement. The letter informs the city that he has written “to princes and cities, that the matter should be examined appropriately and necessarily, the earlier the better.”<sup>20</sup> It is notable that the brothers’ list places imperial cities and princes alongside learned men and schools, as though these were equally legitimate authorities.

The conflating of religious and imperial authority was not the product of a disordered mind. Rather it was a savvy recognition of a developing political reality. Imperial cities were taking an increasingly active role in the spirituality of their citizens and the management of the Church within their jurisdictions. With this came a sense that city councils had a responsibility to guard the morals and souls of their inhabitants. This belief was a harbinger of the early days of the Reformation, when the councils of cities such as Nürnberg felt empowered to choose their own confessional fates. The care the Wirsbergers took to address city councils in their quest for validity suggests that they recognized this new role and supported it. It also suggests that they perceived the power of these free cities to make religious decisions, and possibly to defend them against inimical Church authorities. In other words, the brothers, having been spurned by Church officials, might have turned to cities as an alternate form of support and of protection.

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**19** Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>o</sup> 85, fol. 190r: “Darumb es seÿ nun gewant umb sollich sach von got oder von den tēwfel kummen. So berürt die doch auf daß reich und wir lassen unß sagen wie die sach hand daby an euch von nürenberg ertfurd und regensburg gelanget seÿ und demie der auch schribt sey von nÿmet antwort widerfaren dar durch er möchte wissen ob die sach erlernet geachtet und erkennet biß her war ward. Item.”

**20** Gradl, “Die Irrlehre,” 273: “On ffürsten und Stet, habe domit doch dy sach ye ee ye pesser ordentlich und notdurfftiglich verhöret werde; doch das man ffürsten und stete des Reiches auch dertzustellen sol und must haben, geitlich und werntlich, wann dy sach auff das Reiche dor umb lawten und das mit geczeugung der heyligen schriffth hoch and peberlich angeczogen ist...”

This recognition of the authority of imperial cities fits perfectly with the brothers' eschatological program, which asserts that the inhabitants of the Empire – and especially the free imperial cities – have a special role to play in the impending upheavals. The writer frequently emphasizes that the matter about which he writes is of particular import to the people and cities of the Empire. At the beginning of the communication to Hans from the East, the author explains that he writes in order to be informed “what one may rightly teach on account of God and how he should seek out and approach the people of the Reich, learned and unlearned. Here my dear friend Hans is meant the free and imperial cities, especially the Christians of Ulm, Nürnberg, Regensburg and Erfurt.”<sup>21</sup> To these cities, he addresses his message regarding this “important and unheard of and far reaching matter... that affects you, as you may perceive from the contents.”

The preoccupation with the Empire is not unique to the Wirsbergers. Rather it represents a peculiar aspect of German popular prophecy: the emphasis on a special role for the German people and imperial cities in the upcoming apocalyptic events. The composers of popular prophecy in late medieval Germany frequently transform the traditional apocalyptic narrative to give Germans a starring role in the End Times. Popular prophecies present the Germans as chastisers of the corrupt Church in the forthcoming tribulations before the End Times, and as leaders of the reformed Church in the millennial era of milk and honey.

The Wirsbergers have their own radical and unorthodox take on the role of the Empire. They express this through their glosses of passages in the bible associated with the apocalypse. For instance, they cite Jeremiah 4:6, “Set up the standard in Zion. Strengthen yourselves, stay not: for I bring evil from the north, and great destruction.” As explication, they assert, “Hear and raise up the great sign and wonder, by Zion is meant the Reich.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, by associating the Empire with Zion, they suggest that the Reich is to be the spiritual home of the redeemed, the New Jerusalem of the End Times.

They also interpret apocalyptic passages from the Gospels and Revelation as referring specifically to the people and cities of the Empire. The communication states that the seven mountains in Revelation, upon which the whore of Babylon sits, represent the seven elector-princes of the Empire, “And here is the understanding that

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<sup>21</sup> Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>o</sup> 85, fol. 190r: “So daß man sich dar nach richten sol werde sy aber erkant von anfechtung teyfels dass man sich zehütten aber wiß so sol er dar in tun und laussen was man in von gotz wegen auch under richten müg und wie er solichs bey des reichs lēwten gelerten und ungelerten su<sup>o</sup>chen sý und thun sol... Item Der hy mein lieber frünt Hans sollicher mainung glich er den freý und reich stetten bedütten sol sunderlich daß cristen den von ulm und nürenberg regensburg und erdfurt und ist sollich schwär und ungehört weit läffige sach und schriff an kummen der wir uns kümmern müssen und die wir üch auch mit wöllen verhalten nach den sy doch etwas auff ewch rürt der sach inhelt als ir vernemen müget.”

<sup>22</sup> Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>o</sup> 85, fol. 201r: “Hort hy und hept auff das groß wunder und zaichen ir in syon dem reich gemaint Et dicite congregami et ingrediamur civitates munitas levate signum in syon Item”.

has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sits: and they are seven kings.' By this is meant the elector-princes."<sup>23</sup> Revelation 17:10 then pronounces "and five (of the mountains) are fallen." This, the gloss explains, means that the elector-princes "are with Antichrist and Lucifer and remain with them." Furthermore, the author identifies the beast which was and is not, as in Revelation 17:8, "The beast which you saw, was, and is not, and shall come up out of the bottomless pit and go into destruction. And the inhabitants on the earth (whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) shall wonder, seeing the beast that was and is not." This beast "means an emperor or a Roman king and the Reich." And not just any emperor, but in fact the current one, for "this touches here the emperor who is now chosen by the seven princes."

This interpretation suggests a diabolical role for the leaders of the Empire. And yet, the passage continues with a much more positive interpretation of the Empire. The communication addressed to Nürnberg asserts that the people of the Empire are ordered to follow the commandment to preach to all nations in the time before the End, "Now hear, Reich and Reichsland and cities, what God demands and asks of you in Matthew 24:14, 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations: and then shall the consummation come.'" The communication next cites Luke 17:37 on the coming of Christ, "They answering, say to him: Where, Lord? Who said to them: Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together."<sup>24</sup> The brothers then clarify that the eagles gathered together represent the Empire and the free imperial cities. In this interpretation, the Empire and its cities will thus be gathered where Christ comes. Most

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**23** Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 192v: "Si fieri potest etiam electi die man by ewch die hailige reich süchen und funden sol sunderlich auch meinen des kurland leütt und stetten und in den freÿ und reichstetten also sie haimlich offenbarung am xvii capitulo Inhelt hic est superfluous [sic] qui habet intellectum vii capita vii montes sunt und sein die und kur gemaint super quos sedet mulier das ist der gaistlich statt genannt und die da trancken von der hailigen plüt und der mertirer ihu ist da vor In dem xvii capitulo berürt. Item. Vidi mulierem ebriam de sanguine sanctorum et de sanguine martyrum ihu. Hort ferner wider von dem kürfürsten und herren. Item. Quinque ceciderunt bey dem dißer fienselikait wirt mag gefunden wissen wan sy dem antichristi und by lucifer sein und beyben werden. ... Item. Et bestia que erat et non est (Rev. 17:11). Das ist ain kaiser oder ein Römischer küng und das reich gemaint. Etiam de est et in interitum ibit haben sich hy die kayser der itzunt von dem sibem kurn koren ist und doch mit deiner fruchtung nicht bist als du darumb gewebet geweliet und sein soldest.

**24** Augsburg UB, Cod. II, 1 2<sup>^</sup>85, fol. 192v: Nun hört die reichung und des reichs land stet was ewch got Mt xxiiii capitulo wil fordert und begert. Item. Predicabitur hoc ewangelium regni et universo mundo in testimonium omnibus gentibus tunc venit consummatio. Item. Und darumb und auch luc am xvii capitulo wie sich by ewch reich und freÿ stetten dy adler besamen süllen ubicumque fuerit corpus Christi congregabuntur et aquile (Luke 17:37 & Matth 24:28). Der leichnam damit sein die land und stett des reiches gemaint, die ir geschicht in allen iren betrachten fligen in die höche auff der erden ob aller erkentlichait haben werden die erkentlichait des ertrichs darin got seinen samen nun seen und arbaiten zü fruchtberikait ist. Item. Uff zu waschen und sich zu neren davon alle welt in ainen gelauben zu besamen und zu speisen. Item.

extraordinary of all, the communication further elucidates that the “body” (i.e. the body of Christ) in the scriptural passage refers to the land and cities of the Reich. It explains, “By the body is meant the land and cities of the Reich. You will fly to the highest place. You will have recognition above all others, the recognition of the earth in which God has sown his seeds and worked them to fruitfulness, so that all the world may grow, and be fertilized, and be nourished in one belief.”

From these glosses, we learn that the Wirsbergers expect the inhabitants of the Holy Roman Empire to be among the elect. (Keeping in mind that Jesus warns his followers that many will be deceived by false prophets and led astray from the faith. Only a few elect will remain true.) Moreover, the Germans will, as true Christians and witnesses of Christ, proselytize his message and preach to all nations. And this preaching will directly precede the End Times, which they avow, will come soon. Thus, when Christ returns, the Empire and its cities will be gathered there like eagles around a corpse. Then the metaphor changes, and the body of Christ becomes a symbol of the imperial (German) lands. The brothers declare that the German lands will be rewarded for their righteousness. The Germans are the seeds sown by God that will grow and bear fruit. They will reap the rewards of this fruitfulness. The reference to the fruitfulness of the earth, when all the world will be united in one belief, indicates a millennial time of peace and bounty, after the tribulations and before the Judgment, echoing their association of the Reich with Zion. In other words, the Reich cities and lands appear to be the elect, who will triumph as the victors at the End of Time.

## Conclusion

Until recently, our knowledge of the Wirsberger brothers has been derived almost exclusively from hostile sources. As a result, our view of the Wirsbergers’ actual ideas and writings has been somewhat obscured. Now, a close study of the brothers’ communications reveals that they coincide with the preoccupations expressed in popular prophecies circulating in the German-speaking realm. The prophecies use the vernacular. They express hostility and violence towards clerics and Latin speakers. They are vociferously anti-clerical and anti-Roman. They emphasize the imminence of the Last Days and the frightful nature of the approaching tribulations. And they give the Holy Roman Empire a special role in the End Times. The Wirsbergers’ unorthodox interpretation has many unique and indeed bizarre aspects and must be considered within its own context. Nevertheless, its salient features reflect a home-grown strain of prophetic thought in late medieval Germany. Two fundamental elements of this strain of prophetic thought are resentment of the clergy and the establishment of an apocalyptic, often millennial role, for Germans. Through these elements, prophecies engaged in contemporary discourses of a nascent German identity. Thus, popular prophecy acted as a space where Germans staked their own special claim to knowledge, spiritual authority, and the future of the Christian world. The Wirsbergers, laymen and

members of the Empire, add their voices to this discourse, staking their own claims to knowledge of the future and resolutely proclaiming their vision of the Empire in the End Times.





Anselm Schubert

## **Nova Israhelis republica. Das Täuferreich von Münster 1534/35 als wahres Israel**

Die Christentumsgeschichte zeigt an vielen Beispielen, wie einfach es ist, Andere als apokalyptische Feinde zu perhorrezieren. Ungleich schwieriger ist es, den Anspruch des eigenen Auserwähltseins unter den Bedingungen der Gegenwart durchzuhalten. Das berühmteste Beispiel der Reformationsgeschichte ist zweifellos das Täuferreich von Münster, das sich als Volk der akuten Endzeit verstand und dabei in die Verlegenheit kam, sich in der realen Welt auf Dauer einrichten zu müssen. Seinen Protagonisten gelang dies, weil sie hartnäckig genug waren, noch die Widerlegung ihrer zentralen Prophezeiungen als Bestätigung der eigenen Auserwähltheit zu interpretieren. Im Folgenden soll untersucht werden, wie und unter welchen Bedingungen den Münsteraner Täufern die angesichts der äußeren Umstände nur als kontrafaktisch zu bezeichnende Etablierung und Begründung ihres Herrschaftsanspruches gelang.

Einen wichtigen Schritt zur Lösung dieses für eine angemessene Deutung des Gesamtphänomens zentralen Problems hat Claus Bernet gemacht, der in einem Beitrag betont hat, dass und wie sich das Täuferreich von Münster als das wahre Israel interpretierte und inszenierte.<sup>1</sup> Das von Bernet versammelte Material zeigt eindrucksvoll, in welcher Weise die Münsteraner ihre Stadt und ihr Gemeinwesen als das „himmlische Jerusalem“ der Apokalypse imaginierten, und durch bauliche, rechtliche und soziale Maßnahmen versuchten, sie an das apokalyptische Idealbild anzupassen.

Dennoch ist das Bild, das Bernet zeichnet, in zweifacher Hinsicht problematisch. Zum einen identifiziert Bernet das „nova Israhel“ oder „nova Hierosolyma“ der Täufer vor dem Hintergrund des melchioritischen Chiliasmus unkritisch mit dem „himmlischen Jerusalem“ aus Apokalypse 22. Damit handelt sich Bernet das Problem ein, nicht nur eine reformationsgeschichtliche Sonderstellung des Täuferreiches, sondern auch eine fortgesetzte kognitive Dissonanz der Münsteraner Täufer begründen zu müssen, die die Gassen der irdischen Stadt Münster hartnäckig mit den Straßen des himmlischen Jerusalems verwechselt hätten.<sup>2</sup>

Zum anderen wirft Bernets Umgang mit den Quellen Probleme auf: ausgehend von der unhinterfragten These, das himmlische Jerusalem sei eine endzeitliche Theokra-

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1 Claus Bernet: The Concept of the New Jerusalem among early Anabaptists in Münster 1534/35. An Interpretation of Political, Social and Religious Rule, in: ARG 102 (2011), S. 175 – 194; die ähnlich gerichtete Studie von Jörg Trelenburg: Die Bibel als ‚Regiebuch‘ für das Täuferreich von Münster, in: JBWKG 104 (2008), S. 79 – 109, hat er offenbar jedoch nicht zur Kenntnis genommen.

2 Bernet interpretiert dieses Unterfangen als Versuch, die Realität durch Theologie zu bestimmen und das himmlische Jerusalem in Westfalen antizipatorisch vorwegzunehmen. Vgl. Bernet, wie Anm. 1, S. 176: „Münsterites sought to reshape the social and physical order so as to conform to the biblical apocalyptic pattern, i.e. the notion that theology shapes reality.“

tie,<sup>3</sup> ordnet er alle aus den Quellen erhobenen Details in diesen homogenisierenden Rahmen ein.<sup>4</sup> Dabei blendet er nicht nur die – in der Forschung schon früh untersuchten – inneren Differenzen und Entwicklungen der sozialen und politischen Struktur des Täuferreichs zwischen Ostern 1534 und Sommer 1535 aus,<sup>5</sup> sondern ignoriert auch die in der Täuferforschung seit Cornelius<sup>6</sup> bekannte, und durch die Arbeiten Kirchoffs und Klötzers eindrucksvoll bestätigte Erkenntnis,<sup>7</sup> dass die zentralen Berichte von Gresbeck,<sup>8</sup> Dorpius<sup>9</sup> und Kerssenbroich<sup>10</sup> nicht als Tatsachenberichte gelten können, sondern hochproblematische Texte darstellen, deren Erkenntniswert für die Rekonstruktion der Geschichte des Täuferreiches stets kritisch befragt werden muss – und im Falle des berühmtesten Textes von Kerssenbroich nahezu Null ist.<sup>11</sup>

Um Bernets berechtigten Ansatz fortzuführen ist es daher unerlässlich, eine Aussage primär aus den erhaltenen täuferischen Quellen selbst zu rekonstruieren, und nur dort, wo es unerlässlich ist und sich die Zeugnisse sinnvoll ergänzen, auf die bekannten „master narratives“ zurückzugreifen.<sup>12</sup>

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3 Vgl. ebd.

4 So beginnt er, ebd., die Rekonstruktion des neuen Jerusalem sogleich mit der Proklamation des Königreiches Jan van Leidens, ohne zu berücksichtigen, dass bereits seit Ostern 1534 Münster sich als neues Israel verstand und zunächst eine Ältesten- bzw. Richterfassung besaß.

5 So grundlegend noch immer Eike Wolgast: Herrschaftsorganisation und Herrschaftskrisen im Täuferreich von Münster 1534/35, in: ARG 67 (1976), S. 179–202.

6 Vgl. dazu das Vorwort von Cornelius, wie Anm. 8, S. IX-XCVIII.

7 Vgl. etwa Karl-Heinz Kirchoff: Die Täufer in Münster 1534/35. Untersuchungen zum Umfang und zur Sozialstruktur der Bewegung, Münster 1973; ders.: Die Endzeiterwartung der Täufergemeinde zu Münster 1534/35, in: JBWKG 78 (1985), S. 19–42; Ralf Klötzer: Die Täuferherrschaft von Münster. Stadtreformation und Welterneuerung (= RGST 131), Münster 1992; ders.: Hoffnungen auf eine andere Wirklichkeit. Der Erwartungshorizont in der Täuferstadt Münster 1534/35, in: Außenseiter zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit. FS Hans-Jürgen Goertz, hg. von Norbert Fuchs und Marion Kobelt-Groch (= SMRT 51), Leiden / New York / Köln 1997, S. 153–170; ders.: Herrschaft der Täufer, Barbara Rommé (Hg.): Das Königreich der Täufer. Reformation und Herrschaft der Täufer in Münster (Katalog), Bd. 1, Münster 2000, S. 104–131.

8 Carl Adolf Cornelius (Hg.): Berichte der Augenzeugen über das Münsterische Täuferreich, Münster 1853, S. 1–214.

9 Heinrich Dorpius: Wahrhafte Historie, wie das Evangelium zu Münster angefangen und danach, durch die Wiedertäufer zerstört, wieder aufgehört hat, in: Adolf Laube (Hg.): Flugschriften vom Bauernkrieg zum Täuferreich (1526–1535), 2 Bde., Berlin 1992, 2 Bd., S. 1662–1697.

10 Heinrich Detmer (Hg.): Hermanni a Kerssenbroch Anabaptistici furoris Monasterium inclitum Westphaliae metropolim evertentis historica narratio (= GQBM 5/6), Münster 1899/1900.

11 So zu zuletzt auch in Willem de Bakker / Michael Driedger / James Stayer: Bernhard Rothmann and the Reformation in Münster 1530–1535, Kitchener/Ontraio 2009, S. 9–11.

12 Dieses Vorgehen hat schon Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, verfolgt, ohne es jedoch explizit zu machen. Allerdings hat er die Beziehungen zwischen Münster und dem neuen Israel nicht in den Fokus seiner Aufmerksamkeit gestellt.

Die Vorgeschichte und Entstehung des Münsteraner Täuferreichs aus der Verbindung von straßburgischem und niederländischem Melchioritismus soll nicht Gegenstand dieser Untersuchung sein.<sup>13</sup> Wichtig ist allerdings, dass die Vorstellung, jene sichere Stadt, in der das Täuferum das Ende der Welt überleben werde, sei in irgendeiner Weise als Jerusalem zu verstehen, in Melchioritischen Kreisen schon vor dem Entstehen der Täuferherrschaft in Münster bekannt war. Schon 1530 hatte Melchior Hoffman die Schar der Auserwählten – im Sinne der patristischen Vorstellung vom *verus israel*<sup>14</sup> – als „geistliches Jerusalem“<sup>15</sup> verstanden; zugleich identifizierte er das irdische Straßburg als Ort dieses geistlichen Jerusalems,<sup>16</sup> das sich den Mächten des Bösen bis zu Wiederkunft Christi in einem apokalyptischen Endkampf entgegenstellen werde. Der Beginn dieses Kampfes stehe, so Hoffman, für 1533 zu erwarten, er forderte den Rat der Stadt Straßburg deshalb auf, sich zu bewaffnen und die verfolgten Täufer aufzunehmen. Nachdem der Straßburger Rat keinerlei Anstalten machte, seiner Rolle als endzeitliches Jerusalem nachzukommen, sondern Hoffman ins Gefängnis warf, wurde die Prophezeiung von dem niederländischen Täuferpropheten Jan Mathijs weitergetragen: er sagte im November 1533 das Weltende für Ostern 1534 voraus, hob eigenmächtig den Taufstillstand auf, um in den Monaten vor dem Weltende die letzten Auserwählten noch versiegeln zu können, und erklärte, Münster sei der von Gott auserkorene Ort, an dem die Gerechten Schutz finden sollten.<sup>17</sup> In der Folge strömten seit Januar 1534 niederländische und niederdeutsche Täufer hierher, um das Weltende am Ostersonntag, dem 4. April 1534, abzuwarten.

Innerhalb weniger Wochen kippte die Stadt: Anfang Februar hatte sich bereits ein Viertel der Bevölkerung neu taufen lassen. In diesem Zusammenhang begegnet auch unter den einfachen Taufwilligen in Münster erstmals die Erwartung, ihre Stadt sei der Ort, an dem das *neue* Jerusalem wiedererstehen solle.<sup>18</sup> Mitte Februar erließ der evangelische Rat ein Toleranzedikt gegenüber den Täufern, und Ende Februar hatten die Täufer schon die Ratswahlen gewonnen.<sup>19</sup> Innerhalb weniger Wochen war aus einer evangelischen Stadt, die einen Konflikt mit ihrem Bischof hatte, eine täuferische

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**13** Man vgl. dazu die Standardwerke (wie Anm. 7) und vor allem Klaus Deppermann: *Melchior Hoffman. Soziale Unruhen und apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Göttingen 1979.

**14** Vgl. dazu grundlegend Marcel Simon: *Verus Israel. Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'Empire Romain (135–425)*, Paris 2. Aufl. 1964; eine hilfreiche Zusammenstellung der wichtigsten Texte findet sich bei Kurt Hruby: *Juden und Judentum bei den Kirchenvätern (= SJK 2)*, Zürich 1972.

**15** Vgl. Deppermann, wie Anm. 13, S. 224, Anm. 155, und 227, Anm. 169.

**16** Vgl. ebd., S. 228, Anm. 171.

**17** Vgl. ebd., S. 289 ff.

**18** Das entsprechende Zeugnis von Kerksenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 487, wird bestätigt durch das (oder beruht auf dem) Zeugnis des Jakob Hufschmied: „[...] bessert vch, dan der Konig van Syon wert khomen heraff, vnd das Jherusalem widder vffbouwen“ (in Joseph Niesert (Hg.): *Münsterische Urkundensammlung*. Erster Band: *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Münsterischen Wiedertäufer*, Coesfeld 1826, S. 155). Grundlegend dazu Bakker, wie Anm. 11, S. 157–171, bes. 160 f.

**19** Vgl. dazu Klötzer, *Täuferherrschaft*, wie Anm. 7, S. 75.

Endzeitgemeinschaft geworden, die für den 4. April das Ende dieser Welt erwartete und die sich überdies seit Ende Februar mit den irdischen Mächten (in Form der Fürstenkoalition) im Krieg befand.

Angesichts des Belagerungszustandes und des nahen Weltendes, begann der täuferisch dominierte Stadtrat mit einer religiösen Säuberung der Stadt:<sup>20</sup> alle Nichttaufwilligen mussten die Stadt verlassen, da sie einen religiösen und militärischen Unsicherheitsfaktor darstellten. Alle übrigen Bürger wurden auf dem Marktplatz vom Münster neu getauft, die Kirchen geschlossen, die Akten des Ratsarchivs verbrannt, die Ständeordnung wurde aufgehoben, der Privatbesitz abgeschafft und der Gemeinschaftsbesitz an aller beweglichen und unbeweglichen Habe erklärt. Der Ostersonntag ging schließlich ereignislos vorbei, und am folgenden Ostermontag ritt Jan Mathijs vor die Stadt und ließ sich von den Belagerern töten.<sup>21</sup> In der Forschung ist dieser Akt stets als Verzweiflungstat interpretiert worden, doch womöglich identifizierte sich Jan Mathijs mit einem der beiden Zeugen aus Apk. 11,3 und wollte mit seinem gewaltsamen Tod das Kommen des Endes doch noch erzwingen oder zumindest beschleunigen.<sup>22</sup>

Nach dem Verstreichen des Ostertermins mussten sich die Täufer wider Erwarten auf Dauer in einer Gegenwart einrichten, die es gar nicht hätte geben dürfen. Die Aufgabe, das Scheitern der Prophezeiung zu erklären, übernahm der Schneidergeselle Jan van Leiden, der die rechte Hand von Mathijs gewesen war.<sup>23</sup> Er nahm das Thema des neuen Jerusalem auf, gab ihm aber eine bezeichnende Wende:<sup>24</sup> Münster sei nicht nur als Fluchtort angesichts des Endes zu verstehen. Das Weltende sei verschoben, denn Gott wolle, dass Münster erst ganz rein und heilig werde und von seinem Vorbild die Bekehrung der Welt ausgehe.<sup>25</sup> Das bedeutete, dass die Münsteraner sich öffentlich als soziale Gemeinschaft von Täufern organisieren mussten. Das einzige Vorbild für ein dementsprechendes, heiliges Gemeinwesen, auf das man zurückgreifen konnte, war zwangsläufig Israel, das auserwählte Volk des alten Bundes.<sup>26</sup> Vor diesem Hintergrund verwundert es nicht, dass Jan van Leiden als Prophet unmittelbar nach dem Scheitern

<sup>20</sup> Dazu grundlegend ebd. 67–85.

<sup>21</sup> Vgl. Bakker, wie Anm. 11, S. 169.

<sup>22</sup> Vgl. grundlegend Rodney L. Peterson: *Preaching in the Last days. The Theme of two Witnesses in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century*, Oxford 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. Bakker, wie Anm. 11, S. 169.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. ebd.

<sup>25</sup> Die Aussage, die Gresbeck als Predigt Jan van Leidens kolportiert („Und al das ungerechtigkeit und al, dat noch in sunden iss, dat moet uthgeradet sein, wante das vorbelde is reide, und gy siet ingetreten in die apostolische kercke, und gy siet hillch. Hilligh iss der her und gy siet sein volck. Als nu dat vorbelde reide ist, so sol it aver die heile welt sein, glick als hir begunnen iss in dieser stat.“; wie Anm. 8, S. 41), wird gestützt durch die Stadtverordnung vom April 1534 (vgl. Kerssenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 578).

<sup>26</sup> Kerssenbroichs entsprechend tendenziöse Angabe („Cum hi designatu fuissent, Bernardus Rothmannus apud populum de nova hac reipublicae forma concionatus est, quae a Deo instituta Israelitici populi Deo adamati imaginem referret, Atque hic eorum nomina publice recitavit.“ wie Anm. 10, S. 576) wird gestützt durch die Aussage des Obe Philipps (vgl. Richard van Dülmen (Hg.): *Das Täuferreich zu Münster 1534–1535. Berichte und Dokumente*, München 1974, S. 41).

der Osterprophezeiung gemäß dem Vorbild der israelitischen Richter einen Rat von 12 Ältesten einrichtete, die auf dem Marktplatz saßen und mit dem Gesetz Gottes die Stadt regieren sollten.<sup>27</sup> Ihre Entschlüsse sollten vom Propheten Jan van Leiden dem Volk verkündet werden.<sup>28</sup>

In einem Aufruf an die Belagerer war schon am 8. April die Umdeutung vollzogen und von einer Krise nichts mehr zu spüren: man lebte im Bewußtsein auserwählt zu sein und in „Münster in der Stadt des höchsten Gottes“<sup>29</sup> zu leben. Die erste Verordnung der Ältesten richtete sich dementsprechend an „ganz Israel, das Volk Gottes“.<sup>30</sup> Da nun das Alte Testament das Gesetzbuch bildete,<sup>31</sup> wurde gemäß den levitischen Verordnungen für eine Vielzahl auch leichtester Sünden wieder die Todesstrafe eingeführt.<sup>32</sup> Die Stadtordnung betont mit Apk. 22,18 dass die Stadt von Sünde ganz rein zu halten sei.<sup>33</sup> Die „sancta civita[s] Monastariensi[s]“<sup>34</sup> erschien in der Stadtordnung deshalb als „nova Israhelis republica“, ihre Bürger werden als „sincer[ae] nimique fucat[ae] israhelitae“<sup>35</sup> bezeichnet.

Mit dem Zitat von Apk. 22,18 scheint die Stadtordnung Münster tatsächlich mit dem *himmlischen Jerusalem* gleichsetzen zu wollen. Gleichwohl ist auffällig, dass von den authentischen Quellen her diese Aussage singulär bleibt und sie wohl nicht allzu belastbar ist; nicht nur die Einsetzung der Richter und die Einschärfung der levitischen Gesetze, die in einem himmlischen Jerusalem beide keine Geltung mehr hätten, auch die sozialpolitischen Maßnahmen der Folgezeit zeigen, dass man sich eher am Vorbild des *alten Israel* orientierte. Das zeigt vor allem schließlich die Einführung der Polygamie im Juli 1534.<sup>36</sup> Da gemäß der israelitischen Verordnung jede Frau einem Manne als Oberhaupt untertan sein mußte, die Zahl der Männer in Münster hierfür jedoch nicht ausreichte, führten die Ältesten die Mehrehe ein. Legitimiert wurde die neue Institution laut den Berichten von Kerksenbroich<sup>37</sup> und Gresbeck<sup>38</sup> mit dem Argu-

<sup>27</sup> Zum Zeitpunkt vgl. Klötzer, Täuferherrschaft, wie Anm. 7, S. 90; bereits die Verordnung vom 8. April wurde im Namen der Ältesten des neuen Reiches erlassen. Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, S. 182, hat auf diese Einrichtung zurecht hingewiesen, aber nicht die Verfassung der atl. Richter, sondern wohl abwegig 4. Mose 1 als Vorbild vermutet.

<sup>28</sup> Vgl. Kerksenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 582 (Nr. 7).

<sup>29</sup> Vgl. ebd.: „[...] in sancta civitate Monasteriensi per gratiam altissimi et omnipotentis Dei vocati“.

<sup>30</sup> Vgl. ebd., S. 577: „pax super universum Israelem, populum Dei“.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. die 13 Gebote des Flugblates, ebd. S. 577–581.

<sup>32</sup> Vgl. ebd., S. 579–581.

<sup>33</sup> Vgl. die ebd., S. 581, mitgeteilte Nachricht, dass Analog zu Apok. 22,14 nur die durch die Tore eingehen, die seine Gebote halten. Die direkte Identifizierung Münsters mit dem himmlischen Jerusalem geht offensichtlich auf eine Information Gresbrecks zurück, nach der die zwölf Tore der Stadt nach den zwölf Toren des himmlischen Jerusalem und der Domhügel nach dem „Berg Zion“ benannt wurde (wie Anm. 8, S. 168).

<sup>34</sup> Vgl. Kerksenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 582.

<sup>35</sup> Ebd., S. 583.

<sup>36</sup> Grundlegend dazu Klötzer, Täuferherrschaft, wie Anm. 7, S. 97–99; Bakker, wie Anm. 11, S. 171–174.

<sup>37</sup> Vgl. Kerksenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 619.

ment, auch die Patriarchen des Alten Testaments hätten mehrere Frauen gehabt, in den Schriften Bernhard Rothmanns zeigt sich jedoch, dass auch hier (ähnlich wie in der Stadtordnung) die Anlehnung an die levitischen Gesetze eine Rolle gespielt zu haben scheint: Unter Berufung auf das Alte Testament sah Rothmann (wie übrigens auch andere täuferische Gruppen der frühen 1530er Jahre)<sup>39</sup> den Geschlechtsverkehr mit einer unfruchtbaren (d. h. menstruierenden, schwangeren oder zu alten) Frau als Todsünde an.<sup>40</sup> Angesichts des Schöpfungsbefehls und zur Vermeidung männlicher Unzucht schien es deshalb sinnvoll und legitim, mehrere Frauen zu haben, mit denen der Mann ehelich, also sündlos verkehren konnte.

Wie weit bei allem Widerstand gegen die Polygynie auch unter manchen Frauen die Identifizierung mit dem alten Israel ging, zeigt das berühmte Beispiel der Hille Feiken, die bereits im Juni den Plan gefasst hatte, nach dem Vorbild der Judith<sup>41</sup> aus dem Lager zu entweichen und den gegnerischen Heerführer zu erstechen, um die Belagerung Münsters zu beenden. Sie wurde, anders als ihr alttestamentliches Vorbild, jedoch gefasst und sofort hingerichtet.<sup>42</sup>

Ein zentraler Schritt in der Entwicklung des „neuen Israel“ war schließlich der Übergang von der Richterverfassung zur Monarchie im September 1534.<sup>43</sup> Nachdem der Sturmangriff vom 31. August abgewehrt worden war, verkündete der selbsternannte Prophet Johan Dusentschur, Gott habe Jan van Leiden zum König bestimmt, und rief ihn vor dem Volk zum König aus.<sup>44</sup> Auch weil Jan van Leiden später beteuerte, dieses Amt gar angestrebt zu haben,<sup>45</sup> ist der Wandel von einer kommunalen zu einer monarchischen Verfassung des Täuferreichs von der bisherigen Forschung als Herrschaftskrise verstanden worden.<sup>46</sup> Mit Blick auf das alttestamentliche Vorbild erscheint die Einführung der Monarchie in Münster jedoch geradezu zwangsläufig, denn

**38** Gresbeck, wie Anm. 8, S. 60.

**39** Vgl. dazu auch Anselm Schubert: Der Tag vom Traum des Herrn. Die „Uttenreuther Träumer“ und das apokalyptische Täuferium, in: ARG 97 (2006), S. 6–37.

**40** Vgl. Bernhard Rothmann: Restitution rechter und gesunder christlicher Lehre, in: Robert Stupperich, (Hg.): Die Schriften der Münsterischen Täufer und ihrer Gegner I. Die Schriften Bernhard Rothmanns (= VHKW XXXII/1), Münster 1970, S. 259 und 264 f. Die radikale Identifizierung mit dem auserwählten Volk des Endes führte auch zu einer Revitalisierung der Reinheitsgebote des Alten Testaments: Nicht Libertinismus, sondern umgekehrt Vermeidung der Sünden der Unzucht unter den Auserwählten war der entscheidende Grund für die Einführung der Polygamie, insbesondere da sie im Grunde ganz konsequent die reformatorische Überzeugung von der Unvermeidlichkeit der Sexualität auf die bestehenden biblischen Eheordnungen anwendete.

**41** So explizit in ihrer Aussage bei Niesert, wie Anm. 18, S. 44 f.

**42** Vgl. Klötzer, Täuferherrschaft, wie Anm. 7, S. 96.

**43** Grundlegend dazu noch immer Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, 186 ff.

**44** Der tendenziöse Bericht von Kerssenbroich (wie Anm. 10, S. 634–636), laut dem Dusentschur den Ältesten das Schwert genommen und es Jan van Leiden gereicht habe, um ihn dann vor dem Volk „zum neuen König in Zion“ zu salben, wird bestätigt durch eine Vielzahl verschiedener Quellen (siehe die Liste bei Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, S. 191, Anm. 50).

**45** Vgl. das Verhör Jan van Leidens vom 25. Juli 1535, in Cornelius, wie Anm. 8, S. 372.

**46** Vgl. Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, S. 186.

auch im Alten Israel war die Zeit der Richter durch die Monarchie abgelöst worden, als der Prophet Samuel zunächst Saul und dann den jungen David zum König über Israel gesalbt hatte.<sup>47</sup>

Wir haben es auch hier offensichtlich weniger mit einer Krise als mit der Nachahmung des alttestamentlichen Vorbildes zu tun,<sup>48</sup> wobei zunächst unklar bleibt, ob die Einsetzung des Königs sich auf den ersten König Saul oder auf seinen Nachfolger David bezog.<sup>49</sup> Die Prediger legitimierten den Verfassungswandel zunächst mit Jer. 23 und Ez. 37 und deuteten die Bevölkerung von Münster als jenes Volk Israel, das durch den Geist des Herrn zu neuem Leben erweckt werde.<sup>50</sup> Spätestens seit Oktober aber wurde Jan van Leiden auch offiziell als David redivivus gedeutet, den Gott in den letzten Tagen des Heils über Israel setzen wolle. Dabei wurde der David redivivus ganz deutlich vom kommenden Messias unterschieden. Rothmann, jetzt Hofprediger des Königs, entwickelte die von der Tradition abweichende Deutung, „nicht David, mer Salomon is ein belde vp Christum“.<sup>51</sup> Dem Friedensfürst Christu müsse ein David als „Hauptmann“ vorausgehen, der dieses Reich erobere und die Gottlosen vernichte.<sup>52</sup> Diese Rolle erfüllte Jan van Leiden als König des neuen Israel – den letzten Schritt, ihn mit Christus gleichzusetzen, gingen die Münsteraner Täufer also bezeichnenderweise

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**47** Darauf macht Trelenberg, wie Anm. 1, S. 102, aufmerksam. Dementsprechend wäre Samuel als erster König durch Jan Mathijs repräsentiert worden.

**48** Tatsächlich befand sich das Täuferreich zu diesem Zeitpunkt auf dem Höhepunkt seines Selbstbewußtseins: der innere Aufstand gegen die Polygamie war ebenso abgewehrt worden wie der zweite Großangriff der alliierten Truppen und noch waren die Nahrungsvorräte nicht knapp. Dass die Münsteraner Bürger murrten, weil ein Ortsfremder König wurde, war schon Saul passiert, weil er aus dem Stamme Benjamin kam (vgl. 1. Sam. 10, 27).

**49** Das zögerliche Widerstreben des Neuernannten erinnert deutlich an Saul (vgl. 1. Sam. 9, 15 ff.); andererseits wird Jan van Leiden bereits früh (bei Kerssenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 637 f.) und bei Bernhard Rothmann explizit mit David identifiziert (vgl. Anm. 51)

**50** Die Aussage bei Kerssenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 638, wird bestätigt durch das Bekenntnis des Dioynsios Vinne (vgl. Cornelius, wie Anm. 8, S. 277).

**51** Vgl. Rothmann, Wrake, wie Anm. 40, S. 294; vgl. auch Restitution, ebd., S. 275; bei Kerssenbroich gilt diese Identifizierung von Beginn an (vgl. Anm. 50).

**52** Vgl. Restitution, wie Anm. 51, S. 276; dazu auch Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, S. 186 mit instruktiven Nachweisen. In der Aufgabenverteilung zwischen einem kämpfenden Endzeitkönig und einem regierenden Friedenskönig gleicht die Lehre Rothmanns der jüdischen Lehre vom Messias ben Joseph und dem Messias ben David, ohne dass diese Zusammenhänge bislang untersucht worden wären. Ein direkter Bezug Rothmanns auf jüdische Quellen ist kaum wahrscheinlich, eher dass Rothmann sein messianologisches Wissen aus christlich-hebraistischen Quellen bezog. Im einschlägigen Werk von Sebastian Münster: *Vikkuah Christiani Hominis cum Iudeo pertinaciter prodigiosis suis opinionibus & scripturæ violentis interpretationibus addicto*, Basileæ MDXXIX, findet sich die Rede von den zwei Messiassen allerdings nicht. Vgl. dazu Anselm Schubert: *Täuferium und Kabbalah*. Augustin Bader und die Grenzen der Radikalen Reformantion (= QFRG 81), Gütersloh 2008, S. 302 ff.



nicht.<sup>53</sup> Sie verstanden sich als das „neue Israel“, aber nicht als die tausendjährige Herrschaft des wiedergekommen Christus.

Die weitere Entwicklung vollzog sich im steten Wechsel von Prophetie und einer Wirklichkeit, in der der Anspruch, das wahre Israel zu sein, immer unwahrscheinlicher erscheinen musste.<sup>54</sup> Ihre Zuspitzung findet diese Problematik schließlich im Antagonismus zwischen dem König und Johan Dusentschur, der, nachdem dieses Amt mit der Ernennung van Leidens zum König frei geworden war, der Hauptprophet geworden war.<sup>55</sup> Von Anfang an war die Inthronisation Jan van Leidens von Dusentschur damit legitimiert worden, dass dieser als König die Herrschaft auch über die außerhalb der Stadtmauern gelegene Welt erringen solle.<sup>56</sup> Im September verkündete Dusentschur dementsprechend, das ganze Volk Israel werde sich an einem bestimmten Tag auf dem „Berg Zion“ versammeln, wie weiland das Volk Israel aus der Gefangenschaft ausziehen und dann mit der Eroberung der Welt beginnen.<sup>57</sup> Unmittelbar vor dem Auszug feierte man in Anlehnung an das Pessach-Mahl des Volkes Israel das Abendmahl als öffentliches Gastmahl.<sup>58</sup>

Die Ankündigung eines siegreichen Auszuges setzte den König Israels jedoch unter Zugzwang. Wollte er nicht die Glaubwürdigkeit des Prophetenamtes untergraben, dem er selbst seine Legitimation verdankte, musste sich diese Prophezeiung erfüllen. Wichtig für unsere Fragestellung ist vor allem der Wandel des Selbstbildes, der sich an der Prophetie Dusentschurs beobachten lässt: Dusentschur interpretierte Münster nicht mehr nur als triumphierendes Israel auf dem Zion, dem die Weltherrschaft offenstand, sondern – und mit Blick auf die Realität nicht zu Unrecht – erstmals

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**53** Die Identifizierung mit dem David redivivus ging zumindest soweit, dass Jan van Leiden offiziell den Titel „Diener Gottes im neuen Tempel“ (vgl. 1. Chron. 22) für sich verwendete; weitere Nachweise vgl. Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, S. 186 ff.

**54** Vgl. dazu instruktiv Wolgast, wie Anm. 5, S. 189 ff. und insgesamt Trelenburg, wie Anm. 1.

**55** Bernhard Knipperdolling, nun Schwerthalter Jan van Leidens, scheint eine Zeitlang mit dieser Rolle geliebäugelt zu haben. Vgl. seinen Versuch, einige Tage nach dem Scheitern der Auszugsprophezeiung dessen Thron zu übernehmen (vgl. Trelenburg, wie Anm. 1, S. 101 ff.). Diese Auseinandersetzung ist von der Forschung als Herrschaftskrise interpretiert worden (vgl. Wolgast, ebd.), die inhärente Symbolik zeigt jedoch, dass wir es hier auch mit dem typologischen Abbild der bereits im Buch Samuel berichteten Rivalität zwischen Prophet und König zu tun haben, zumindest aber, dass und wie auch Machtkämpfe in Münster nur noch im Paradigma der symbolischen Entsprechung mit dem alttestamentlichen Vorbild vollzogen werden konnten.

**56** Vgl. dazu Kerssenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 637; die schlecht belegte Information wird gestützt durch den Brief eines Unbekannten an den Fürstbischof (vgl. Hermann Rump: *Neue Zeitung von den Wider teufferen zu Münster*, in: *Zeitschrift für Vaterländische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* 27 (1867), S. 255–266, ebd., S. 264.

**57** Leider haben wir dazu nur den Bericht von Gresbeck, wie Anm. 8, S. 103–107; vgl. dazu grundlegend Klötzer, *Täuferherrschaft*, wie Anm. 7, S. 11 f.

**58** Das hat Trelenberg, wie Anm. 1, S. 104, sehr klar herausgestellt.

auch als in Ägypten gefangenes Israel, das von Gott erst noch befreit werden musste.<sup>59</sup> Der langfristig vorbereitete Auszug der gesamten Bürgerschaft wurde deshalb erst in letzter Sekunde abgeblasen, als sich zeigte, dass mit einem unmittelbaren Eingreifen Gottes nicht mehr zu rechnen war.<sup>60</sup> Das Scheitern dieser Prophezeiung erschütterte das Königtum Jan van Leidens immerhin so stark, dass er temporär gezwungen war, die Krone abzulegen – nur um kurz darauf von Dusentschur wieder inthronisiert zu werden. Das Ausbleiben des Auszugs wurde schließlich durch die stellvertretende Aussendung von Prädikanten kompensiert, die die Täuferherrschaft nun zumindest geistlich in der Welt vorzubereiten helfen sollten.<sup>61</sup>

Das Scheitern der ersten Prophezeiung im April 1534 war der Anlass gewesen, das täuferische Münster als neues Israel zu erfinden und zu verstetigen. Das Scheitern der zweiten Prophetie im Oktober bedeutete den Beginn vom Ende des imaginierten Israel. Für Ostern 1535 verkündete Jan van Leiden ein letztes Mal die kommende Erlösung und sah sich – wegen des Scheiterns der bisherigen Prophezeiungen – gezwungen, sein Leben an die Erfüllung dieser Prophezeiung zu knüpfen.<sup>62</sup> Er überlebte das Scheitern auch dieser Prophezeiung, da es ihm gelang, auch sie in einen alttestamentlichen Interpretationsrahmen einzurücken.

Die meisten Berichte betonen, der König habe das Ausbleiben der Erlösung mit der bleibenden Sündhaftigkeit der Bewohner Münsters begründet.<sup>63</sup> Gresbeck berichtet aber auch eine Episode, die ein ganz anderes Licht auf das Selbstverständnis Jan von Leidens im zweiten Jahr der Belagerung wirft: demnach habe sich der König nach dem Ausbleiben der Erlösung ins Fenster seines Palastes gesetzt und den Bürgern aus dem Buch der Könige vorgelesen,<sup>64</sup> „wie dat der engel uth dem himmel qwam mit einem gloedigen schwert und schloich die feiande fur konnigh David hin. ‚Leven broeders, datselve khan bei uns ouch wol geschehn. Derselve Got levet noch.“<sup>65</sup>

Diese Episode wird allein durch Gresbeck berichtet, muss aber wohl als historisch zuverlässig gelten, da sie der täuferkritischen Erzählintention seines Werkes gerade zuwiderläuft. Das wird an einer wichtigen Umdeutung deutlich, die Gresbeck vornimmt. Wenn er vom Erschlagen der Feinde Davids spricht, stellt er die Episode als Durchhalteparole des Königs dar, und so ist sie in der Forschung bislang auch durchgehend verstanden worden.<sup>66</sup> Tatsächlich aber legt der biblische Zusammenhang

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59 In Dusentschurs Prophetie verbanden sich das ntl. apokalyptische Konzept der dritten Posaune (Apk. 8, 10 ff.) und die Endzeitprophezeiungen über Babel (Jes. 13) erstmals mit der Erinnerung an den Exodus Israels aus Ägypten.

60 Vgl. ebd. und Klötzer, Täuferherrschaft, wie Anm. 7, S. 112.

61 Vgl. die Aussendung der Apostel und ihre Begründung wird vielfach bezeugt durch die Verhöre der Verhafteten (vgl. Dülmen, wie Anm. 26, S. 167 ff.).

62 Der Bericht Gresbecks, wie Anm. 8, S. 121, wird bestätigt durch das Bekenntnis des Heinrich Graes (Niesert, wie Anm. 18, S. 146).

63 Etwa Gresbeck, wie Anm. 8, S. 124, und Kerssenbroich, wie Anm. 10, S. 793.

64 1. Chron 21, 15 ff. = III. Könige nach alter Zählung; vgl. auch die parr. 2. Sam. 24, 15 ff.

65 Gresbeck, wie Anm. 8, S. 132.

66 Klötzer, Täuferherrschaft, wie Anm. 7, S. 128.

eine Interpretation nahe, die Gresbecks Darstellung unterläuft. Denn der Würgeengel mit dem Schwert, den Jan van Leiden zitiert, wird in 1.Chr. 21,7–17 eben nicht geschickt, um die Feinde Davids zu töten, sondern um die Bewohner Israels und Jerusalems auszulöschen, weil David die Sünde begangen hatte, Israel zählen zu lassen. Der König bittet daher (1.Chr. 21,17): „Bin ichs nicht, der das Volck zelen hies? Ich bin der gesuendiget und das vbel gethan hat. Diese Schafe aber was haben sie gethan? HERR mein Gott las deine Hand wider mich und meines Vaters haus, und nicht wider dein Volck sein, zu plagen.“<sup>67</sup> Vor diesem Hintergrund erscheint die Beschwörung Jan van Leidens, derselbe Gott lebe noch, weniger als Beteuerung der Erlösungshoffnung, denn als Ausdruck der Verzweiflung und als Versuch, auch die unerklärliche Abwendung Gottes von seinem Volk noch im Deutungsparadigma des neuen Israel zu verstehen: Gott selbst streitet gegen sein Volk, dessen Erlösung eine Sünde des Königs verhindert.<sup>68</sup>

Dass das Täuferreich von Münster nicht an der fortgesetzten Nichterfüllung seiner zentralen Prophetien zerbrach, hatte seinen Grund nicht nur in der besonderen Fähigkeit seiner Protagonisten, noch das Scheitern ihrer zentralen Prophezeiungen als Bestätigung des eigenen Anspruchs zu deuten, „nova Israhel“ zu sein.<sup>69</sup> Prophezeiungen, die sich nicht erfüllten, waren, wie etwa der von Hans Hut 1528 prophezeite Weltuntergang, im frühen Täufertum an sich nichts besonderes.<sup>70</sup> Für gewöhnlich führte das Ausbleiben des prophezeiten Ereignisses dann schlichtweg zur Auflösung der entsprechenden Gruppe, so auch 1528, als die Anhänger Huts enttäuscht in ihr altes Leben zurückgekehrt waren und sich das süddeutsche Täufertum praktisch auflöste.<sup>71</sup> Die Besonderheit der Situation in Münster bestand vor allem darin, dass den Täufern *diese* Möglichkeit, auf das Scheitern zentraler Prophezeiungen zu reagieren, genommen war: seit Februar 1534 waren sie gefangen in einer belagerten Stadt, die sie – nachdem sie sich offen als Täufer bekannt hatten – nicht mehr lebendig verlassen konnten.<sup>72</sup> Sie hatten nur als Alternative dazu, auch das Scheitern ihrer Hoffnungen

<sup>67</sup> Lutherübersetzung 1545.

<sup>68</sup> Eine Verbindung beider Vorstellungen findet sich in Dorpius, wie Anm. 9, S. 1680, Z. 30–35, wo der König behauptet, die Sünden des Volkes seien ihm von Gott auferlegt worden; dass Jan van Leiden Zweifel an seinem Königtum gehegt habe berichtet auch Gresbeck, wie Anm. 8, S. 101, in diesem Zusammenhang.

<sup>69</sup> Vgl. dazu die Studie von Leon Festinger / Riecken, Henry W. / Schachter, Stanley: *When Prophecy Fails*, Minneapolis 1956.

<sup>70</sup> So die Endzeitprophetien von Hut und den Esslinger Täufern (1528) vgl. Schubert, wie Anm. 53, S. 68; für die Endzeiterwartung der Uttenreuther Träumer (1533) vgl. Schubert, wie Anm. 39.

<sup>71</sup> Schubert, wie Anm. 52, S. 104–108.

<sup>72</sup> Zur Belagerung Münsters vgl. neuerdings Günther Vogler: *Die Täuferherrschaft in Münster und die Reichsstände. Die politische, religiöse und militärische Dimension eines Konfliktes in den Jahren 1534 bis 1536* (= QFRG 88), Gütersloh 2014; zur Rechtslage der Bestrafung aufständischer Täufer vgl. Horst Werner Schraepfer: *Die rechtliche Behandlung der Täufer in der deutschen Schweiz, Südwest-*

immer wieder im Modus des eigenen Anspruchs zu interpretieren, das neue Israel zu sein, nur noch die Wahl, dem sicheren Tod entgegenzugehen.

Die Mechanismen ihrer Durchsetzung und Aufrechterhaltung zu verstehen, erklärt jedoch noch nicht, warum sich das Münsteraner Täuferreich überhaupt auf die Vorstellung gründete, eine Restitution Israels zu sein.

Die offiziellen Dokumente, die das Täuferreich im Laufe der Geschichte erließ, sprechen sämtlich davon, dass die „heilige Stadt“ Münster ein „nova Israhel“ sei, die Münsteraner Täufer „sincerae israhelitae“. Claus Bernet hat diesen Anspruch der Täufer so gedeutet, dass sie ihre *Stadt als himmlisches Jerusalem* nach Apk. 21 und ihre Herrschaft als Tausendjähriges Reich auf Erden (Apk. 20) imaginiert hätten. Tatsächlich haben vor allem die konfessionellen Gegner des 16. Jahrhunderts das Täuferreich so verstanden,<sup>73</sup> was von der Historiographie des 19. Jahrhunderts aufgenommen<sup>74</sup> und unter umgekehrten Vorzeichen noch im 20. Jahrhundert fortgeführt worden ist.<sup>75</sup> Diese Deutung stützt sich vor allem auf Tatsache, dass die Stadtordnung die Sündlosigkeit der Stadt tatsächlich an einer Stelle mit dem Hinweis auf die Reinheit des neuen Jerusalem (Apk. 22, 14f) begründet.<sup>76</sup>

Der Sprachgebrauch der täuferischen Dokumente und hier vor allem der Schriften Rothmanns legt, wie gesehen, allerdings eher die Vermutung nahe, dass sich der Blick der Münsteraner Täufer weniger auf die Zukunft als vielmehr auf die Vergangenheit richtete.<sup>77</sup> Dem scheint zu widersprechen, dass sich die Münsteraner Täufer ganz offensichtlich nicht im alttestamentlichen Sinne als Juden und ihre Herrschaft nicht als jüdischen Staat,<sup>78</sup> sondern als dezidiert christliches Gemeinwesen verstanden. Diese Differenz zum alten Israel wird durch den Begriff „nova“ eindeutig markiert. Da sich sich also weder als *alte Israel* noch als *himmlische Jerusalem* verstanden, liegt die Vermutung nahe, dass die Münsteraner Täufer sich als *typologische Entsprechung Israels* verstanden, an denen die Heilsprophetien über Israel nun erfüllt würden.<sup>79</sup>

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deutschland und Hessen 1525 – 1618 (= SKRG 4), Tübingen 1957; Hans Stiasny: Die strafrechtliche Verfolgung der Täufer in der freien Reichsstadt Köln 1529 – 1618 (= RGST 88), Münster 1962

**73** Hier ist vor allem zu nennen Urbanus Rhegius: *De Restitutione Regni Israelitici contra omnium seculorum Chiliastas, inprimis tamen miliarios Monasteriensis disputatio*, in: Robert Stupperich (Hg.): *Die Schriften der Münsterischen Täufer und ihrer Gegner III. Die Schriften von evangelischer Seite gegen die Täufer* (= VHKW XXXII/3), Münster 1983, S. 137f157.

**74** Vgl. die Literatur bei Günther List: *Chiliasmatische Utopie und radikale Reformation. Die Erneuerung der Idee vom Tausendjährigen Reich im 16. Jahrhundert*, München 1973, S. 9 – 18.

**75** Vgl. dazu ebd., S. 198 – 231.

**76** Siehe oben S. XY. Bernets darauf aufbauendes Argument, die Umgestaltungen des Stadtbildes hätten die Ziel gedient, aus Münster das himmlische Jerusalem zu machen, stützen sich jedoch ausschließlich auf die kaum zuverlässigen Aussagen Gresbecks und Kerßenbroichs, die im Täuferreich ohnehin den Versuch sahen, das Tausendjährige Reich der Gerechten zu errichten.

**77** Das zumindest hat richtig erkannt schon List, wie Anm. 76, S. 209 ff.

**78** In den Quellen zum Münsteraner Täuferreich findet sich keinerlei Aussage zum zeitgenössischen Judentum.

**79** Vgl. Rothmanns Ausführungen zum „vörbelde“ Israels, das in der heutigen Zeit vollendet werden soll (Von der Wrake, wie Anm. 51, S. 290 ff.; Restitution, wie Anm. 40, S. 274 ff.).

Entsprechende Restitutionsvorstellungen, die eben nicht (wie die Theologen der Großkonfessionen argwöhnten) mit chiliastischen Erwartungen, sondern mit typologischen Erfüllungshoffnungen argumentieren, waren in der Radikalen Reformation nicht ungewöhnlich. Wenn sich die Münsteraner Täufer als *verus israel* verstanden, bewegten sie sich vielmehr ganz im Horizont der traditionellen christlichen Eschatologie.<sup>80</sup> Schon seit Paulus war die christliche Tradition davon ausgegangen, dass die Heilsprophezeiungen des Alten Testaments sich keineswegs an den realen Juden, dem fleischlichen Israel, erfüllen würden, sondern an den Christen als dem wahren Israel der Auserwählten.<sup>81</sup> Problematisch war auch nicht, dass die Münsteraner Täufer eine wortwörtliche Erfüllung der Prophezeiungen und die reale Wiederaufrichtung des neuen Israel im Hier und Jetzt erwarteten: Spätestens seit Hieronymus galt, dass die alttestamentlichen Prophezeiungen nicht in einem wörtlichen, sondern in einem höheren, spirituellen Sinne zu verstehen seien, und Augustin hatte etwa gleichzeitig die für das Mittelalter kanonisch gewordene Interpretation durchgesetzt, wonach diese Prophezeiungen in der katholischen Kirche als dem irdischen Reich Christi, bereits erfüllt seien.<sup>82</sup> Dieser exegetische Konsens war in der Reformationszeit jedoch zerbrochen: das Reich Gottes, so die reformatorischen Theologen, konnte mit der römischen Kirche nicht identisch sein, die Erfüllung der Prophetien musste daher noch ausstehen.<sup>83</sup>

Der radikalen Reformation nahestehende und im Täufertum einflußreiche Theologen wie Martin Cellarius und Wolfgang Capito in Straßburg etwa rechneten um 1530 konsequenterweise mit beidem: für die Juden mit der wortwörtlichen und für die Christen mit der höheren, geistlichen Erfüllung der Prophezeiungen. Sie erwarteten deshalb in unmittelbarer Zukunft die Wiedererrichtung eines jüdischen Königreiches in Palästina und den Aufbau des Tempels als Voraussetzung für die Erfüllung der geistlichen Heilsprophezeiungen über das wahre Israel der Christen.<sup>84</sup> Singulär an der Position der Münsteraner war also nicht, dass sie sich einerseits für das geistliche Israel hielten und andererseits eine wörtliche Erfüllung der alttestamentlichen Prophezeiungen erwarteten. Problematisch war allein, dass sie beides verbanden und für sich selbst als *geistliches Israel* die *wörtliche Erfüllung* der Heilsprophetien erwarteten.<sup>85</sup>

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**80** Zum Folgenden vgl. grundsätzlich Schubert, wie Anm. 52, S. 327–342.

**81** Vgl. Simon, wie Anm. 14.

**82** Vgl. seine Ausführungen in *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XX, Cap. 7.

**83** Zur Apokalyptik der Reformationszeit vgl. grundlegend Hans Preuss: *Martin Luther. Der Prophet, Gütersloh 1933*; Oberman, *Luther; Leppin, Antichrist und Jüngster Tag. Das Profil apokalyptischer Flugschriften im deutschen Luthertum 1548–1618* (= QFRG 69), Gütersloh 1999.

**84** Schubert, wie Anm. 52, S. 328–342; darauf hat schon Urbanus Rhegius hingewiesen (wie Anm. 75).

**85** Allerdings war schon Cellarius eine solche Verwechslung der Kategorien unterlaufen (vgl. Schubert, wie Anm. 52, S. 334).

Gerade vor diesem Hintergrund aber erscheinen die irritierenden Versuche einer Restitution der Institutionen des alten Israel in Münster durchaus konsequent: Die Institution der Ältestenverfassung und des Königtums, die Einführung der Polygynie, das Auftreten einer neuen Judith, neuer Propheten und ähnliches waren nicht ein Reenactment des alten Israel oder, wie Bernet es beschreibt, die kontrafaktische Verwirklichung des himmlischen Jerusalem, sondern die Vorbereitung auf die kommende Verwirklichung der alttestamentlichen Heilsverheißungen: das Königtum Davids bereitete den Weg für das Kommen des endzeitlichen Salomo. Das Handeln und die Hoffnung der Täufer beruhten auf der Überzeugung, dass die Geschicke des neuen Israel im alten Israel vorgebildet und deshalb im Prinzip bekannt seien.<sup>86</sup>

Unter dieser Perspektive erscheint das Täuferreich von Münster nicht mehr als singuläre Ausnahme in der radikalreformatorischen Apokalypitk und es besteht auch keine historiographische Notwendigkeit mehr, den Münsteraner Täufern eine fortgesetzte kognitive Dissonanz zwischen der Faktizität der realen Lebensumstände in Münster und der erwarteten Heilsgemeinschaft zu attestieren: Münster war mitnichten das himmlische Jerusalem, es war jene irdische Gemeinschaft, an der sich bei der Wiederkunft Christi die ganz realen Heilsprophezeiungen über das alte Israel erfüllen würden.

Das Problem der Münsteraner Täufer war daher weniger eine Differenz zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit, als die Tatsache, dass die militärische Situation keine Deutungsalternativen zuließ, wenn die Erwartungen, das wahre Israel zu sein, sich nicht erfüllten. Die Tragik des Münsteraner Täuferreiches besteht nicht zuletzt darin, dass die Gegner die Täufer dazu zwangen, an ihren stets widerlegten Hoffnungen festzuhalten. Unter diesen Umständen versteht man, dass Jan van Leiden seine Herrschaft schließlich als Strafe Gottes empfand – nur dass er im Gegensatz zu biblischen König David noch nicht einmal erfuhr, worin seine Sünde bestanden hatte.<sup>87</sup>

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**86** Vgl. Anm. 79.

**87** Diese Deutung wird bestärkt durch die Aussage Jan van Leidens, das Reich von Münster sei „nur ein eitel, tod bilde“ des 1000-jährigen Reiches gewesen, das „umb des misbrauches willen, habe verfallen müssen“ (vgl. Antonius Corvinus: Gespräche und Disputation mit dem münsterischen König, mit Knipperdolling und Krechting, in Laube, wie Anm. 9, S. 1689–1738, ebd., S. 1722).





Andreas Pečar

## **Englands Heil und die Gottesfeinde Gog und Magog. Die bedrohte politische Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ (1588 – 1640)**

Die Johannesoffenbarung – und mit ihr auch die Erzählung von Gog und Magog – war im politischen Diskurs in England im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert beinahe allgegenwärtig. Zahlreiche protestantische Autoren bezogen sich auf sie, um Englands Sendung in der Welt herauszustreichen, um eine bestimmte Religionspolitik einzufordern und um die politischen Ereignisse der Gegenwart einzuordnen in die große Erzählung der Heilsgeschichte, genauer in die Offenbarung der Endzeit. Die Johannesoffenbarung war daher konstitutiv für das Selbstverständnis und die politische Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert.

Diese politische Identität war indes nicht einfach gegeben, sondern die Folge einer mitunter konfliktreichen Debatte, die im öffentlichen Raum ausgetragen wurde.<sup>1</sup> Ein Hinweis auf die Definition von Jan Assmann mag hier hilfreich sein:

Unter einer kollektiven oder Wir-Identität verstehen wir das Bild, das eine Gruppe von sich aufbaut und mit dem sich deren Mitglieder identifizieren. Kollektive Identität ist eine Frage der Identifikation seitens der beteiligten Individuen. Es gibt sie nicht ‚an sich‘, sondern immer nur in dem Maße, wie sich bestimmte Individuen zu ihr bekennen. Sie ist so stark und so schwach, wie sie im Denken und Handeln der Gruppenmitglieder lebendig ist und deren Denken und Handeln zu motivieren vermag.<sup>2</sup>

Zuerst geht es mir darum, das Selbstbild zu bestimmen, das sich im 16. Jahrhundert in England entwickelt hat. Dabei geht es vor allem um die Bestimmung von Freund und Feind, die zur Etablierung der politischen Identität in England von zentraler Bedeutung war. Gerade hierbei spielte der Bezug auf die Offenbarung des Johannes eine bedeutsame Rolle. Anschließend sollen die Bandbreite möglicher politischer Aussagen und das Spektrum damit einhergehender Wirkungsabsichten exemplarisch zur Sprache kommen. Hier geht es um einzelne Sprechakte, in denen das Selbstbild Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ aus unterschiedlichen Gründen beschworen wurde, aber auch um Versuche, mithilfe alternativer Deutungen der Johannesoffenbarung das etablierte Schema der Bestimmung von Freund und Feind zu modifizieren. Zum

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1 Vgl. hierzu Aleida Assmann / Heidrun Friese (Hrsg.), *Identitäten* (Erinnerung, Geschichte, Identität, 3), Frankfurt/M. 1998, insbesondere die Beiträge von Peter Wagner, *Fest-Stellungen. Beobachtungen zur sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskussion über Identität* (S. 44–72) und Jürgen Straub, *Personale und kollektive Identität. Zur Analyse eines theoretischen Begriffs* (S. 73–104); ferner Reinhard Kreckel, *Soziale Integration und nationale Identität*, in: *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 4 (1994), S. 13–20.

2 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München 1992, S. 132.

Schluß wird dann die Frage nach den Folgen der apokalyptischen Rede in den politischen Debatten zu klären sein, also der Zusammenhang von politischem Reden und Handeln.

## Englands Platz in der Heilsgeschichte und die „Mosaïsche Unterscheidung“

Das 16. Jahrhundert läßt sich rückblickend als Formierungsphase der politischen Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ beschreiben. Dieses konfessionelle Selbstverständnis war das Ergebnis eines lang andauernden Transformationsprozesses. Insbesondere die protestantische Geistlichkeit stilisierte England in der Regierungszeit Elisabeth I. zu einem neuen Israel, sah in England das von Gott auserwählte Volk, das durch die Reformation dem Götzendienst im eigenen Land ein Ende bereitet und den Gesetzen Gottes erneut Treue und Gehorsam geschworen habe.<sup>3</sup> Diese Erzählung ermöglichte es, der Selbstbehauptung Englands gegen die Angriffsversuche der spanischen Armada im Jahr 1588 eine besondere Deutung zu verleihen: Die scheinbar wundersame Errettung Englands wurde der Gnade Gottes zugeschrieben, die England vor Spaniens grausamen Truppen bewahrt habe. Der wahre Glaube habe über die Handlanger des Antichristen triumphiert.

Die Selbstbehauptung Englands im Kampf gegen Spanien, der größten Militärmacht dieser Zeit, wurde in den kommenden Jahrzehnten immer wieder als Beweis für Gottes schützende Hand über England angeführt. Es war der zeitgenössische Beweis für die Gültigkeit einer Erzählung, die sich fast ausschließlich aus biblischen Quellen speiste und die regelmäßig von den Kanzeln der Kirchen des Landes widerhallte, aber auch in Traktaten, in Bibelkommentaren, in Reden und in Flugschriften verbreitet wurde. Diese Erzählung handelt vom Kampf der wahren Gläubigen gegen die Mächte des Unglaubens und der Finsternis, ein Kampf, in den England als Schutzmacht des Protestantismus sowohl im inneren als auch nach außen verwickelt sei.

Für diese Erzählung war der Bezug auf die Johannesoffenbarung konstitutiv. Die Gegenwart wurde in England als Erfüllung der Prophezeiungen gedeutet, in denen Johannes die Kämpfe und Bewährungsproben der wahren Gläubigen gegen den Antichristen und seine zahlreichen Mithelfer darlegt, bis die Zerstörung Babylons dann in die Königsherrschaft Christi auf Erden und die Endzeit einmündet.<sup>4</sup> Dabei bestand für

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. hierzu allg. Ronald G. Asch, *An Elect Nation? Protestantismus, nationales Selbstbewußtsein und nationale Feindbilder in England und Irland von zirka 1560 bis 1660*, in: Alois Mosser (Hrsg.), *Gottes auserwählte Völker. Erwählungsvorstellungen und kollektive Selbstfindung in der Geschichte*, Frankfurt a.M. u. a. 2001, S. 117–141.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Rogers, *An Historical Dialogue Touching Antichrist and Poperie*, London 1589; George Gifford, *Sermons upon the Whole Booke of Revelation*, London 1596; Matthew Sutcliffe, *De Turcopapismo*, London 1599; Matthew Sutcliffe, *De Pontifico Romano*, London 1599; Francis Dillingham, *A Disswasive from Popery*, London 1599.

die protestantischen Autoren kein Zweifel daran, daß es sich beim Antichristen um niemand anderes als den Papst handeln könne. Zwischen 1588 und 1628 erschienen mehr als hundert Traktate, darunter mehrere Bibelkommentare zur Johannesoffenbarung, in denen der Nachweis geführt wurde, daß der Papst der in der Heiligen Schrift geoffenbarte Antichrist sei.<sup>5</sup> Die Gleichsetzung des Papsts mit dem Antichrist wurde von der Mehrheit der englischen Geistlichen als gleichsam inoffizieller Glaubensatz verstanden. So war sich beispielweise Gabriel Powel seinen eigenen Worten zufolge in dieser Sache ebenso sicher wie darüber, daß Jesus der Sohn Gottes sei.<sup>6</sup>

Zweitens gingen die Autoren meist davon aus, daß sie bereits die Endzeit erreicht hätten, der Fall der Hure Babylon daher nicht mehr lang auf sich warten lassen könne.<sup>7</sup> Mit dieser Endzeiterwartung ging die Annahme einher, daß England hierbei eine bedeutende heilsgeschichtliche Rolle im Kampf gegen den Antichristen zukam.

Und drittens wurde dabei nur selten akkurat unterschieden zwischen dem Fall der Stadt Babylon (Offb 18) und dem Kampf der Heiligen gegen Gog und Magog (Offb 20). Auch Gog und Magog wurden mit aktuellen Größen im zeitgenössischen Europa gleichgesetzt. Magog galt den meisten Autoren, hier an Luther anknüpfend, als Personifikation der Türken, die das Leben der Christen bedrohten, während das Papsttum mit Gog gleichgesetzt wurde, das im Verborgenen auf die Seelen der Christen aus sei.<sup>8</sup> Gog und Magog waren daher zumindest in der politischen Öffentlichkeit in gleicher Weise biblische Chiffren für den Antichristen, vergleichbar dem Untier der Offenbarung, dem Tier mit den Hörnern oder der Hure Babylon.<sup>9</sup>

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5 Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed. Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600 – 1640*, Cambridge 1994, S. 93.

6 Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (s. Anm. 5), S. 98.

7 Vgl. nur Rogers, *Dialogue* (s. Anm. 4), Epistle, Fol. Aii: „That Whore of Babylon in the holie boke of Revelations delyphered by Saint John, hath bin long since through the goodness of th’almightie in manie waies, and by sundrie meanes in this last age of the world most notablie proved to bee the church of Rome“. Ferner Arthur Dent, *The Ruine of Rome*, London 1603, S. 276: „the utter overthrow of the pope, & all his adherents, shalbe in this life, a little before the comming of Christ unto judgement.“

8 Dent, *Ruine of Rome* (s. Anm. 7), S. 271: „But here by these armies of Gog and Magog, are understood all the chiefe enemies of the church, in these last daies, since the loosing of Sathan, both open and secret, both Turke and pope for the Turke is an open enemy: the Pope a more close enemy.“

9 Vgl. nur Gifford, *Sermons* (s. Anm. 4), S. 397 f.: „Whereupon it must needes bee graunted, that this seducing by Satan here spoken of, is the same with that which is there set foorth, chap. 13 onely this expected, that this of Gog and Magog is more generall. Wee reade there how all nations, kindreds and tongues were made to worship the image of the beast, and to receive his marke: but that is to be extended no further then to those kingdoms which were subject to the poperie. And here by these armies of Gog and Magog, are understood all the chiefe enemies of the Church in these last times, since the loosing of Satan. Here are besides the swarmes of papists, the huge armies of the Turkes.“ Ferner: „how it hath been with the papists, that they fight and warre most bitterly against all that will not worship the beast, condemning them to bee heretikes, and men not worthie to live upon the earth.“ (399) Und schließlich: „But what followeth) Fire (sayth S. Iohn) came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. Now he cometh to set forth the destruction of the armies of Gog and Magog, and of their chiefe captaine also which seduced them. He beginneth with the armies, and showeth how they are consumed with fire from heaven.“ (400) Zum Zeitpunkt: „who seeth not, that by the lively word, and by his

Diese Deutungen waren in England bereits zu Beginn der Reformation zu vernehmen. Insbesondere John Bales *Image of both churches* – geschrieben in den letzten Regierungsjahren Heinrichs VIII. – enthielt eine gleichermaßen auf politische Aktualisierung abzielende Auslegung der Johannesoffenbarung.<sup>10</sup> Die militärische Konfrontation mit Spanien, vor allem aber der Sieg Englands über die Armada verschaffte der Interpretation vom römischen Antichristen und seinem nahe bevorstehenden Fall ungeheuren Auftrieb. In kurzer Zeit erschienen zahlreiche mitunter fast gleichlautende politische Deutungen der Apokalypse.

Die identitätsstiftende Wirkung hatte der Bezug auf die Johannesoffenbarung aufgrund der darin enthaltenen Polaritäten: Christus versus Antichrist, standhafte Gläubiger gegen vom Glauben abgefallene, Wahrheitszeugen und Falsche Propheten, wahres Heil und ewige Verdammnis. Dieses Deutungsschema eignete sich vorzüglich zur Unterscheidung von Freund und Feind, zur Stärkung der eigenen Identität und zur klaren Grenzziehung gegen all diejenigen, die als Glaubensfeinde benannt wurden. Johannes bediente sich in seiner prophetischen Offenbarung einer Argumentationsstrategie, die Jan Assmann als „Mosaische Unterscheidung“ bezeichnet hat. Gemeint ist damit die Unterscheidung „zwischen wahr und falsch in der Religion, zwischen dem wahren Gott und den falschen Göttern, der wahren Lehre und den Irrlehren, zwischen Wissen und Unwissenheit, Glaube und Unglaube.“<sup>11</sup> Diese Mosaische Unterscheidung ist zunächst bestimmten biblischen Texten sowohl des Alten als auch des Neuen Testaments inhärent. Der Bezug auf diese Schriften ermöglichte aber zu jeder Zeit Aussagen darüber, wer zu den wahren Gläubigen zu zählen sei und wer zu den Glaubensfeinden, wer allein auf Gottes Hilfe zählen könne, und welches Schicksal den Glaubensfeinden vorherbestimmt sei.

In England war die Mosaische Unterscheidung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert gängiger Bestandteil der Weltdeutung und Weltwahrnehmung, und zwar in der Kirche ebenso wie im Parlament und in der Traktatliteratur der Zeit.<sup>12</sup> Damit ist jedoch noch wenig ausgesagt über die Sprengkraft, die dieses narrative Muster im politischen Raum

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vengeance he hath already begun to consume and to destroy the popish armies?“ (401). Teilweise wortidentisch wieder aufgegriffen von Dent, *Ruine of Rome* (s. Anm. 7), S. 270–276.

**10** John Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches after the Moste Wonderfull and Heavenly Revelacion of Sainct Iohn the Evangelist, Contayning a Very Frutefull Expositcion or Paraphrase upon the same*, London [1548]. Zu Bales Werdegang vgl. John N. King, Art. John Bale (1495–1563), Bishop of Ossory, Evangelical Polemicist, and Historian, in *ODNB* 3 (2004), S. 482–486; Ders., *English Reformation Literature. The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition*, Princeton 1982, S. 56–75. Von der Breitenwirkung und der Popularität von Bales aktualisierender Auslegung der Johannesoffenbarung zeugen vier Auflagen des Werkes von 1545 bis 1550; Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale. Mythmaker for the English Reformation*, West Lafayette (Ind.) 1976, S. 86 f.

**11** Jan Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus*, München 2003, S. 12 f.

**12** Vgl. hierzu allg. Andreas Pečar, *Macht der Schrift. Politischer Biblizismus in Schottland und England zwischen Reformation und Bürgerkrieg (1534–1642)* (Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts London, 69), München 2011.

entfalten konnte. Entscheidend war nämlich vor allem, wie die Grenzziehung jeweils vorgenommen wurde, wer zu den Ausgeschlossenen zählte, und welche politische Wirkungsabsicht sich mit dieser Grenzziehung jeweils verband. Und hier – in der Anwendung der Mosaischen Unterscheidung – waren die Unterschiede beträchtlich, und ebenso die sich daraus ergebenden politischen Konsequenzen. Dies gilt es nun anhand weniger Beispiele vorzuführen.

## Die Mosaische Unterscheidung in einzelnen politischen Sprechakten<sup>13</sup>

Spätestens während des Krieges Englands gegen Spanien hatte sich die Überzeugung, der Papst sei mit dem Antichristen gleichzusetzen, zu einer neuen Orthodoxie in der englischen Kirche entwickelt. Bei allen religionspolitischen Unterschieden zwischen der Königin Elisabeth I. und dem Parlament, den Bischöfen und den sogenannten Puritanen war man sich einig darin, die römische Kirche als Bedrohung Englands anzusehen und die katholische Religionsausübung in England daher zu verbieten. Die religionspolitischen Strafgesetze gegen die *Recusants* waren in England unter Elisabeth I. unumstritten. Die Grenzziehung der Mosaischen Unterscheidung verlief zwischen den Konfessionen: England war eine ‚protestant nation‘ und setzte sich aus Protestanten zusammen. Katholiken galten als potentielle Hochverräter, im heimlichen Einverständnis mit dem Papst und katholischen feindlichen Mächten wie Spanien. Der Krieg und die Bedrohung Englands hatten diese Grenzziehung verschärft, zugleich aber dazu beigetragen, daß die innerprotestantischen Spannungen und Konflikte in England seit den 1590er Jahren an Schärfe verloren.<sup>14</sup>

Im Jahr 1603 gerieten die Dinge jedoch in Fluß. Mit dem Tod der Königin Elisabeth I. und dem Friedensschluß mit Spanien schien plötzlich wieder offen, wo die Grenze zwischen Freund und Feind künftig zu ziehen sei. Entscheidendes Gewicht hatte dabei der neue König, Jakob I., der zuvor bereits beinahe zwanzig Jahre als schottischer König Jakob VI. regierte. Wie hatte man den schottischen König in Glaubensdingen einzuschätzen? Worauf konnte man zurückgreifen, um sich in England über das Bekenntnis des schottischen Königs ein Urteil zu bilden?

Am leichtesten fiel die Meinungsbildung anhand von Jakobs Schriften, die er während seiner Herrschaftszeit in Schottland verfaßt hatte. So bewies Jakob VI. bereits als schottischer König seine Vertrautheit mit der Johannesoffenbarung und dem darin schlummernden Potential für protestantische Identitätsstiftung. In seinem Traktat mit

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**13** Über den Begriff Sprechakt und dessen Verwendung für die historische Interpretation vgl. Quentin Skinner, *Conventions and the Understanding of Speech-Acts*, in: *Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1970), S. 118–138; Ders., *‘Social Meaning’ and the Explanation of Social Action*, in: James Tully (Hrsg.), *Meaning and Context*. Quentin Skinner and his Critics, Cambridge 1988, S. 79–98; vgl. ferner Pečar, *Macht der Schrift* (s. Anm. 12), S. 21–28.

**14** Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (s. Anm. 5), S. 10–19.

dem Titel *Ane Fruitfull Meditatioun Contening ane Plane and Facill Expositioun of ye 7.8.9 and 10 Versis of the 20 Chap. of the Revelatioun in Forme of ane Sermone* trug er das seine dazu bei, die biblische Erzählung vom Untergang Babylons und der endgültigen Vernichtung der Gottesfeinde in Gestalt von Gog und Magog mit Englands Kampf gegen Spanien zu verknüpfen und damit die heilsgeschichtliche Sendung Englands zu unterstreichen.<sup>15</sup> Diese Schrift erschien in Edinburgh im Jahr 1588, kurz nach dem Sieg Englands über die spanische Armada, und sie wurde 1603 in England erneut gedruckt, unmittelbar nach dem Herrschaftsantritt Jakobs I.<sup>16</sup>

Die politische Botschaft an den Leser war klar. Folgt man Jakobs Worten, so könnte sich England keinen treueren Bündnispartner wünschen als Schottland: „we may [...] concur ane with another as warriouris in ane camp and citizenis of ane belouit citie, for mantenance of ye guid caus God hes cled us with, and defence of our liberties, native countrie, and lyfes.“<sup>17</sup> Diese Worte gehen indes an der politischen Wirklichkeit vorbei. Zwar gab es seit 1586 einen Bündnisvertrag zwischen England und Schottland, und England ließ es sich einiges an Subsidien kosten, um Schottland an seiner Seite zu wissen. Gleichwohl saßen Jakob VI. und Elisabeth I. nicht gemeinsam in einer belagerten Stadt, sondern waren Könige von Schottland und England, und agierten demensprechend unterschiedlich. Jakob VI. tat auf der diplomatischen Bühne alles, um sich im Krieg zwischen Spanien und England nicht allzu deutlich festzulegen und seine politische Zukunft nicht ohne Not an das Schicksal Englands zu binden. Von militärischen Bündnisseleistungen für England konnte erst Recht nicht die Rede sein.<sup>18</sup>

Elisabeth I. sah sich im Zuge der Auseinandersetzungen ihrerseits gezwungen, Maria Stuart, die Mutter von Jakob VI., in England wegen Hochverrats hinrichten zu lassen. Diese Hinrichtung war für die Beziehungen zwischen England und Schottland eine Belastung, obwohl Jakob seinen Thron der Tatsache verdankte, daß Maria Stuart in Schottland abgesetzt wurde und obwohl der Tod seiner Mutter ihm die Aussicht eröffnete, demnächst auch den englischen Thron erben zu können.<sup>19</sup> Jakob wechselte zwar auch nach der Hinrichtung nicht die Seiten. Er nutzte aber die außenpolitische Bedrohung Englands, um regelmäßig mit höheren Subsidienforderungen an die Kö-

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**15** Jakob VI., *Ane Fruitfull Meditatioun Contening ane Plane and facill Expositioun of ye 7.8.9 and 10 Versis of the 20 Chap. of the Revelatioun in Forme of ane Sermone*. Set Down be ye Maist Christiane King and Synceir Professour, and Cheif Defender of the Treuth, James the 6 King of Scottis, Edinburgh 1588; ferner wiederabgedruckt in: Jakob I., *The Workes of the Most High and Mightie Prince, James by the Grace of God, King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith*, hrsg. v. James Montagu, London 1616, S. 73–80.

**16** Vgl. hierzu Jane Rickard, *Authorship and Authority: the Writings of James VI and I*, Manchester 2007, S. 74–80; Dies., *The Word of God and the Word of the King. The Scriptural Exegeses of James VI and I and the King James Bible*, in: Ralph Houlbrooke (Hrsg.), *James VI and I. Ideas, Authority and Government*, Aldershot 2006, S. 135–149.

**17** Jakob VI., *Ane Fruitfull Meditatioun* (s. Anm. 15), Fol. B4r.

**18** Vgl. J. D. Mackie, *Scotland and the Spanish Armada*, in: SHR 12 (1914), S. 16–18.

**19** Vgl. Susan Doran, *Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder? The Impact of Mary Stewart's Execution on Anglo-Scottish Relations*, in: *History* 85 (2000), S. 589–612.

nigin heranzutreten, sich also seine Bündnistreue gut bezahlen zu lassen. In Elisabeths Augen galt Jakob VI. während der Auseinandersetzung mit Spanien weniger als treuer Bundesgenosse denn als unsicherer Kantonist, wie mehrere Briefe aus ihrer Feder bezeugen.<sup>20</sup>

Der Traktat des Königs war daher ein Beitrag dazu, sich im Nachhinein fest an die Seite der siegreichen Königin zu stellen. All die politischen Querelen sind im Traktat des Königs daher mit keinem Wort erwähnt. Stattdessen hebt Jakob hervor, daß zur Deutung der aktuellen politischen Lage, also zur Bedrohung durch die spanische Armada, kein Text so gut geeignet sei wie die Offenbarung des Johannes. Dabei beschränkt er sich auf eine Interpretation der Verse 7–10 des 20. Kapitels, also der Gog und Magog Episode. Magog sei dabei mit der Türkengefahr gleichzusetzen, der Europa in seiner Gegenwart ausgesetzt sei, Gog aber sei das Papsttum, der Feind, der im Verborgenen agiere. In einem bereits zuvor verfaßten Kommentar zur Johannesoffenbarung hat Jakob das 20. Kapitel der Offenbarung mit den Worten charakterisiert, es diene gleichsam als Zusammenfassung des Gesamtextes, „a short recapitulation of the whole Prophecie“.<sup>21</sup> Dies mochte der Grund sein, weshalb er diese Stelle für seinen Traktat in den Mittelpunkt stellte.

Aus dem bevorstehenden Angriff der spanischen Flotte auf England machte Jakob mit dem Verweis auf Gog und Magog den letzten Ansturm des Antichristen gegen die wahre Kirche. Diese wahre Kirche sei durch Spanien in England und Schottland gleichermaßen bedroht gewesen, so der König. Die Spanier seien in Jakobs Augen nur willige Vollstrecker eines viel gefährlicheren Gegners, nämlich des Papstes, der in ganz Europa an der Verfolgung der Protestanten – in der Sprache der Offenbarung der Heiligen – arbeite: „And hath he [der Papst] not of late dayes, seeing his kingdome going to decay, sent out the Iesuites, his last and most pernicious vermin, to stirre up the Princes of the earth his slaves [...]. And are not the armies presently assembled, yea upon the very point of their execution in France against the Saints there? In Flanders for the like; and in Germanie, by whom already the Bishop of Collein is displaced? And what is prepared and come forward against this Ile?“<sup>22</sup>

Mit diesen Worten ordnet Jakob den Angriff der spanischen Armada in einen gesamteuropäischen Kontext ein, in dem ein und derselbe Täter auf verborgene Weise gegen die wahre Kirche, also die Protestanten, zu Felde ziehe. Diese Internationalisierung des Konflikts war für Jakob zugleich ein rhetorisches Mittel der Vergemeinschaftung aller bedrängten Protestanten, die er in einem Boot wähnt. Insbesondere England und Schottland teilten in Jakobs Traktat dasselbe Schicksal: Von spanischen Schiffen belagert sei „our estate“, sei „this Ile“, nicht aber England allein.

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. nur John Bruce (Hrsg.), *Letters of Queen Elizabeth and King James VI of Scotland*, London 1849, S. 16f.

<sup>21</sup> Jakob I., *Paraphrase upon the Revelation of St. John*, in: Ders., *Workes* (s. Anm. 15), S. 1–72, hier S. 63.

<sup>22</sup> Jakob I., *Workes*, S. 78.



Jakobs Anforderung an den Leser lautete denn auch, mit Gottvertrauen und Entschlossenheit den wahren Glauben gegen die Gottesfeinde zu verteidigen.

Die rhetorische Wirkung des Traktats als Beweis protestantischer Glaubensstärke und kämpferischer Entschlossenheit versuchte Jakob noch dadurch zu steigern, daß er im Text die Gefahr der Armada als gegenwärtig bzw. als bevorstehend beschreibt. Er rühmt nicht den Sieg Englands, sondern beschwört die gemeinsame Gefahr. Er redet von der „present armie“ und fragt, „quhat is prepreparit and cum forwart against this Ile“,<sup>23</sup> als würden die Schiffe sich gerade Richtung englischer Küste aufmachen und nicht bereits den Boden von Nordsee und Atlantik zieren.

Alle rhetorischen Mittel zusammengenommen dienten dem schottischen König als diplomatisches Mittel der Schadensbegrenzung, um mit seinen entschiedenen Worten seine wenig entschiedene Politik im Vorfeld der Auseinandersetzung vergessen zu machen. Die Antichristrhetorik war dabei ein bewährtes Mittel protestantischer Identitätsbildung und ja nicht zuletzt deswegen auch in England im Anschluß an den Sieg über Spanien sehr oft bemüht worden. Die englische Königin hat er mit seinen Worten nicht überzeugen können; kaum war die Armada gesunken, sanken auch die Subsidienzahlungen aus der englischen Kasse.<sup>24</sup> Etwas anders mochte die Wahrnehmung derjenigen gewesen sein, die sich im Zusammenhang mit der Thronbesteigung des Königs in England mit Hilfe des Traktats über die religiöse Haltung des Königs informierten. Der Autor zeigt sich als Kämpfer für die protestantische Sache, er nutzt die Mosaische Unterscheidung, deutet die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Spanien und England als Kampf zwischen Licht und Finsternis und sieht in den Gegnern die Sachwalter des Antichristen am Werke.

Die *Fruitful Meditation* war aber nicht die einzige Schrift, die 1603 für das englische Publikum erneut gedruckt wurde. Ebenfalls in diesem Jahr erschien ein Versepos des Königs mit dem Titel *Lepanto* erneut auf dem Buchmarkt. Während in der *Fruitful Meditation* mit dem Verweis auf Gog und Magog das Papsttum samt der mit ihm verbündeten Mächte als schlimmste Geißel der aufrechten Christen benannt wurde, schlimmer noch als die Türken, stellt sich die Beschreibung von Freund und Feind im Versepos doch sehr anders dar. Held des Epos ist der Sieger der Seeschlacht von Lepanto, Don Juan di Austria, ein Spanier, der sich aufgrund seines Sieges über die Türken um die Christenheit insgesamt verdient gemacht hat. Hier zeigt sich Jakob solidarisch mit einer als überkonfessionell aufgefaßten Christenheit im Abwehrkampf gegen die Türken, die allein als Feind benannt werden. Die überkonfessionelle Solidarität und Verbundenheit dürfte zum Zeitpunkt der Entstehung des Epos im Jahr 1585 für Jakob die entscheidende Botschaft gewesen sein, eine politische Botschaft allerdings, die keineswegs für jedermann zur Lektüre gedacht war. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt

<sup>23</sup> Jakob VI., *Ane Fruitfull Meditatioun* (s. Anm. 15), Fol. B2v; Jakob I., *Workes* (s. Anm. 15), S. 78.

<sup>24</sup> Noch in den 1590er Jahren führte die Tatsache, daß die katholischen Earls von Huntly, Crawford, Errol und Angus am Hof Jakobs VI. zu Verstimmungen in den Beziehungen zwischen dem schottischen König und Elisabeth I.; vgl. Susan Doran, *James VI and the English Succession*, in: Ralph Houlbrooke (Hrsg.), *James VI and I. Ideas, Authority and Government*, Aldershot 2006, S. 25–42, hier S. 28.

zirkulierte der Text nur als Manuskript, also vor allem am schottischen Hof, in dessen Hofstaat auch mehrere hochrangige katholische Adlige ihren Dienst für den König verrichteten. Das Epos fand seinen Weg aber auch an andere europäische Höfe und mochte hier als Hinweis dafür dienen, daß der schottische König, obgleich selbst Protestant, keineswegs als grundsätzlicher Gegner der katholischen Welt aufgefaßt werden dürfe. Die von Jakob mit dieser Schrift gezielt adressierten Leser waren sicherlich nicht diejenigen Protestanten, die in Katholiken grundsätzlich den Glaubensfeind und den endzeitlichen Widersacher vermuteten.

Die gedruckten Fassungen des Versepos erschienen erst einige Jahre später, 1591 und dann wieder zur Thronbesteigung 1603. Hier hat Jakob dem Epos ein Vorwort vorangestellt, um eigens zu betonen, daß es nicht in seiner Absicht lag, sich mit dem dargestellten Protagonisten, einem „forraine Papist bastard“, zu identifizieren oder ihn anzupreisen.<sup>25</sup> Ein Grund der Veröffentlichung war sicherlich, mit Hilfe der Kommentare im Vorwort auf die unkontrollierte Verbreitung des Manuskripts in der Öffentlichkeit zu reagieren und damit um sich greifenden Vermutungen über Jakobs konfessionelles Bekenntnis zu begegnen. Allen vorangestellten Kommentaren zum Trotz bleibt die Tatsache bestehen, daß im Versepos eine andere Grenzziehung zwischen Freund und Feind vorgenommen wird als in der Exegese des 20. Kapitels der Offenbarung. Wer als Engländer im Jahr 1603 beide Schriften zu Rate zog, um sich über Jakobs konfessionellen Standpunkt eine Meinung zu bilden, dürfte in dieser Sache kaum Klarheit erhalten haben.

Nicht nur die Schriften des schottischen Königs erzeugten ein schillerndes Bild. Auch die Biographie sowie die Religionspolitik des Königs lieferten unterschiedliche Botschaften. So war Jakob als Sohn Maria Stuarts katholisch getauft worden, erhielt aber nach der Absetzung der Königin eine zutiefst kalvinistische Erziehung. Nachdem er die Regierungsgeschäfte in den 1580er Jahre aus der Hand seiner Regenten übernahm, bemühte er sich immer wieder um demonstrative Bekundungen seiner protestantischen Bekenntnistreue. Zugleich waren unter seinen engsten Ratgebern und Vertrauten am Hof zahlreiche hochrangige Katholiken, weshalb sowohl die schottischen Presbyterianer als auch Elisabeth I. an dem Wert der Treueversprechen für die protestantische Sache zweifelten.<sup>26</sup> Ungeachtet der schillernden konfessionellen Anschauungen des Königs etablierte sich in Schottland in den 1580er und 1590er Jahren

<sup>25</sup> Jakob VI, *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres*, Edinburgh 1591, s.p.; Jakob VI and I: *His Maiesties Lepanto, or Heroicall Song being Part of his Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres*, London 1603, Fol. A2r. Zum Versepos vgl. auch Rickard, *Authorship* (s. Anm. 16), S. 61–67.

<sup>26</sup> Als ein Beispiel unter vielen sei hier verwiesen auf John Napier, *Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St John*, Edinburgh 1593, Fol. A3v-4r: „let it be your Maj. continual study to reforme the universal enormities of your country, and first to begin at your Maj. owne house, familie and court, and purge the same of all suspicion of Papists, and Atheists or Newtrals, whereof this Revelation foretelleth, that the number shall greatly increase in these latter daies. For shall any Prince be able to be one of the destroyers of that great seate, and a purger of the world from Antichristianisme, who purgeth not his owne countrie? Shall he purge his whole country, who purgeth not his owne house? or shall hee purge his house, who is not purged himselfe by private meditations with God?“

zunehmend ein strenges Kirchenregiment, das sich ganz am Leitbild der schottischen Presbyterianer orientierte.<sup>27</sup> Für so manchen englischen *Puritan* wurde Schottland in den 1590er Jahren daher zu einem Sehnsuchtsort, in dem eine vollständige Reformation von Kirche und Gesellschaft zu beobachten war, während eine solche durchgreifende Reformation in England – aus Sicht der *Puritans* – ausblieb.<sup>28</sup>

Diese zahlreichen widersprüchlichen Eindrücke mögen erklären, weshalb Jakobs Thronbesteigung im Jahr 1603 sowohl für die englischen Katholiken als auch für die Puritans mit Hoffnungen für die Zukunft verknüpft war. Sowohl die Puritans als auch die englischen Katholiken hofften darauf, daß der neue König für ihre Anliegen ein offeneres Ohr haben würde als die verstorbene Königin, beide Gruppen wandten sich mit Petitionen an den König, um eine Änderung der Religionspolitik in ihrem Sinne zu erreichen.<sup>29</sup> Für die englischen Katholiken ging es vor allem um die Erlaubnis, die eigene Konfession auch in der Öffentlichkeit praktizieren zu dürfen.

Jakob I. seinerseits bemühte sich darum, parallel zum Friedensschluß mit Spanien den englischen Katholiken versöhnlich zu begegnen. Dem Earl of Northumberland schrieb er im Frühjahr 1603: „As for the Catholics, I will neither persecute any that will be quiet and give but an outward obedience to the law, neither will I spare to advance any of them that will by good service worthily deserve it“.<sup>30</sup> In der Tat stellte Jakob nach seinem Amtsantritt eine Lockerung der Recusant-Gesetze in Aussicht, was wiederum zahlreiche Katholiken in England dazu veranlaßte, sich offen zum katholischen Glauben zu bekennen.

Für die Protestanten waren diese Anzeichen königlicher Toleranz ein Alarmsignal. Es gab daher mehrere Geistliche, die den König in mahnenden Schriften davor warnten, den englischen Katholiken Religionsfreiheit zuzubilligen.<sup>31</sup> Ein prominentes Argument dabei war die Erfüllung der Heilsgeschichte, die bei einer Abkehr vom Protestantismus in England gefährdet sei. In diesem Sinne gelangt Arthur Dent in seinen Kommentar zur Johannesoffenbarung mit dem sprechenden Titel *The Ruine of Rome* zu folgender Schlußfolgerung: „Popery shall [be] never established againe in this kingdome. [...] if the true faith were not to survive in England how could Rome be ruined [...] how shall fire come down from heaven and devour both Gog and Magog?“<sup>32</sup> Auch andere protestantische Theologen wie Robert Abbot, Gabriel Powel und George Downname erinnerten an den Masterplan der Heilsgeschichte, um Jakob I. davon ab-

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. Michael F. Graham, *The Uses of Reform. Godly Discipline and Popular Behaviour in Scotland and Beyond 1560–1610*, Leiden 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Vgl. hierzu Nicholas Tyacke, *Puritan Politicians and King James VI and I, 1587–1604*, in: Thomas Cogswell / Richard Cust / Peter Lake (Hrsg.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain. Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell*, Cambridge 2002, S. 21–44.

<sup>29</sup> Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (s. Anm. 5), S. 19–21.

<sup>30</sup> Zitat bei Ronald G. Asch, *Jakob I. (1566–1625), König von Schottland und England. Herrscher des Friedens im Zeitalter der Religionskriege*, Stuttgart 2005, S. 148.

<sup>31</sup> Gabriel Powel, *The Catholikes Supplication unto the Kings Majestie; for Toleration of Catholikes Religion in England*, London 1603, S. 243 f.

<sup>32</sup> Dent, *Ruine of Rome* (s. Anm. 7), S. 243 f. Bis 1656 wurde dieses Werk zehn Mal aufgelegt.

zuhalten, sich dem festgeschriebenen Gang der Ereignisse in den Weg zu stellen, also den Katholiken in England ihre Religionsausübung wieder in größerem Umfang zu gestatten und die sog. Recusantsgesetze aufzuheben.

Die Konjunktur von Schriften zur Auslegung der Johannesoffenbarung nach dem Amtsantritt Jakobs I. hatte daher auch damit zu tun, daß der neue, fremde König mit Englands heilsgeschichtlicher Sendung vertraut gemacht werden mußte. Nach Maßgabe der Prophezeiung des Johannes vom standhaften Kampf der wahren Gläubigen und den Versuchungen, denen diese Aufrechten seitens des Satans insbesondere in der beginnenden Endzeit ausgesetzt seien, mußte jegliche versöhnliche Geste gegenüber den Katholiken in England als Gefahr der Korrumpierung der wahren Gläubigen erscheinen. Jakob müsse stattdessen, so die politische Botschaft der Exegese, die Protestanten vor Irrglauben und Götzendienst beschützen.

Diese Erwartungen wurden nicht nur in religiösen Traktaten und weiteren politischen Schriften geäußert, sie waren auch Teil der Forderungen des Parlaments an den neuen König. Jakob war gerne bereit, sich diesen Erwartungen zu beugen. Die anfänglichen Zeichen der Offenheit und der Duldungsbereitschaft gegenüber den englischen Katholiken waren nicht von Dauer. Die Recusantsgesetze blieben in Kraft, die katholische Religionsausübung blieb weiterhin aus der Öffentlichkeit in England verbannt.<sup>33</sup>

Daß dies vorerst so blieb, lag auch am sogenannten Gunpowderplot, einem geplanten Terrorakt, mit dem am 5. November 1605 eine Handvoll versprengter Verzweiflungstäter versuchten, die politische Situation der Katholiken in England gewaltsam zu verbessern. Für die politische Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ wurde dieses Datum fortan zu einem weiteren sichtbaren Beweis für die Gnade Gottes, da infolge göttlicher Vorsehung die Pläne der Attentäter vorzeitig bekannt wurden und König und Parlament daher davon verschont blieben, zusammen mit mehreren Tonnen Schwarzpulver in die Luft zu fliegen. Die Jahreszahlen 1588 und 1605 verbürgten jedem Engländer den Schutz Gottes und boten zugleich Aufschluß über den Feind: die Mächte der Finsternis waren sowohl katholische Monarchien in Europa als auch die heimlichen Katholiken im eigenen Land. Geschichte wurde so zu einem Beglaubigungsmittel für die Erfüllung der in der Johannesoffenbarung geweissagten Etappen des Weltendes.

König Jakob I. griff selbst zur Feder, um 1609 in einer Art offenem Brief an die katholischen Monarchen Europas – stellvertretend für alle war das Schreiben an Kaiser Rudolf II. gerichtet – den Nachweis zu führen, daß der Papst niemand anderes sei als der Antichrist, da er sich das Recht herausnehme, Könige zu exkommunizieren und von ihrem Thron zu stürzen.<sup>34</sup> Als Argument führt Jakob ausdrücklich Offb 17,18 ins Feld, wo die ‚Hure Babylon‘ als diejenige Macht benannt wird, die „die Herrschaft hat

<sup>33</sup> Asch, Jakob I. (s. Anm. 30), S. 147 – 151.

<sup>34</sup> Jakob I., Premonition to all Most Mightie Monarches, Kings, Free Princes and States of Christendom, in: Ders., Workes (s. Anm. 15), S. 289 – 348.

über die Könige auf Erden“.<sup>35</sup> Der Gunpowderplot war für Jakob ein schlagender Beweis für ein Papsttum, das für wahrhaft teuflische Handlungen Versprechungen für das Seelenheil ausspreche:

And it is no small merchandise of Soules, when men are so highly deluded by the hopes and promise to Salvation, as to make a Frier murther his Sovereigne [Heinrich III]; a yong knave attempt the murther of his next Successour [Heinrich IV]; many one to conspire and attempt the like against the late Queene; and in my time, to attempt the destruction of a whole Kingdome and State by a blast of Powder: and hereby to play bankrupt with both the soules mentioned in the Scriptures, Animus & Anima.<sup>36</sup>

Jakob unterließ es auch nicht, die katholischen Monarchen Europas an ihre endzeitliche Mission zu erinnern, nämlich zu gegebener Stunde die Hure Babylon zu vernichten:

wee shall in the time appointed by God, having thus fought with the Lambe, but 'being overcome by him', that is, converted by his Word; wee shall then (I say) 'hate the Whore, and make her desolate, and make her naked', by discovering her hypocrisie and false pretence of zeale; and 'shall eate her flash, and burne her with fire'.<sup>37</sup>

Die *Praemonition to all Christian Monarchs* Jakobs I. ist keineswegs nur eine Wiederauflage seiner zwanzig Jahre früher veröffentlichten *Fruitful Meditation*, auch wenn er sich in beiden Texten auf die Johannesoffenbarung beruft und aus deren Exegese politische Botschaften ableitet. Jakobs aus der Johannesoffenbarung abgeleitete Botschaft war aber keineswegs dieselbe. Im Fall der *Fruitful Meditation* ging es dem schottischen König um nachträgliche Solidarität mit England im Krieg gegen Spanien, hatte der Text eine bellizistische Note, um Jakobs Bündnistreue zu demonstrieren. Dies war in der *Praemonition* anders. Jakob grenzt sich nicht von den katholischen Mächten Europas ab, sondern appelliert konfessionsübergreifend an die gemeinsame Solidarität der Monarchen gegen den Papst, der für sich das Exkommunikationsrecht auch gegenüber Königen beansprucht und damit aus Sicht Jakobs die legitimen Herrschaftsrechte aller Monarchen gleichermaßen verletzt. Ging es im ersten Fall um eine Grenzziehung zwischen den protestantischen und den katholischen Mächten Europas, insbesondere um eine Kampfansage gegen Spanien, so ging es im zweiten Fall um die Ausgrenzung des Papstes allein: als Usurpator der den Königen von Gott verliehenen monarchischen Entscheidungsbefugnis in weltlichen wie in geistlichen Belangen. Der Kampf gegen den Antichristen und die Hure Babylon diene Jakob VI. / I. in zwei unterschiedlichen Kontexten zu zwei unterschiedlichen Definitionen von Freund und Feind. Sein Engagement in der publizistischen Auseinandersetzung gegen die Kurie und die Fürsprecher des Papstes stand durchaus nicht im Widerspruch zu seiner Rolle

<sup>35</sup> Jakob I., *Premonition* (s. Anm. 34), S. 331–337.

<sup>36</sup> Jakob I., *Premonition* (s. Anm. 34), S. 326.

<sup>37</sup> Jakob I., *Premonition* (s. Anm. 34), S. 325 f.

als europäischer Friedensstifter, als der sich Jakob I. nach seiner Thronbesteigung in England und nach dem Friedensschluß mit Spanien öffentlich inszenierte.<sup>38</sup> Und es war weniger die politische Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘, die Jakob mit seiner Praemonition zu bekräftigen suchte, als vielmehr die Verbundenheit aller gesalbten Häupter auf den Thronen Europas. Die Diskrepanz zwischen diesen beiden Vorstellungen sollte im Jahr 1609 noch nicht offen zutage treten. Knapp zehn Jahre später indes sah die Lage mit dem Ausbruch des Dreißigjährigen Krieges anders aus.

Die Auseinandersetzung, die der Pfälzische Kurfürst Friedrich V. von der Pfalz, Schwiegersohn Jakobs I., als frisch gewählter König von Böhmen mit seinem Kontrahenten – dem habsburgischen Kaiser Ferdinand II., dessen spanische Verwandte sowie den Truppen der katholischen Liga – zu führen hatte, stellte sich für zahlreiche Protestanten auch in England als Religionskrieg dar, genauer als eine weitere Etappe des Endkampfes zwischen den christlichen Gläubigen und den Handlangern des Antichristen. Die Mosaische Unterscheidung erzwang in ihren Augen geradezu die Teilnahme Englands in diesem Krieg an der Seite des bedrängten calvinistischen Glaubensbruders.

Exemplarisch soll hier auf die Haltung des Erzbischofs von Canterbury, Georg Abbot, verwiesen werden, der dem für die Außenpolitik der Regierung zuständigen Amtsträger Robert Naunton mitteilte, der Moment sei gekommen, an dem „by piece and piece, the Kings of the Earth, that gave their power unto the Beast (all the word of God must be fulfilled) shall now tear the ‘Whore and make her desolate’, as St John in his Revelation hath foretold“.<sup>39</sup> In ähnlicher Weise versicherte er auch Friedrich V., eine bestimmende Rolle bei der Erfüllung der Heilsgeschichte zu spielen. Für Abbot und zahlreiche weitere Fürsprecher eines Kriegseintritts Englands an der Seite der bedrängten Protestanten war nun der Moment gekommen, Offb 17,16 in die Tat umzusetzen.

Während ein beachtliches protestantisches Lager für den Kriegseintritt votierte, lagen die Dinge für Jakob I. anders. Friedrich V. hatte mit seiner Entscheidung, den ihm angebotenen Thron in Böhmen anzunehmen, mit den böhmischen Rebellen gemeinsame Sache gemacht, die zuvor König Ferdinand II. für abgesetzt erklärt hatten. In den Augen des englischen Königs wog die Unantastbarkeit regierender Monarchen schwerer als konfessionelle Verbundenheit und auch als verwandtschaftliche Bindungen.<sup>40</sup> Er verweigerte sich jeglicher Kriegsbeteiligung und versuchte stattdessen,

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**38** Malcolm Smuts, *The Making of Rex Pacificus. James VI and I and the Problem of Peace in an Age of Religious War*, in: Daniel Fischlin / Mark Fortier (Hrsg.), *Royal Subjects. Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, Detroit 2002, S. 371 – 387.

**39** Abbot an Naunton, s.d. [1619], in: *Cabala sive, Scrinia sacra: Mysteries of State and Government in Letters of [...] Great Ministers of State*, London 1691, S. 102f.

**40** Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution. English Politics and the Coming of War*, Cambridge 1989, S. 17; Asch, Jakob I. (s. Anm. 30), S. 153f.; S. L. Adams, *Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624*, in: Kevin Sharpe (Hrsg.), *Faction and Parliament. Essays on Early Stuart History*,



als Schiedsrichter zwischen den Kampfparteien zu vermitteln. Auch die Idee einer dynastischen, konfessionsübergreifenden Hochzeit zwischen seinem Sohn und Thronfolger Karl und der spanischen Infantin Doña Maria schien ihm ein geeignetes Mittel, um zwischen den Religionsparteien in Europa für Ausgleich zu sorgen. Und da es angesichts der langwierigen Anbahnung einer solchen Hocheit notwendig schien, die Recusant-Gesetze gegen Katholiken in England auszusetzen, um Spanien gegenüber ernsthafte Verhandlungsbereitschaft zu signalisieren, wurde auch dies durchgesetzt – zur gleichen Zeit übrigens, als spanische Truppen die gesamte Pfalz in Besitz nahmen und Friedrich V. außer Landes fliehen mußte.

Mit dieser Ausgleichspolitik brachte Jakob I. das Fass allerdings zum Überlaufen.<sup>41</sup> In den Augen der Befürworter eines „Heiligen Krieges“ gegen die Mächte der Finsternis, d. h. vor allem gegen Spanien und den Kaiser, ging es um den großen, apokalyptischen Konflikt zwischen Heil und Verdammnis. Englands Haltung zu diesem Konflikt entschied in ihrer Sicht der Dinge nicht nur über das Schicksal der protestantischen Leidensgenossen in Böhmen und in der Pfalz. Sie war auch der entscheidende Indikator dafür, wo England selbst im Moment der Vernichtung Babylons seinen Platz finden sollte: bei den Streitern für Christus Lehre, oder bei denjenigen, die bis zuletzt mit der Hure Babylon Unzucht getrieben hätten. In diesem Konflikt war Neutralität nicht möglich. Schließlich verkündet das Sendschreiben der Johannesoffenbarung an die Stadt Laodicäa, dass lauwarmen, unentschiedenen Gläubigen ebenso die Verdammnis bevorstehe wie den Gegnern Christi (Offb 3, 14–20).<sup>42</sup>

Nur wenige Autoren brachten ihre Verständnislosigkeit gegenüber der Politik des englischen Königs so deutlich auf den Punkt wie der Presbyterianer Thomas Scott, der wegen seiner massiven Publizistik für den Kriegseintritt schließlich nach Holland ins Exil ging, um einer Inhaftierung zu entgehen. Er richtete in seinem Traktat *Digitus Dei* eine klare Frage an den König: „If the Pope be not Antichrist, why hath he written so? It is Gods Word and his Pen that hath deceived us. If the Pope be Antichrist, then to make a Covenant with him, or to trade with him in Spirituall Merchandize, is to make a Covenant with Death, Satan, and Hell, against God, his Sonne, and his Church.“<sup>43</sup>

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Oxford 1978, S. 139–172; hier S. 146 f.; M.A. Breslow, *A Mirror of England. England Puritan Views of Foreign Nations 1618–1640*, Cambridge 1970, Kap. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Zu dieser Debatte vgl. Pečar, *Macht der Schrift* (s. Anm. 12), S. 331–375.

<sup>42</sup> Vgl. hierzu Thomas Brightman als einer der ersten Mahner, bereits vor dem Ausbruch des Dreißigjährigen Krieges; Thomas Brightman, *Revelation of the Revelation that is, the Revelation of St. John*, 2. Aufl. Amsterdam 1615, S. 137 und 165; vgl. hierzu auch Ronald G. Asch, *The Revelation of the Revelation. Die Bedeutung der Offenbarung des Johannes für das politische Denken in England im späten 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhundert*, in: Andreas Pečar / Kai Trampedach (Hrsg.), *Die Bibel als politisches Argument. Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne* (HZ, Beih. 43), München 2007, S. 315–331, hier S. 325.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Scott, *Digitus Dei*, [Utrecht] 1624, S. 30 f. Zu Thomas Scott vgl. ferner Peter Lake, *Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match*, in: *Historical Journal* 25 (1982), S. 805–825.



Für Scott wie für zahlreiche weitere Autoren war der Papst keineswegs eine singuläre, nur auf die Kurie zu reduzierende Größe, sondern eine Chiffre für die katholischen Mächte insgesamt. Spanien wurde als weltlicher Arm des Papsttums wahrgenommen und gleichermaßen mit dem Antichristen identifiziert, wie man es seit der Auseinandersetzung mit der Armada gelernt hatte. Die Unterscheidung von Freund und Feind war in den Augen der Kritiker von Jakobs Ausgleichspolitik ferner keineswegs eine rein politische Frage. Vielmehr bestand die Befürchtung, daß man in England dabei sei, mit Babylon gemeiname Sache zu machen und damit die besondere Gnade Gottes und das Heil Englands zu verspielen.

Die Befürchtungen der Kritiker Jakobs erhielten neue Nahrung, als ein Theologe namens Richard Montagu im Jahr 1624 rundheraus bestritt, daß der Papst mit dem Antichristen gleichzusetzen sei.<sup>44</sup> Montagu zweifelte damit an einem Deutungsmuster, das in England längst dogmatische Züge annahm, ohne doch Teil der protestantischen Bekenntnisschriften zu sein. Spätestens seit der Exkommunikation Elisabeths I. im Jahr 1570 war die Gleichsetzung des Papstes mit dem Antichristen ein Topos der politischen Debatte ebenso wie der religiösen Rede, feste Glaubensgewißheit aller Protestanten in England, aller sonstigen Gräben und Streitigkeiten zum Trotz.

Montagus demonstrativer Verstoß gegen den Common Sense wurde unter zahlreichen protestantischen Theologen ebenso wie in der politischen Öffentlichkeit, insbesondere von zahlreichen Abgeordneten des Unterhauses, als direkter Angriff auf die politische Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ gedeutet.<sup>45</sup> In den Parlamentssitzungen der Jahre 1624, 1626 und 1628/29 war Montagu daher stets Gegenstand der Auseinandersetzung.<sup>46</sup> Das Unterhaus unternahm mehrfach den Versuch, den unbotmäßigen Theologen mit Hilfe eines Impeachmentverfahrens zur Rechenschaft

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**44** Richard Montagu, *A Gagge for the New Gospel? No, a New Gagg for an Old Goose*, London 1624; *Ders.*, *Appello Caesarem. A Iust Appeale from two Iniust Informers*, London 1625.

**45** Meist wird die *Causa Montagu* in der historischen Debatte reduziert auf einen Dogmenstreit zwischen Calvinisten und Arminianern. Ich bemühe mich hier hingegen darum, den politischen Bedeutungsgehalt der Debatte darzulegen, ohne auf die dogmatische Debatte, die wesentlich um die Prädestinationslehre kreiste, einzugehen; hierzu vgl. Nicholas Tyacke, *Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution*, in: Conrad Russell (Hrsg.), *The Origins of the English Civil War*, 1973, S. 119–143, 261 f. und 270 f.; *Ders.*, *The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered*, in: *PP 115* (1987), S. 201–229; *Ders.*, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640*. Oxford, 1987; vgl. ferner Peter Lake, *Puritanism, Arminianism and Nicholas Tyacke*, in: Kenneth Fincham / Peter Lake (Hrsg.): *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England. Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, Woodbridge 2006, S. 1–15; Peter White, *The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered*, in: *PP 115* (1987), S. 201–229; *Ders.*, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic. Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War*, Cambridge 1992; *Ders.*, *The „Via Media“ in the Early Stuart Church*, in: Kenneth Fincham (Hrsg.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642*, Basingstoke 1993, S. 211–230; J. C. Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church*, Oxford 1992; Kevin Sharpe, *Religion, Rhetoric and Revolution*, in: *Ders.*, *Remapping Early Modern England. The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics*, Cambridge 2000, S. 345–391, hier S. 349; *Ders.*, *The Personal Rule of Charles I.*, New Haven / London 1992, Kap. 6.

**46** Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621–1629*, Oxford 1979, S. 231–233, 240 f. u. ö.

zu ziehen, was der neue König Karl I. indes dadurch vereitelte, daß er Montagu als Hofkaplan in seine Dienste nahm und damit unter seinen persönlichen Schutz stellte. Außerdem sollten in den kommenden Jahren diejenigen Geistlichen Karriere machen und die wichtigsten Bischofssitze besetzen, die wie Montagu daran zweifelten, daß man den Papst umstandslos mit dem Antichristen identifizieren könne. Diese tonangebende Elite bestimmte mit dem Segen Karls I., daß solche strittigen, theologisch kniffligen Fragen fortan in der Öffentlichkeit nicht mehr verhandelt werden sollten. Auch Montagu selbst sollte sich nach 1625 nicht mehr öffentlich zur Antichristproblematik äußern.<sup>47</sup>

Dieses Schweigegebot trug wenig dazu bei, die Irritationen aus der Welt zu schaffen, die seit den frühen 1620er Jahren infolge der Religionspolitik Jakobs I. und Karls I. entstanden waren. Ungeachtet aller theologischen Reibungspunkte hatte die Auseinandersetzung auch einen politischen Kern, ging es um die politische Identität Englands, die zahlreiche Mitglieder der kirchlichen wie der politischen Führungsschicht zunehmend als bedroht ansahen. Dabei lag die politische Brisanz darin, daß die Bedrohung nun nicht mehr in äußeren Gefahren gesehen wurde wie zur Zeit des Krieges mit Spanien (1588), sondern eine innere Gefährdung Englands ausgemacht wurde, und daß diese Gefährdung nicht auf vereinzelte katholische Überzeugungstäter im Untergrund zurückgeführt wurde (1605), sondern auf die Religionspolitik des Königs und seiner Bischöfe selbst.

Die Jahreszahlen 1588 und 1605 waren jedem englischen Protestanten ein Beleg für Englands heilsgeschichtliche Sendung, sie waren aber auch eine Mahnung, daß die Gnade des Herrn vom eigenen Wohlverhalten abhing, also von Bekenntnistreue und dem Widerstehen aller Versuchungen des Antichristen. Es mangelte daher auch in den 1630er Jahren nicht an kritischen Schriften, die eine Umkehr von der Religionspolitik Karls I. verlangten, und deren Autoren England darstellten als ein Land, das der Antichrist immer stärker in Besitz nehme. In dieser Auseinandersetzung um die Religionspolitik in England wurde erneut die Johannesoffenbarung bemüht und der Kampf gegen die Hure Babylon beschworen. Anders als in früheren Fällen richtete sich aber nun der Antichrist-Vorwurf nicht mehr allein gegen äußere Mächte oder katholische ‚recusants‘, sondern gegen Mitglieder der eigenen Kirche, ja insbesondere gegen deren Führungspersonal.<sup>48</sup> Auch die katholische Gemahlin König Karls I., Henrietta Maria, wurde nicht geschont: In seiner Schrift mit dem bezeichnenden Titel *The Baiting of the Popes Bull* klagte Henry Burton, einer der lautstärksten Kritiker der Kirchenpolitik, unverholen darüber, daß die Frösche der Apokalypse, die in Offb 16,13–14 die Könige zum Antichristen verführten, bereits in Karls Schlafzimmer vorgedrungen

<sup>47</sup> Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (s. Anm. 5), S. 117.

<sup>48</sup> Vgl. hierzu klassisch Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 2. Aufl. London / New York 1990, Kap. 3.

seien.<sup>49</sup> Er sah den König in der Pflicht, gegen die Bischöfe einzuschreiten und die Abgrenzung gegen die katholische Kirche und deren götzendienerische Frömmigkeitspraktiken wieder zum Leitkriterium der englischen Kirche zu erheben, anstand weiterhin katholische Bestandteile in der englischen Liturgie zu dulden oder gar zu stärken.

Spätestens mit der Einberufung des Langen Parlaments im Herbst 1640 gab es im Unterhaus eine Mehrheit mit dem klaren Ziel, Englands heilsgeschichtliche Mission als Streitmacht gegen den Antichristen wiederzubeleben, und zwar vorerst im eigenen Land. Dieser Entschlossenheit fiel zuerst Karls Religionspolitik zum Opfer, anschließend die Führungsposition der Bischöfe und schließlich, nach mehreren Jahren Bürgerkrieg, auch der König selbst.<sup>50</sup> Gerade im Bürgerkrieg spielte der Kampf gegen den Antichristen in der politischen Rhetorik eine entscheidende Rolle, war die Verteidigung Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ ein prominentes Argument, um den Kampf gegen die Anhänger Karls I. und seiner Truppen zu legitimieren. So finden sich beispielsweise in einem Katechismus aus dem Jahr 1644 folgende Aussagen über die Bedeutung und das politische Ziel des Kampfes gegen die Truppen des Königs: „Wee take up Armes against the enemies of Jesus Christ, who in His Majesties name make warre against the Church and People of God“.<sup>51</sup> Zu den politischen Zielen des Kampfes äußert sich der Katechismus in einer Aufzählung von acht Punkten. Die ersten vier Ziele lauteten wie folgt: Erstens gehe es um die Zerstörung von Babylon, zweitens um die Verdrängung der „Antichristian Prelacy“, also der Bischofskirche, drittens um die Reformation des korrupten Klerus allgemein und viertens um die Beförderung des Königreichs Christi.<sup>52</sup> Glaubt man dem Katechismus und der politischen Begleitrhetorik des Bürgerkrieges, so vollzog sich der Endkampf zwischen Gut und Böse auf englischem Boden, stand die Vernichtung Babylons, personifiziert durch die Truppen des Königs, unmittelbar bevor.

## Reden und Handeln

Die Rede vom Papst als Antichristen hatte für die politische Identität in England konstitutive Bedeutung. Sie ermöglichte zum einen die Selbststilisierung als Schutz-

<sup>49</sup> Henry Burton, *The Baiting of the Popes Bull, or An Unmasking of the Mystery of Iniquity, Folded up in a most Pernituous Breeve or Bull, Sent from the Pope lately into England, to Cawse a Rent therein, for his Reentry*, London 1627, Fol. ¶2v.

<sup>50</sup> Vgl. hierzu David Cressy, *England on Edge. Crisis and Revolution 1640–1642*, Oxford 2006; Ders., *Revolutionary England 1640–1642*, in: *Past and Present* 181 (2003), S. 35–71. Zur biblizistischen Begründung der Hinrichtung Karls I. vgl. demnächst Andreas Pečar, *Warum mußte Karl I. sterben?* in: Christoph Kampmann (Hg.), *Sicherheit in der Frühen Neuzeit. Norm, Praxis, Repräsentation* [9. Arbeitstagung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Frühe Neuzeit im Verband der Historikerinnen und Historiker Deutschlands vom 15. bis zum 17. September 2011], Köln/Weimar/Wien 2013, S. 235–250.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Ram, *The Souldiers Catechisme, Composed for the Parliaments Army*, [London] 1644, S. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Ebd., S. 9.

burg der wahren Gläubigen. Zum anderen versicherte man sich mit ihr Gottes besonderer Gnade und Protektion, wie sie historisch im Sieg Englands über die Armada (1588) und in der wundersamen Aufdeckung der Pulververschwörung (1605) für jedermann ersichtlich wurde. Daraus resultierte ferner der Imperativ, sich auch weiterhin demonstrativ vom Katholizismus fernzuhalten, keine Gemeinschaft mit Katholiken einzugehen, da diese mit dem Stigma Babylons versehen seien und daher die Reinheit der wahren Gläubigen in England gefährdeten.

Die mosaische Unterscheidung, die Bestimmung von Freund und Feind wird in diesem Selbstbild von Englands Rolle in der Welt wesentlich anhand der Konfessionsgrenzen getroffen. Katholiken galten als politische und spirituelle Gefahr gleichermaßen, deren Ausgrenzung und Bekämpfung war daher eine notwendige, geradezu gottgebotene Schutzmaßnahme, gleichgültig, ob es sich dabei um katholische Gläubige in England handelte oder um katholische Monarchen in Europa. Die Legitimität dieser Weltdeutung verdankt sich wesentlich biblischen Schriften, auf die kontinuierlich rekurriert wurde. Auch und gerade die Offenbarung des Johannes spielte hierbei eine bedeutsame Rolle.

Zugleich hat sich anhand einer Untersuchung einzelner Sprechakte zeigen lassen, dass die politische Identität Englands nicht statisch gedacht werden darf, sondern nur als Ergebnis einer ständigen Auseinandersetzung über die eigene politische und heilsgeschichtliche Rolle, über die daraus abgeleiteten Feindbilder, über die daraus resultierenden politischen Entscheidungen. Auch König Jakob I. hat sich mehrfach in dieser Debatte zu Wort gemeldet. Dabei hat er die Deutung des Papstes als Antichrist nicht in Frage gestellt. Wohl aber hat er auf kreative Weise versucht, die katholischen Monarchen von diesem Verdikt auszunehmen, da er auf die endzeitliche Rolle der Könige als Vollstrecker des göttlichen Willens bei der Vernichtung Babylons hinwies. Dies bot Möglichkeiten, die Mosaische Unterscheidung abzuschwächen und Katholiken bzw. katholische Monarchen nicht ausnahmslos als Feinde Englands verdammen zu müssen. Es zeigte sich aber in den politischen Debatten zu Beginn des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, daß auch in der politischen Elite das Bild von Katholiken als Feinden Englands weiterhin sehr verbreitet blieb und jegliche Annäherung an den Glaubensfeind als Gefährdung Englands aufgefaßt wurde.

In den darauffolgenden Jahren der Herrschaft Karls I. sollte sich zeigen, daß ein bedeutsamer Teil der politischen Elite Englands sich dem Kampf gegen den Antichristen stärker verpflichtet fühlte als der Treue zum König. Als das Kirchenregiment unter der Führung der Bischöfe sich zunehmend vom Feindbild des Papstes als Antichrist lossagte bzw. diese Formel nicht mehr weiterhin kontinuierlich beschwor, als die Bischöfe darüber hinaus betonten, die englische Kirche verkörpere die eigentliche, die nicht vom Papst und seinen Neuerungen korrumpierte katholische Kirche, war dies für zahlreiche protestantische Gemüter in England ein Anlaß, die Mosaische Unterscheidung erneut anzuwenden und nicht nur Katholiken als Feinden Englands den Kampf anzusagen, sondern auch den Bischöfen der englischen Kirche sowie allen Fürsprechern der Religionspolitik Karls I.

Die politische Identität Englands als ‚protestant nation‘ war Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts ein so hohes Gut, daß die Mehrheit der Unterhausabgeordneten zu dessen Schutz einen Krieg gegen den eigenen König in Kauf nahm. Die prophetische Imagination der Johannesoffenbarung und der darin geschilderte Abwehrkampf gegen imaginäre Feinde wie Babylon, Gog und Magog nahm für die beteiligten Akteure in England nach 1642 höchst reale Züge an. Der Kampf gegen die Gottesfeinde der Offenbarung war nicht nur ein Mittel der politischen Rhetorik, sondern mitunter auch ein Baustein für ein politisches Weltbild, das Wahrnehmung, Denken und Handeln der Akteure wesentlich bestimmte. Eine kulturelle Konstruktion zeitigte auf diese Weise reale politische Folgen.



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**VI Nicht-apokalyptische Völker der Endzeit /  
Non-Apocalyptic Peoples of the Apocalypse**





James T. Palmer

## Apocalyptic Outsiders and their Uses in the Early Medieval West

People beyond salvation played pivotal roles in medieval apocalyptic scenarios. Revelation itself had Satan, beasts, sinners, enemies of the faithful, and of course Gog and Magog, primed to go into battle either leading up to or else upon the loosening of Satan's thousand-year bonds. The persecution of the faithful by enemies in the End Times figured prominently in the Little Apocalypse of Matthew 24–25. Old Testament prophecies inspired and reinforced many motifs, most notably in the appearance of Gog and Magog from the North in Ezekiel 38–39 to punish the sins of Israel. Medieval Christians found interpretation of these texts challenging because of the tensions between possible historical and symbolic readings. The spiritual truths suggested in ecclesiological interpretations of Revelation, for instance, still seemed to have tangible expressions when 'barbarians' or non-Christians attacked Christendom, or heretics challenged orthodoxy. At the same time, many commentators offered non-apocalyptic readings of the same threats to the coherence and stability of Christian worlds. The variability of possible response raises the question of why some people chose to describe outsiders in apocalyptic terms.

Analysing interest in apocalyptic outsiders can be fruitful because it takes us to the edges of the most common modern models used to understand apocalypticism.<sup>1</sup> Following Johannes Fried and Richard Landes, the first of these prioritises attitudes towards the date as an apocalyptic marker, such as the 6000<sup>th</sup> year of the world, or the millennial anniversary of Christ's Incarnation or Passion.<sup>2</sup> Individuals and groups would variously be moved to actions driven by hope or anxiety, giving way to disappointment, relief and rationalisation when the End or a millennial kingdom failed to come. Outsiders may have seemed more portentous at these times but their

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1 J. T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2014). Useful context set out also in J. T. Palmer, 'The Otherness of Non-Christians in the Early Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History*, 51 (2015), pp. 33–52.

2 J. Fried, 'Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende', *Deutsches Archiv*, 45 (1989), pp. 381–473; R. Landes, 'Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography, 100–800 CE', in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), pp. 141–211; id., 'Millenarismus absconditus: L'historiographie augustinienne et l'An Mil', *Le Moyen Age*, 98 (1992), pp. 355–377; id., 'Sur les traces du Millennium: La via negativa', *Le Moyen Age*, 99 (1993), pp. 5–26; R. Landes, A. Gow and D.C. van Meter, eds., *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050* (Oxford, 2003); W. Brandes, 'Anastasios ho dikoros: Endzeiterwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr.', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 90 (1997), 24–63; id., 'Liudprand von Cremona (Legatio Cap. 39–40) und eine bisher unbeachtete West-Östliche Korrespondenz über die bedeutung des Jahres 1000 A.D.', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 93 (2000), 435–463; P. Magdalino, 'The Year 1000 in Byzantium', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 233–270.

relevance to apocalyptic tradition was by no means restricted to them – they could be unsettling whenever they came. The second model, which features in Landes' work and also that of Norman Cohn, focuses on the reforming spirit of millennialism – the effort to create a heavenly kingdom on Earth.<sup>3</sup> The application of this seems in particular relevant to instances of 'popular' piety with an eschatological edge, pitched against a more conservative or oppressive mainstream. Heretical outsiders may seem more relevant here as opponents of reform and order, or even as characterisations of those seeking change. Attitudes towards some other kinds of outsider ('barbarians' etc) are less readily accounted for here, however, not least because Gog and Magog – the apocalyptic outsiders par excellence – signalled the *end* of the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20,7). This was sometimes history imagined in the tragic mode, not the comic mode. Neither dominant framework, then, will quite suffice when it comes to explaining interest in outsiders, even if many insights can be retained.

In what follows, it will be suggested that a model adapted to analyse apocalyptic outsiders must focus on four aspects. First, following O'Leary's tripartite analysis of apocalyptic rhetoric, we might consider that conceptualising outsiders pertains to the problem of evil in the world (as opposed to time or authority, O'Leary's other pillars).<sup>4</sup> Immediately this indicates what kind of discourse of otherness we are dealing with, because it leads us to observe a hostile dichotomy between good and bad which defines groups in conflict. Second, geography was crucial here because evil was often subject to 'borealisation' – which is to say that it became associated with a monstrous and barbaric north, cast as the antithesis of the civilised south but also as a rod of God's wrath following the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah.<sup>5</sup> A third aspect is provided by the dynamic of conflict which we could label 'cultural dissonance': when the confidence of a culture is challenged by outsiders, it triggers a process in which people have to rationalise out failed expectations – of superiority, say – and work through their new circumstances.<sup>6</sup> Embedded in this dynamic is our

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3 R. Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of Millennial Experience* (Oxford, 2011); N. Cohn, *In Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millennarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, 1970).

4 S. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1994).

5 The idea plays naturally on E. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), brought importantly into discussions of medieval apocalypticism in A. Gow, 'Gog and Magog on Mappaemundi and Early Printed World Maps: Orientalizing Ethnography in the Apocalyptic Tradition', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 2. 1 (1998), 61–88, esp. 64–65. See also D. Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden: Vorstellungen und Fremdheitskategorien bei Rimbart, Thietmar von Merseburg, Adam von Bremen und Helmold von Bosau, Orbis mediaevalis 5* (Berlin, 2005); T. Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität: Selbst- und Fremd- deutung im Norden des hochmittelalterlichen Europa, Europa im Mittelalter*, 14 (Berlin, 2009).

6 I use the label 'cultural dissonance' here to refer to a general cultural dialectic and to distinguish the process from cognitive dissonance which specifically follows failed prophecies, first set out in L. Festinger, H. W. Riecken & S. Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails: A Sociological and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World* (Minneapolis, 1956), with useful criticisms in J. G. Melton, 'Spiritualization and reaffirmation: what really happens when prophecy fails',

fourth aspect, which is the way in which outsiders can inspire both ‘passive’ descriptive responses (e. g. the identification of a people as Gog) and ‘active’ ones which encourage people into some kind of action.<sup>7</sup> Bearing these ideas in mind, we can turn to analysing the ways in which apocalyptic outsiders were defined and used within early medieval discourses.

## The Internal Enemy

In terms of early medieval ‘theories’ about apocalyptic outsiders in the West, definition began within the ecclesiological framework of biblical exegesis on Revelation.<sup>8</sup> Here apocalyptic scripture was read as a meditation on Ecclesia rather than as prophecy. This was not to say that the early medieval Church was committed to a ‘realised eschatology’ in which the teachings of the New Testament related only to present and not future experience, for it could not be.<sup>9</sup> But neither could scripture be taken as a literal guide to the future. With regards to Gog and Magog, apocalyptic outsiders stood for secret enemies within the Church in general rather than definite historical characters to come in the End Times. St Jerome provided an etymology of their names in which the former meant ‘roof’ (*tectum*) or, in Greek, ‘dwelling’ (δῶμα); while the latter, he asserted, meant ‘from the roof’ (*de tecto*) or ‘uncovering’ (*detecto*).<sup>10</sup> This etymology was cited by Augustine in *De civitate Dei* and then by Primasius of Hadrumentum (fl. 550) in his commentary on Revelation, after which it became a stable part of exegetical tradition.<sup>11</sup> The roof stood for the enclosure of the (secret) enemies of Christianity, who would burst into the open, emerging ‘from the roof’. Stated so, Gog and Magog stood for heretics most of all, since they came from within rather than from without, and this was the preferred interpretation by Bede (d. 735), Haimo of Auxerre (c. 850), and others.<sup>12</sup> What Gog and Magog could

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American Studies, 26 (1985), 17–29 and D. Tumminia, ‘How prophecy never fails: interpretative reason in a flying-saucer group’, *Sociology of Religion*, 59.2 (1998), 157–170.

7 On the use of apocalyptic motifs in the active mode see also F. L. Borschart, *Doomsday Speculation as a Strategy of Persuasion: A Study of Apocalypticism as Rhetoric* (Lewiston, 1990).

8 E. A. Matter, ‘The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis’, in R. Emmerson & B. McGinn (eds.), *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1992), 38–50; P. Fredriksen, ‘Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity: From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo’, *Vigiliae Christianae*, 45 (1991), 151–183.

9 ‘Realized eschatology’ was first set out in C. H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1935) and so is not entirely relevant to medieval theology.

10 Jerome, In Ezekiel, XI, PL 25.354–357; *Liber de nominibus Hebraicis*, PL 23.781 (Gen), 837 (Eze) and 857–858 (Rev).

11 Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XX. 11, ed. Dombart, CCSL 48 (Turnhout, 1955), pp. 720–721; Primasius, *Commentarius in apocalypsin*, V, ed. A. W. Adams, CCSL 92 (Turnhout, 1985), pp. 278–279.

12 Bede, *Expositio apocalypseos*, XXXV. 92–102, ed. R. Gryson, CCSL 121 A (Turnhout, 2002), p. 511; Haimo of Auxerre, In *apocalypsin*, PL 117. 1186–1187. Compare also the texts in *Commentaria minor in Apocalypsin Iohannis*, ed. R. Gryson, CCSL 107 (Turnhout, 2003).

not signify, most commentators agreed in theory, were specific and localisable peoples such as the Getae and Massagetae or the Huns.

The association between ‘secret enemies’ and Gog and Magog enjoyed little development despite the apparent victory of the idea in biblical commentaries. Drawing on Jerome’s Latinised Greek etymology of Magog, *de domate* (‘from the dwelling’), in 786 Beatus of Lièbana saw the opportunity to talk about those *de dogmate*, those who had strayed from correct interpretations of dogma – no doubt thinking about the growing Christological dispute in the Iberian peninsula at the time.<sup>13</sup> The Irish exegetical compendium *Pauca problesmata* preserved in ninth-century Regensburg made a strong association between Gog and heretics, but without direct Hieronymian influence or obvious heresies to combat.<sup>14</sup> Heretics were discussed at length in relation to apocalyptic scripture as the enemies of Ecclesia, as is particularly notable in Haimo’s work even as he made different distinctions between internal and external forces.<sup>15</sup> Rarely, however, does one find such discussion away from exegetical works. One exception is the author of the *Vita Boniti*, an eighth-century Gaulish saint’s Life, who characterised extreme ascetics in the Auvergne as Gog and Magog, explicitly citing Jerome to underpin the idea that they were enemies of the Church and perhaps (‘forsitan’) some of the heretics that would precede Antichrist.<sup>16</sup> Other writers were slower to accuse their enemies of being Gog and Magog than they were even to label them ‘Antichrist(s)’.<sup>17</sup>

Pseudo-prophets as apocalyptic outsiders (Matt. 24,11 and 24; Rev. 16;13; 19,20; 20,10), on the other hand, seemed real enough and caused unrest. They were often outsiders because they rejected institutional hierarchy, even if they tended to adopt many of the standard trappings of early medieval piety. Gregory of Tours described three such figures in his *Historiae* (written up to c. 593), the most dramatic being the messianic ‘Christ’ of Bourges – an ‘antichrist’, thought Gregory – who

<sup>13</sup> Beatus, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, XI, ed. E. Romero-Pose, Rome 1985, II. 358. On the debate, J. C. Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West: Adoptionism in Spain and Gaul, 785–820* (Philadelphia, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14277, f. 339v (‘Gog tectum interpretatur, id est populus hereticorum’). On the *Pauca problesmata* see B. Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkt in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter’, in his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, 1 (Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 205–272 at pp. 231–236.

<sup>15</sup> Haimo of Auxerre, In apoc., PL 117. 1007, 1028, 1047–1060, 1068–1069, 1073, 1077, 1083, 1085, 1093, 1100, 1114, 1129, 1137, 1159–1160, 1184, 1217–1218, 1220 – often extra Ecclesiam alongside pagans, Jews and false Christians. On Haimo and his more political commentary on Ezekiel see J. J. Contreni, ‘“By Lions, Bishops are Meant; By Wolves, Priests”: History, Exegesis, and the Carolingian Church in Haimo of Auxerre’s Commentary on Ezekiel’, *Francia*, 29. 1 (2002), 29–56, esp. 35–36.

<sup>16</sup> *Vita Boniti*, c. 17, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM, 6 (Hanover, 1913), p. 129

<sup>17</sup> See the examples of Antichrist rhetoric discussed in S. MacLean, ‘Reform, Queenship and the End of the World in Tenth-Century France: Adso’s “Letter on the Origin and Time of the Antichrist” Reconsidered’, *Revue Belge de philologie et d’histoire*, 86 (2008), 645–675 at 653–656 and Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 216–219.

lived in the woods with his sister, 'Mary', and attracted an army of thousands through his false Second Coming.<sup>18</sup> He was, the bishop of Tours was sure, a sign of the End's approach; but more than that, he was a challenge to the *ecclesia Dei* Gregory helped to lead, and therefore Gregory had to condemn his type to posterity.<sup>19</sup> To attack such figures was to defend an orthodox eschatology, not to obscure belief in the End. Similar things can be seen 150 years later, when St Boniface led the condemnation of the unapproved holy man Aldebert, 'a precursor of Antichrist', who attracted people by offering quick absolution of sins, easily accessible relics (his hair and fingernail clippings), and dismissing the importance of pilgrimage or even going to proper churches.<sup>20</sup> This was the only time in a long career with many tribulations that Boniface employed apocalyptic rhetoric, highlighting the seriousness with which he regarded such an alternative popular focus for worship.<sup>21</sup> Again, the condemnation of an outsider, a not-so-secret enemy within, reinforced core values framed by an eschatological need to keep society in order for Judgement.

## External Enemies

A livelier cluster of traditions developed in the early Middle Ages concerning apocalyptic invasion, perhaps where cultural dissonance was more keenly felt. It was the Goths' role in the unsettled early years of the fifth century which prompted both St Jerome and St Augustine to write against associating the attackers with Gog and Magog.<sup>22</sup> The identification played on the names of the Gothic Getae and Masagetae but also represented an outgrowth of genealogical traditions in which all peoples had biblical ancestors – and in this case, the Scythians and Getae were widely considered to be the descendants of Japheth's son Magog.<sup>23</sup> There was nothing strictly prophetic about this association, at least when compared to the descendants of Sarah (*saraceni*; Arabs) who represented one branch which history had separated

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**18** Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, X. 25, ed. B. Krusch & W. Levison, MGH SRM, 1. 1 (Hanover, 1951), pp. 517–519. See also IX. 6, pp. 417–420. Discussed in M. Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes*, 418–781 (Paris, 1979), pp. 409–414 and Landes, 'Millenarismus absconditus', 376–377; Landes, *Heaven on Earth*, pp. 63–64; Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 75–76.

**19** M. Heinzlmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. C. Carroll (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 78 and p. 83.

**20** Boniface, *Epistola*, no. 59, ed. M. Tangl, MGH Epp. sel. 1 (Berlin, 1916), pp. 110–113; Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 148–150.

**21** N. Zeddies, 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen: die Häretiker Aldebert und Clemens', in: Th. Fögen (ed.), *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter. Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion, Ius commune. Sonderheft 70* (Frankfurt-am-Main 1995), pp. 232–251

**22** See above, p. 309.

**23** In the East this tradition naturally coalesced around the Huns: see W. Brandes, 'Gog, Magog und die Hunnen. Anmerkungen zur eschatologischen "Ethnographie" der Völkerwanderungszeit', in: *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, ed. by W. Pohl / Cl. Gantner / R. Payne. Aldershot 2012, 477–498, and V. Wieser, this volume.

from salvation.<sup>24</sup> Sometimes, more rhetorical mileage could be teased from ambiguous identifications of otherness, labelling outsiders *barbari* for example, or in the ninth century embracing the literal *nordmanni* to describe the Scandinavian raiders who afflicted Latin Christendom. These could then be linked to something more concretely apocalyptic, as when Aethicus Ister used an imagined barbaric North as the location of Gog and Magog.<sup>25</sup> Often, however, labels could be emotive, even pejorative, but their resonance was left seemingly left open for the reader to understand.

Jews, in this context, were the ‘outsiders’ who played the least role in eschatological definitions of community. This was because, as Heil observed, ‘conflict with the Jews was an intellectual, not a social, reality’ – a point which underscores the importance of genuine conflict to interpretations of apocalyptic outsiders.<sup>26</sup> There just were not many Jewish communities in the West at this time, but where there were, they did provide some contrast with the *ecclesia Dei*. Gregory of Tours thought the Jews in Orléans to be deceitful heretics but afforded them no further role in his apocalyptic unfolding of history other than to show good king Guntramn resisting their calls for help rebuilding a synagogue.<sup>27</sup> In Carolingian Lyons, Agobard wrote to exhort Emperor Louis the Pious to provide order and direction during *tempora periculosa* characterised by Jews – associated with Antichrist – leading Christians astray.<sup>28</sup> Often this tapped into an apocalyptic anti-Judaism shaped equally by Jerome and Pseudo-Methodius in which Jews stood as the opponents of Christ.<sup>29</sup> Yet, seizing on Romans (11. 25–26), the conversion of Jews by a returning Enoch and Elijah was another essential part of the End Times narrative, as proclaimed more positively by Bede and Alcuin in the eighth century.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps this is why few felt the need for vi-

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**24** Emphasised in Pseudo-Methodius, [5], 2, eds. W. J. Aerts & G. A. A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten Griechischen und Lateinischen Übersetzungen* (2 vols., Leuven, 1998), p. 93. K. Scarfe Becket, *Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 33 (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 90–115.

**25** *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister*, cc. 32–33, ed. and trans. M. Herren, *Publications of The Journal of Medieval Latin*, 8 (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 32–35.

**26** J. Heil, “‘Nos nescientes de hoc velle manere’ – ‘We Wish to Remain Ignorant About This’: Timeless End, or: Approaches to Reconceptualizing Eschatology after AD 800 (AM 6000)”, *Traditio*, 55 (2000), 73–103 at p. 98. Further context in Palmer, ‘The Otherness of Non-Christians’, pp. 39–41.

**27** Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, VIII. 1, eds. Krusch & Levison, pp. 370–371. On Gregory’s attitudes towards the Jews see A. Keeley, ‘Arians and Jews in the Histories of Gregory of Tours’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 23. 2 (1997), 103–115 at 109–115.

**28** Agobard of Lyons, *De insolentia Iudeorum*, ed. L. van Acker, *CCCM*, 52 (Turnhout, 1981), p. 191; Heil, ‘Reconceptualizing Eschatology’, 99–101.

**29** Jerome, *In Daniele*, 3 (4), ed. F. Glorie, *CCSL* 75 A (Turnhout, 1964), 917; Pseudo-Methodius, [14], 10, p. 195 (Antichrist descended from the tribe of Dan, just like Judas Iscariot). I cite here the Latin version as I am discussing the Western traditions. Aerts & Kortekaas’s edition now forms the basis of the texts in B. Garstad’s *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library*, 14 (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

**30** Bede, *De temporum ratione*, c. 69, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL*, 123B (Turnhout, 1977), p. 532; Alcuin, *De fide sanctae et individuae trinitatis*, 3. 19, PL 101. 51 A-B. Note also how Adso incorporates this



olence against them that could be witnessed after AD 1000 – and indeed why there are so many examples of forcible conversion.<sup>31</sup> Anti-Judaism might not always have gone hand-in-hand with anti-apocalypticism if people actively wished to bring about the conditions for Judgement Day.<sup>32</sup>

Often it was the instability of the world, rather than an interest in Gog and Magog per se, which moved people to write about outsiders. After Augustine's rejection of historical interpretations of Revelation, the intellectual landscape was complicated by Gregory the Great (590–604) – largely Augustinian but with a deeper sense of apocalyptic imminence – because of his portentous and widely-circulated interpretation of the Lombards.<sup>33</sup> Time and again, in sermons, letters, and the *Dialogi*, Lombard attacks were listed amongst signs of the End, largely because they were perpetrated by barbarians set against the civilised world – a *gens contra gentem* from Luke 21, 10.<sup>34</sup> They were not beyond the pale for this, and Gregory worked actively to establish peace and to encourage the Lombards to renounce Arianism. Through such measures, and the ambiguity of his words, Gregory retained a level of agnosticism about the End by refusing to raise the Lombards up as an essential part of a set narrative of the End Times. It was nevertheless perhaps only a short distance in thought from Gregory's sketches to the appearance of Pseudo-Ephraim's *Sermo*, with its un-specific 'warlike peoples' – still not Gog and Magog – who would come in the Last Days to scatter people hither-and-thither, East and West.<sup>35</sup> As long as some things

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into the Pseudo-Methodian end section of his *De ortu et tempore antichristo*, ed. D. Verhelst, CCCM, 45 (Turnhout, 1976), p. 28.

**31** On anti-Judaism around the Year 1000, Fried, 'Endzeiterwartung', 468–469, and R. Landes, 'The Massacres of 101: On the Origins of Popular Anti-Jewish Violence in Western Europe', in J. Cohen (ed.), *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought* (Wolfenbüttel, 1996), 79–112. Examples of forced baptism: Gregory, *Historiae*, V. 11, pp. 205–206, and VI. 17, pp. 286–287 (but note the deliberate contrast in narrative); Isidore, *Historia*, c. 60, ed. C. Rodríguez Alonso (Léon, 1975), pp. 270–272. Peaceful conversion urged by Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, XIII. 13, ed. Norberg, II. 1013–1014. See B. Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis, 1977).

**32** Cf. Heil, 'Reconceptualizing Eschatology', 101 (although I agree with his interpretation of the evidence he cites).

**33** On Gregory's eschatology: C. Dagens, 'La fin de temps et l'Église selon Saint Grégoire le Grand', *Recherches de science religieuse*, 58 (1970), 273–288; R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 51–67 and his 'Living within Sight of the End', in: C. Humphrey & M. Ormrod (eds.), *Time in the Medieval World* (York, 2001), 23–34; M. Meier, 'Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr. – oder: Wie Osten und Westen beständig aneinander vorbei redeten', in: W. Brandes & F. Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen* (Berlin & New York, 2008), pp. 41–73 at 56–63.

**34** Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, I. 1, ed. R. Étaix, CCL, 141 (Turnhout, 1999), p. 6; *Registrum*, V. 37, II. 309; *Dialogi*, III. 38. 3, ed. A. de Vogüé, *Sources Chrétiennes*, 260, Paris 1979, p. 430; *Moralia in Job*, XIX. 9. 16, ed. M. Adriaen, CCL, 143 (3 vols, Turnhout, 1979–1985), II. 968; Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 63–65.

**35** Pseudo-Ephraim, *Scarpsum*, ed. D. Verhelst, in: R. Lievens, E. van Mingroot & W. Verbeke (eds.), *Pascua Mediaevalia, Historica Lovaniensia*, 155 (Leuven, 1983), 518–528 at 524–525. D. Verhelst,

were left sufficiently open, barbarian attacks added important colour to a sense of imminence.

More than Gregory, Pseudo-Ephraim hinted that the people of the Endtime would be geographically locatable – something intensified by the tradition of Alexander, the Caspian Gates, and ‘the Breasts of the North’ in the West.<sup>36</sup> In Julius Valerius’s *Res gestae Alexandri*, a fourth- or fifth-century translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes, the peoples Alexander locked behind the Caspian Gates were rendered as just *gentes plurimae*.<sup>37</sup> In Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* these were *gentes ferae* and associated with the Huns, just as they often were in the East.<sup>38</sup> Fredegar – writing later in the seventh century and perhaps with second-hand knowledge of Eastern tradition – adapted the legend so that Emperor Herakleios released *gentes suevissimae* from behind the Caspian Gates when seeking help against the Arabs.<sup>39</sup> It was then famously in Pseudo-Methodius’ *Sermo* that the legend was cast as part of an apocalyptic narrative: Gog and Magog were amongst those imprisoned by Alexander and much later, after persecutions by the Arabs ended only by a last *rex Grecorum sive Romanorum*, the *gentes ab Aquilone* would be released from the North to unleash a final persecution before Judgement Day.<sup>40</sup> With Petrus Monachus translating Pseudo-Methodius from Greek into Latin early in the eighth century, the West had the resources for a more developed historicising framework for interpreting apocalyptic outsiders.<sup>41</sup>

The fate of Pseudo-Methodius in the West is revealing of the anxiety of interpretation involved. For a start, Petrus’s text was bound to the Latin text of Pseudo-Ephraim from an early date, meaning that two similar prophecies now sat together.<sup>42</sup> Readers did not readily accept the relevance of the Alexander Legend, which was ex-

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‘La préhistoire des conceptions d’Adson concernant l’Antichrist’, *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 40 (1973), 52–103 at pp. 97–98; G. J. Reinink, ‘Pseudo-Methodius and the Pseudo-Ephreman *Sermo de fine mundi*’, in: R. Nip et al. (eds.), *Media Latinitas* (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 317–321; G. Kortekaas, ‘The Biblical Quotations in the Pseudo-Ephreman *Sermo de fine mundi*’, in: *Media Latinitas*, pp. 237–244.

**36** A. R. Anderson, *Alexander’s Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA, 1932); A. B. Schmidt, ‘Die “Brüste des Norden” und Alexanders Mauer gegen Gog und Magog’, in Brandes & Schmieder, *Endzeiten*, pp. 89–99.

**37** Julius Valerius, *Res gestae Alexandri*, II.19, ed. M. Rosellini (Leipzig, 1993), p. 114.

**38** Isidore, *Etymologiae*, ix.2.66, ed. W. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911) [unpaginated]. Anderson, *Alexander’s Gate*, p. 12 and see again Brandes, ‘Gog, Magog und die Hunnen’, for the Eastern tradition.

**39** Fredegar, *Chronicae*, IV. 66, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM, 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 153–154.

**40** Pseudo-Methodius (Petrus Monachus), c. 13. 19–21, ed. Kortekaas & Aerts, pp. 183–185.

**41** On Petrus see now H. Möhring, ‘Karl der Große und die Endkaiser-Weissagung: Der Sieger über den Islam kommt aus dem Westen’, in: B. Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith & R. Hiestand (eds.), *Montjoie: Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer* (Aldershot, 1997), 1–20, elaborated in Möhring’s, *Der Weltkaiser*, pp. 136–143; R. M. Pollard, ‘One Other on Another: Petrus Monachus’ *Revelationes and Islam*’, in M. Cohen & J. Firnhaber-Baker (eds.), *Difference and Identity in Francia and Medieval France* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 25–42; Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 107–129.

**42** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 13348, 89r-111v (provenance Corbie, mid-eighth century).

punged from the second Latin recension (in Alemannia, perhaps around 793) and dismissed by the Gallo-Roman Ambrosius Autpertus at S. Vincenzo between 758 and 767 as pertaining to human rather than spiritual truths.<sup>43</sup> But at the same time, the resonance of Gog and Magog increased, as they were used to gloss the identity of the *gentes ab Aquilone* by Petrus's reviser. A third recension, also with a witness by Lake Constance by c. 800, both kept Alexander and added the clarifying references to Gog and Magog.<sup>44</sup> Yet another early witness, the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister, wove the Alexander legend and Gog and Magog of the North – 'borealised' further with the poem "mother of dragons, and nurse of scorpions, pit of vipers, and lake of demons" – into a slightly fantastical and barbed description of the world.<sup>45</sup> Here Gog and Magog, still to be led by Antichrist in the Last Days, were satirised as part of a wider array of barbarous and peculiar peoples in the North, many cannibalistic, the antithesis of civility. The most important feature of such apocalyptic outsiders, as we shall see further below, was their otherness as a moral lesson, not their historical reality.

The difficulty the 'debate' about Gog and Magog posed was how to deal with apocalyptic outsiders when they were, ultimately, just people. There was, for sure, trauma, conflict and general cultural dissonance surrounding the actions of some, but people were also interested in actively bringing that conflict back into harmony. Isidore of Seville pulled off a careful trick with his use of Gog and Magog in the formation of Visigothic identity in the *Historia Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum*, written in its expanded form for King Sisenand in 624.<sup>46</sup> At the beginning of his chronicle, he points to the association between Gog and Magog and the Getae, drawing attention to the importance of Ezekiel's prophecy but essentially undercutting it by not explaining the resonance. But by then quoting Orosius's explicitly de-eschatologising reputation of the Getae – Alexander said they should be shunned, Caesar never beat them – we are put on a straight historical footing. Indeed, this ties in with Isidore's discussion of the Goths in *Etymologiae*, which is a simple exercise in the genealogical tradition.<sup>47</sup> For Isidore, as for Orosius, there was a sense in which the Goths had taken over the dignity of the Roman Empire and in the process become insiders. Rome was the last of the four World Empires and perversely it was now run by the apocalyptic outsiders it stood up to. Gog and Magog in this case had not signalled the End of the world, but helped in its endurance.

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<sup>43</sup> Ambrosius Autpertus, *Expositionis in Apocalypsin*, IX. 45–52, ed. R. Weber, CCCM 27 A (Turnhout, 1975), p. 758. For the second recension of Pseudo-Methodius see O. Prinz, 'Eine frühe abendländische Aktulaisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius', *Deutsches Archiv*, 41 (1985), 1–23.

<sup>44</sup> Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 254, ff. 206r-208r and f. 209r (provenance Reichenau, early ninth century).

<sup>45</sup> Gow, 'Gog and Magog', 64–65 (on apocalyptic geography and orientalisation).

<sup>46</sup> Isidore, *Historia*, 'De origine Gothorum', ed. Rodríguez Alonso, p. 172.

<sup>47</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, IX.2 (especially 27 on Magog).

## Apocalyptic Outsiders as a Spur for Reform

Behind much of what we have seen so far was an interest in embracing the ‘threat’ of apocalyptic outsiders to encourage moral reform. This is in effect the ‘active-focused’ side of cultural dissonance, because it was less about proclaiming the End and more about directing responses to the present. When people sought to understand why they had been attacked, reforming voices adopted a retrospective prophetic mood and quickly blamed the behaviour of the afflicted. Alcuin, for instance, used the viking Sack of Lindisfarne in 793 as an opportunity to write letters criticising drinking, hunting and other ‘secular’ pursuits in monasteries – addressing not only the shocked community in Lindisfarne, but also in Jarrow 80 km away.<sup>48</sup> Famously he linked the attacks to Jeremiah’s ‘from the north an evil shall break forth’ (1, 14).<sup>49</sup> Salvian of Marseilles in the mid-fifth century, targeting Roman society at large, naturally found a wider spectrum of sins to correct.<sup>50</sup> Sometimes these were ‘imagined sins’ drawn from reading, just as there were ‘imagined paganisms’. Both Salvian and Pseudo-Methodius worried about unnatural sex acts, but both did so on the basis of Paul’s Romans 1, 26–27 rather than because there were prostitutes outside their window as far as we can tell.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, Pseudo-Methodius concluded: ‘on account of this [the sinners] will be handed by God into the hands of the barbarians’.<sup>52</sup> The audience was left in no doubt what fate awaited them if they did not behave better.

There was something inessential about apocalyptic motifs in these contexts – something which helps to identify a repertoire of interpretation that goes beyond the apocalyptic. A single example might suffice: Gildas wrote his *De excidio Britanniae* perhaps in the late fifth or early sixth century as a layman resigning from public life in favour of the monastic, pouring scorn on the standards of the kings and nobles of Sub-Roman Britain.<sup>53</sup> Repeatedly, like Salvian of Marseilles, Gildas invoked a providential prophetic voice, both to explain why pagan Saxons and Picts had been so successful at invading Christian Britain, and to explain why moral correction was

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48 Alcuin, *Epistolae*, nos. 19, pp. 53–56, 20, pp. 56–58, 21, pp. 58–59, 22, pp. 59–60.

49 Alcuin, *Epistola*, no. 19, p. 55. On the intellectual context see S. Coupland, ‘The Rod of God’s Wrath or the People of God’s Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 42 (1991), 535–554.

50 Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei*, ed. C. Halm, MGH AA, 1 (Berlin, 1877), 1–108.

51 Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei*, VII. 76, p. 97; Pseudo-Methodius (Petrus Monachus), *Sermo*, [11], 6–7, pp. 141–143.

52 Ps-Methodius, 11, 8, p. 143: ‘propter hoc igitur tradentur a Deo in manus barbarorum’.

53 Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA, 13 (Berlin, 1898), 1–85. The authenticity has recently been called into question on the basis of Bede’s all-too-neat appropriation of Gildas’s prophecy – see A. Woolf, ‘An Interpolation into the Text of Gildas’s *De excidio Britanniae*’, *Peritia*, 16 (2002), 161–167 and K. Olbrich, ‘Die Britannienprophezeiung des Gildas im Lichte der Säkularvorstellungen: Spuren einer politischen Fälschung des 8. Jahrhunderts?’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 44 (2011), 59–82. The pertinent section for my comparison may still be genuine.

a necessary response. The striking feature for us is the lack of explicit apocalyptic rhetoric. Gildas had the ammunition: the barbaric, pagan Picts had come from the North, from beyond Hadrian's Wall, and with other 'barbarians' had persecuted Christians with severe failings in moral character, at least as far as Gildas was concerned.<sup>54</sup> Two things might have affected his response: first, we need to bear in mind that Gildas had access to a more limited repertoire of apocalyptic ideas, not least because he wrote before Pseudo-Methodius;<sup>55</sup> and, second, Gildas may simply have chosen not to push things in the direction of a Salvian or Quodvultdeus, content that what he wrote would be sufficient for his argumentative purposes. Context defined eschatological logic.

Seeking further evidence of prophetic or apocalyptic use of outsiders in reform sermons provides mixed results. Galician tradition urged use of Revelation in paschal liturgical settings, and in Spain it was enshrined in a decision at Isidore's Toledo IV, although in neither case are details provided.<sup>56</sup> Many early eschatologically-focused sermons were more interested in the struggles of the soul than the threats of outsiders.<sup>57</sup> But it was certainly Gregory the Great's intention to frighten the audience of his homilies into a state of penitence in response to things such as Lombard attacks. The texts of Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Ephraim were called *sermones*, even if they may have been reserved for private study in monasteries. Pseudo-Ephraim at least lamented that people should have been considering penance sooner. When in 789 Charlemagne's court issued an 'exemplar sermon' to help guard against the activities of (apocalyptic) pseudo-prophets and pseudo-teachers, however, the content of the sermon was more about abstract moral reflection rather than the evils of unorthodox preachers, and that was perhaps the more common strategy.<sup>58</sup> Agobard of Lyons provided one rare later Carolingian example when he quoted most of the first section of Rev. 20 in *De fidei veritate*. He passed little comment on Gog and Magog but did summarise a general truth: 'and so perfect Christians should not only not fear tribulations, but in truth glory in tribulations.' He recog-

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<sup>54</sup> See especially Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae*, c. 21, pp. 36–37.

<sup>55</sup> It is worth noting that in Britain, where no copy of Pseudo-Methodius is known until the twelfth century, there was no strong tradition of analysing outsiders – even vikings – as Gog and Magog, even in the eschatological sermons of Wulfstan (<http://webpages.ursinus.edu/~jlionarons/wulfstan/frame-set1.html>).

<sup>56</sup> Pseudo-Germanus, *Expositio brevis antiquae liturgiae Gallicanae*, I, 7, ed. E. Ratcliff, Henry Bradshaw Society, 98 (Chichester, 1965), pp. 5–6. Toledo IV, c. 17, ed. K.-G. Schon (<http://www.pseudoisidor.mgh.de/html/108.htm>).

<sup>57</sup> For one such collection see Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 28135 (Freising, early s. ix) available online through [www.europeanaregia.eu](http://www.europeanaregia.eu)

<sup>58</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c. 82, ed. A. Boretius, MGH Cap. 1 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 61–62; T. L. Amos, 'Preaching and the Sermon in the Carolingian World', in T. L. Amos, E. A. Green & B. M. Kienzle (eds.), *De ore domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1989), pp. 41–60 at 43–44.

nised, as Gregory had done, that outsiders provided a test of faith and were therefore spiritually useful.<sup>59</sup>

Reform legislation and canon law, surprisingly, carried little of the urgency proclaimed by sermons or attacks on charismatics.<sup>60</sup> Despite the ecclesiology in exegesis of Revelation, most church councils defined their enemy as slipping standards rather than apocalyptic evils. (Curiously, one might also note that church councils never condemned ‘non-orthodox’ views on apocalypticism, exposing the ambiguity in attitude further). When councils did make a stand, there were clear triggers. Charlemagne’s concern about pseudo-prophets and pseudo-teachers in 789, for instance, was likely a response to the fiery arguments surrounding the Adoptionist Controversy. The Synod of Meaux-Paris in 845/6 under King Charles the Bald was notable for opening with a darker discussion of judgement, punishment and prophecy.<sup>61</sup> Here the cause was made explicit: the Lord gave ‘from North’, so that according to the prophet, ‘an evil will break forth’... namely the most brutal persecutors of the Christians, the Northmen (‘Nordmanni), who came to Paris...’ – referring to the famous attack of the city in 845.<sup>62</sup> The programme of emendation proposed at the synod drew its force from an actualisation of prophecy. Perhaps the report of an ominous vision about the vikings had heightened expectations.<sup>63</sup> Yet, as viking attacks increased in the second half of the ninth century, the response at Paris would turn out to be an exception rather than the rule.

With the Northmen, we come back to the issue of apocalyptic geography. While Gog and Magog lurked, ominously, on the peripheries of the known world, were they to inspire people to take up the missionary life? Matt 24.14 explicitly linked the consummation of the world to the preaching of the Gospels to all kingdoms and nations, and 28.19–20 sent the disciples forth to fulfil this work. Pascasius Radbertus of Corbie recognised here that the building of churches in Scandinavia went some way to completing the task of evangelisation, although he noted that ‘all peoples are promised to come to the faith, not all men of all peoples’.<sup>64</sup> Here too lived cynocephali according to Aethicus Ister, the same ones imprisoned by Alexander alongside

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**59** Agobard, *De fidei veritate*, ed. van Acker, p. 275: *perfecti itaque Christiani non solum non timent tribulaciones, uerum etiam gloriantur in tribulacionibus, scientes quod tribulacio pacienciam operatur, paciencia autem probacionem, probacio uero spem, spes autem non confundit.*

**60** One rare example is Chrodegang of Metz’s *Vita canonicorum*, pref., ed. J. Bertram, *The Chrodegang Rules* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 27–28.

**61** no. 11, ed. W. Hartmann, *MGH Conc. 3* (Hanover, 1984), pp. 82–83.

**62** *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 845, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG*, 6 (Hanover, 1883), p. 32; *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 845, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SRG*, 7 (Hanover, 1891), p. 35; Palmer, ‘The Otherness of Non-Christians’, p. 39.

**63** *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 839, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG*, 5 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 18–19.

**64** Pascasius Radbertus, in *Matheum*, XI, ed. Beda Paulus, *CCCM*, 56 (3 vols., Turnhout, 1984), II. 1165: ‘omnes gentes promissae sunt ad fidem venire, non omnes homines omnium gentium’. Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 181–182.



Gog and Magog according to Pseudo-Methodius.<sup>65</sup> Rimbert of Hamburg-Bremen worried over whether these monstrous figures were humans and were therefore in need of mission, presumably because of his apocalyptic evangelical drive.<sup>66</sup> Again that which was external and unusual had to be normalised, brought ‘inside’, so that prophecy could be fulfilled. But it had been so since the days of Gregory the Great, when he had written to Eulogios of Alexandria to inform him that Christianity had been preached unto the ends of the Earth now that the English had converted under his influence.<sup>67</sup>

Were, then, opponents of mission ‘anti-apocalyptic’ for obstructing actions which some people considered to be a fulfilment of prophecy?<sup>68</sup> It is, of course, a matter of perspective. When Gregory was active, the idea of universal mission was just in its infancy so difficulties in garnering support exposed contrasts between models of Christendom and its duties. Over a century later Gregory’s view, bolstered by similar ideas spreading from Ireland, still failed to motivate bishops and priests whose priorities simply lay elsewhere. Into the Viking Age, Hincmar of Rheims in many ways stood opposed to the evangelisation work launched from Rimbert’s see, but did so because he had a dim view of the Danes and politically needed to distance himself from Ebbo, his predecessor as archbishop. Haimo of Auxerre dismissed the relevance of Gog and Magog to the Northmen on the basis of exegetical tradition.<sup>69</sup> Removed from the politics, but not the prejudice, in 883–885 Notker the Stammler of St Gall openly mocked cynocephali and the ‘faked’ conversions of the Northmen – yet he opened his *Gesta Karoli* by announcing that the Carolingian Empire, as the successor to Rome, was the last world empire from the Book of Daniel.<sup>70</sup> Engagement with apocalyptic traditions was often dictated by what an in-

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**65** The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister, c. 28, ed. Herren, p. 26; Pseudo-Methodius (Petrus Monachus), *Sermo*, [8], 10, ed. Kortekaas & Aerts, p. 117. On traditions about cynocephali in the period see I. N. Wood, ‘Categorising the Cynocephali’, in R. Corradini, M. Gillis, R. McKitterick & I. van Renswoude (eds.), *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 125–136.

**66** Only the reply to Rimbert’s worries has survived: Ratramnus of Corbie, *Epistolae variorum inde a saeculo non medio usque ad mortem Karoli II. (Cavli) imperatoris collectae*, no. 12, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 5 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 155–156.

**67** Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, VIII. 29, ed. D. Norberg, *CCSL*, 140 A (Turnhout, 1982), pp. 551–552. Gregory had also seen praedictores – missionary or not – to be essential in the End Times: see C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), p. 157.

**68** On opposition to mission to Scandinavia see J. T. Palmer, ‘Rimbert’s Vita Anskarii and Scandinavian Mission in the Ninth Century’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55. 2 (2004), 235–256.

**69** Haimo of Auxerre, In apocalypsin PL 117. 1186–1187, possibly with a text such as Frechulf, *Historiae*, I. 2. 25, ed. M. Allen, *CCCM*, 169 A (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 134–135, as well as Ambrosius Autpertus (as n. 43).

**70** Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, I. 1, ed. H. F. Haefele, *MGH SRG*, n.s. 12 (Berlin, 1959), p. 1 (Charlemagne’s empire as the successor to Rome); II. 13, p. 76 (cynocephali); II. 19, pp. 89–90 (faked conversions). Palmer, *The Apocalypse*, p. 159.



dividual hoped to achieve in the world. There were many ways in which eschatology and reform could combine.

In the final reckoning, apocalyptic outsiders presented a spectrum of factors which both encouraged and constrained use. Contingent historical circumstance (invasion, heresy) and chosen genres of writing (exegesis, sermons etc) clearly made references to apocalyptic outsiders potentially more attractive, depending on the purpose of the rhetoric. A repertoire developed accordingly and rarely stood still, absorbing ecclesiological symbolism, moralising exhortations, fear of the North and a shifting geographical framework for Gog and Magog, and different kinds of expectations for the future, both spiritual and temporal. The uses to which the motifs were put are instructive as writers were rarely interested in proclaiming that the End Times were near as an end in itself. Writers designed their products to shape discourse about recent events, but more specifically to dramatise the need for reform and encourage genuine response rather than to present mere commentary. The obvious result of this is that discussion of apocalyptic outsiders became an exercise in internal reflection – not surprising, perhaps, given the building blocks provided in the spiritual readings of exegetical texts, but it meant that even historical readings could be turned towards the same desired outcome. The emphasis on reform is natural if we step back and consider apocalyptic in general as a response to ‘cultural dissonance’ – not just as an expression of displacement and uncertainty, but as a strategy of resolution in which the veracity of both the problem and the solution could be grasped.

Anke Holdenried

## Christian Moral Decline: A New Context for the *Sibylla Tiburtina* (Ms Escorial &.I.3)

The *Sibylla Tiburtina* was one of the most popular, widespread and influential apocalyptic texts of the medieval period. I have considered elsewhere the *Tiburtina*'s reception by its medieval audience.<sup>1</sup> My observations in this paper, however, concern a new aspect of the Latin text – its early history. Much remains to be said about this topic, since, as has been rightly remarked: ‘the history of the family of texts that for convenience’s sake we call the *Sibylla Tiburtina* is still imperfectly known’.<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps not surprising: with roots in late antiquity, the *Tiburtina*'s text evolved over a remarkably long period. The trigger for my discussion below is some neglected aspects of the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Sibylla Tiburtina*. Since the version of the text contained in this codex has been treated as the base text for the current edition, anything said about this manuscript will be critically important for the whole textual tradition. However, firstly, in order to appreciate why these points require further analysis, it is necessary to understand the text’s early development.

The text itself is a prophecy supposedly given by an ancient prophetess – the Sibyl of the title. The *Sibylla Tiburtina* narrates world history, structured as nine ages (which the text refers to as “generations”). Particular attention is paid to the history of the Roman Empire, especially the exploits of its last ruler (the ‘Last Emperor’) and to an account of Christ’s birth, life and death in the middle of the narrative. The text was originally written in Greek in the late fourth century, as part of the resurgence in Christian apocalyptic speculation about the nature and purpose of history which followed the catastrophic defeat of the Roman Empire by Gothic forces at the battle of Adrianople in 378. Although this original Greek text is lost, a modified version does survive, produced in the sixth century, again written in Greek and known as the *Oracle of Baalbek*.<sup>3</sup> It has been plausibly suggested that the original fourth-

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1 A. Holdenried, *The Sibyl and Her Scribes* (Aldershot, 2006).

2 B. McGinn, ‘Oracular transformations: the *Sibylla Tiburtina* in the Middle Ages’, in Ileana Chirassi Colombo (ed), *Sibille e linguaggi oracolari. Mito, Storia, Tradizione* (Pisa, Rome 1998), pp. 603–644, at 612. McGinn’s comment remains true, notwithstanding substantial further study of the available manuscript evidence, see Holdenried, *Sibyl*. A fresh appraisal of the origins and stemmatic relationship of the surviving versions, for example, is among the urgent research desiderata which remain, not least because new manuscript copies of the text keep coming to light (see also below, n. 11).

3 P.J. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek. The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1967). As far as we are currently aware, the *Oracle of Baalbek* constitutes an entirely separate branch of this family of texts and does not influence the Latin *Sibylla Tiburtina*. Nevertheless, it is introduced here because the *Oracle* illuminates aspects of the Latin *Sibylla Tiburtina* because of their shared ancestry.

century text was not translated from Greek into Latin until some point after the sixth-century.<sup>4</sup> The date of this translation is still uncertain. The earliest surviving manuscript of this Latin translation is dated 1047 AD. This is the strict *terminus ante quem*. However, textual analysis enables us to work backwards from that earliest manuscript to extend our understanding of the development of the Latin text back about half a century earlier, to c. 1000 AD. We can do this by observing that at least four different Latin versions of the *Tiburtina* have been identified.<sup>5</sup> These four versions derive from a hypothetical common Latin version of the text, now lost, known to scholars as the Ottonian Sibyl.<sup>6</sup> As far as I am aware, currently no one has identified any evidence that the text was known in the early medieval west before this.

By combining these observations McGinn has suggested that the text's history is as follows: the original text was written in the fourth century in Greek; the *Oracle of Baalbek* was created in the sixth century (and went on to enjoy a textual life separate from the *Tiburtina*); then, sometime after the creation of the *Oracle* (i.e. at some date after, say, 700 AD) the original fourth-century Greek text was updated to include a distinctive seven-stage scenario of the endtime and the Last Emperor motif (thus creating another Greek version separate and different from the *Oracle of Baalbek*);<sup>7</sup> this updated Greek version was either composed in, or found its way to, Italy where it became the basis of the lost Latin translation mentioned above, known as the Ottonian Sibyl, which was produced in the time of the German Emperor Otto III.<sup>8</sup> In summary, therefore, although it does not survive, the earliest identifiable version of the Latin *Tiburtina* is the Ottonian Sibyl, which was probably produced around the year 1000 by someone living in Italy.

As the reader will appreciate, the above reconstruction of the text's early history is simply based on logical inferences derived from later manuscript copies. Except for the conclusion that the *Sibylla Tiburtina* is not based on the *Oracle*, strictly no ele-

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4 McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', pp. 612–613.

5 We can be confident about this observation because the *Tiburtina* has a large corpus of surviving manuscript copies, see 'Conspectus of Extant Manuscripts' in Holdenried, *Sibyl*, pp. 177–202, which lists 112 manuscripts of the Latin *Tiburtina*. On further manuscript references which have since come to light, see below, n. 11.

6 For a brief sketch of the relationship of these versions, see B. McGinn, *Antichrist. Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (New York, 1994), p. 309, n.97 and, for additional discussion, H. Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit. Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkling einer tausendjährigen Weisung* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 149–156.

7 The origins of the Last Emperor motif are still being debated, see Gian Luca Potestà, 'The *Vaticinium of Constans*. Genesis and original purposes of the legend of the Last World Emperor', in Wolfgang Brandes et al. (eds), *Millennium. Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.*, Vol. 8 (Berlin, New York, 2011), pp. 271–289.

8 McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', p. 613. Otto III's mother was a Byzantine princess, Theophanu, who introduced Byzantine cultural influence to the Ottonian court. It has been assumed that the translation is somehow connected to this.

ment of this reconstruction can be proven because there are no surviving manuscripts of the text until 1047. Just to be absolutely clear, this means we have no manuscript or later copies of either the original fourth-century text, the post-700 updated Greek version or the Ottonian Sibyl. These texts do not survive and will always remain purely hypothetical, barring some extraordinary discovery. As soon as we have manuscript evidence, we are confronted by several versions of the text.

Despite this, scholars have tried to divine the context in which the hypothetical Ottonian Sibyl was produced. They have concluded that the *Tiburtina* is a piece of imperial apocalyptic (or *Reichseschatologie*), both Eastern and Western.<sup>9</sup> This interpretation is based on changes introduced into just one part of the text – the *Tiburtina*'s depiction of the Last Emperor in battle with Antichrist. This incorporates a list of rulers of Italy into its account of the ninth (and final) generation, ending with a portrait of Otto III. Scholars have concluded that this suggests a political and imperial context for the production of the Ottonian Sibyl.<sup>10</sup> Logically, therefore, one would expect that the same interpretation, that is, placing the text in a similar political and imperial context, would provide the best explanation for later copies of the *Tiburtina*.

However, as soon as we move away from reconstructing the hypothetical production of the Ottonian Sibyl to the actual copies of surviving versions of the *Tiburtina* derived from it, we encounter a difficulty. The difficulty arises, in fact, with the very earliest surviving manuscript of the *Tiburtina*, the one closest in time to the Ottonian Sibyl. That manuscript is Escorial &.I.3<sup>11</sup>, which, as well as the *Tiburtina*, contains a copy of Isidore's *Etymologies* and a commentary on the Book of Isaiah by Gregory the

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9 McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', p. 606 and p. 629. *Reichseschatologie* is a particular belief in Last Things which regards the fate of the *imperium romanum et christianum* as the central concern of apocalyptic speculation. It is founded on the identification of the last of the four world empires in the Book of Daniel with the Roman Empire and includes the belief that the Last Roman Emperor is the dominant messianic figure before the actual return of Christ.

10 See, for example, references to the *Tiburtina* in discussions of Otto III's apocalyptic mentality, policies, and actions, such as J. Fried, 'Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende', *Deutsches Archiv* 45 (1989), pp. 381–473 (at p. 427) and Matthew Gabriele, 'Otto III, Charelmagne, and pentecost A.D. 1000: A reconsideration using diplomatic evidence', p. 111–132 (at pp. 114–115), in M. Frassetto (ed), *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York 2002).

11 Lorenzo DiTommaso, reviewing my *The Sibyl and Her Scribes* in *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21 (2011), pp. 73–76 (at p. 74) recently called into question whether the Escorial manuscript is indeed the earliest manuscript of the *Tiburtina*, because a hitherto unknown manuscript containing the text, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. Lat. Q69 (fols. 1r-3v) is, according to its catalogue description, written in a tenth-century hand: see K.A. de Meyer, *Codices Vossiani latini. Pars II: codices in quarto* (Leiden, 1975), p. 158. However, I have examined the Leiden manuscript and in my opinion the script certainly looks eleventh century, perhaps even later (I am grateful to David Ganz for confirming my view of a later date for the script). In addition, internal textual evidence rules out a tenth-century date for the Leiden text of the *Tiburtina*: its regnal list is identical with that of the version of the *Tiburtina* preserved in the Escorial manuscript, that is, with the version that has been dated to the 1030s (see above).

Great, all written in 1047 in a single Visigothic hand, by a priest called Dominicus.<sup>12</sup> If the proposed reconstruction of the Latin text's history before 1047 is correct, however, then it is very odd that Escorial &.I.3 originates not from within the Empire, or even from a territory to which a German emperor might conceivably lay claim,<sup>13</sup> but instead comes from mid-eleventh century Spain, from the Muslim-controlled city of Toledo. At the time, Toledo was one of the more important *taifa*-kingdoms to emerge in Spain after the final extinction of the central authority of the Umayyad Caliphate in 1031.<sup>14</sup> It is thus difficult to see any "imperial" political context for this manuscript.

This points up a problem with the interpretation of the *Tiburtina*'s prehistory outlined above: it is a chain of hypotheses. It hypothesises the existence of a text (the Ottonian Sibyl) which does not survive and it then hypothesises the environment in which such a text might have appeared. However, since we have no surviving evidence until 1047, the circles in which the text was translated, edited and circulated before that date can likewise only ever be hypothesised. If therefore the conventional explanation cannot satisfactorily explain the very first manuscript containing the text, then, clearly, that explanation must be at least partly wrong and some other explanation is needed. In this regard, several observations about the Escorial manuscript itself suggest a way forward.

Firstly, the Toledo version of the *Tiburtina* is one of no less than three different eleventh-century versions of the text, which points to much copying and recopying. This in turn suggests that the Latin *Tiburtina* had already enjoyed wide and early dispersal in Europe, even before it arrived in the hands of the priest Dominicus in Toledo barely half a century after its assumed creation. This supposition is supported by another fact: the text preserved in the Escorial manuscript is not simply a copy of the Ottonian Sibyl (the supposed *Ur-Tiburtina*) from around 1000AD, but already an updated version thought to have been composed in the time of the Salian emperor Henry III (1039–1056), again by someone in Italy.<sup>15</sup> This all implies a rapid dissemination of the work during the eleventh century. By the 1120s we have surviving cop-

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**12** For descriptions of the Escorial manuscript, see P.G. Antolín, *Catálogo de los Códices Latinos de la real Biblioteca del Escorial*, vol.2 (Madrid 1911), p. 331; Joachim Kirchner, *Scriptura Latina Libraria* (editio altera, Oldenbourg 1970), p. 27. The current belief that the manuscript comes from Toledo rests on a thirteenth-century note in the codex, first reported by P. Ewald, 'Reise nach Spanien im Winter von 1878 auf 1879', in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 6 (1881), p. 248.

**13** On the boundaries of the mid-eleventh German Empire, see Hanna Vollrath, 'The Western Empire under the Salians', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume IV c. 1024–1198*. Part II, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley Smith (Cambridge 2004), pp. 40–43.

**14** See S. Barton, 'Spain in the Eleventh Century', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume IV c. 1024–1198* (op. cit.), pp. 154–190, which includes discussion and further bibliographical references to Toledo's period as a *taifa*-kingdom on p. 157 and pp. 170–171.

**15** On this, as well as the other eleventh-century versions, see McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', pp. 610–615. There has been some debate over whether the updating occurred in northern Italy (Lombardy), or Southern Italy, see Möhring, *Weltkaiser*, pp. 37–39.

ies from Spain, England and Germany and evidence the text was known in Flanders and France.<sup>16</sup>

If it is correct that the text was frequently copied and widely disseminated soon after being created, then the obvious question is: why was it so popular? The traditional answer would be that it enjoyed such wide diffusion because of its imperial associations. However, as mentioned above, this explanation does not seem to work even for the earliest surviving manuscript. Alternatively, we might assume that apocalypticism would be the other natural context for a work such as the *Tiburtina*, which depicts the rise of Antichrist. It was widely held in medieval Europe that in the endtimes the Christian community would be threatened from the outside by Antichrist and his helpers, whether by mythical tribes such as Gog and Magog, or by the real ‘other’, that is non-Christian faith communities such as pagans, Jews, or Muslims.<sup>17</sup> Again, however, it is difficult to see any such “non-political” apocalyptic reason for the text to have been copied. The Toledo copy of the *Tiburtina* does not depict the rise of Islam as a particular apocalyptic threat,<sup>18</sup> nor were any annotations made in the margins to reflect contemporary anxieties about Muslims as Antichrist’s agents or as the apocalyptic peoples Gog and Magog. Indeed, if anything, there may have been more optimism in Christian Spain in the 1040s, following the caliphate’s extinction in 1031 and its fragmentation into competing Muslim *taifa* city states, and a spate of victories against the Muslims by Spain’s Christian rulers.<sup>19</sup>

I would like to suggest an alternative explanation. The political interpretation of the *Tiburtina* has caused scholars to focus on just one eschatological element of the text (the Antichrist-Last Emperor motif) to the exclusion of its other eschatological themes. Perhaps a more convincing solution to the problems of the Toledo manuscript can be found by looking towards these neglected eschatological elements. I

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<sup>16</sup> Holdenried, *Sibyl*, Appendix B, pp. 203–206 and Conspectus of Extant Manuscripts, pp. 177–202.

<sup>17</sup> This is considered, for example, in A.C. Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200–1600* (Leiden, 1995) and F. Schmieder, ‘Christians, Jews, Muslims – and Mongols. Fitting a Foreign People into the Western Christian Apocalyptic Scenario’, in *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006), pp. 274–295. The tradition of fitting outsiders into the Christian apocalyptic scenario ties in closely with beliefs about Antichrist, Christianity’s arch-opponent who could be variously understood as a single individual or a group of people, see R.K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study in Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Manchester, 1981), p. 11–33 and McGinn, *Antichrist*, pp. 54–56, 80–82.

<sup>18</sup> As McGinn observed in the context of his study of another, later, *Tiburtina*-manuscript (the so-called Newberry Sibyl), the Toledo-*Tiburtina* (which he calls the W1-Sibyl) ‘gave no special stress to the *Sarraceni* or *filii Ishmael*, merely mentioning the Last Emperor’s destruction of idols and calling of pagans to baptism’, see ‘Oracular Transformations’, p. 631.

<sup>19</sup> On the more optimistic nature of Spanish apocalypticism in the wake of Muslim defeat by Christians (and on Spanish lack of interest in the role of the German empire), see H. Mayr Harting who considers these topics with reference to the tenth century in ‘Apocalyptic Book Illustration in the Early Middle Ages’, in *Apocalyptic in History and Tradition*, ed. C. Rowland and J. Barton (London, 2003), pp. 172–211 (at p. 188).

would suggest that one reason for the *Tiburtina*'s early popularity derives from its use of the theme of Christian suffering based on moral decline in its description of the endtimes. This is an important but often overlooked theme not only in discussions of the *Tiburtina*, but in Christian apocalypticism generally, because of the general focus on the role which outside forces play in apocalyptic tribulations. Yet, persecution and suffering at the hands of outsiders is not the whole story. In the inherited apocalyptic drama, with its various colourful symbolic figures, the ordinary multitude of the suffering Christian people plays a part, too, and deserves our attention. This is because, to an extent, the Christian community brings suffering upon itself because it harbours collective Antichrists<sup>20</sup>, that is, as stated in the tradition of Augustine and Gregory by a tenth-century cleric with an interest in apocalypticism: 'anyone, layman, cleric, or monk who lives contrary to justice and attacks the rule of his way of life and blasphemes what is good is Antichrist and a minister of Satan'.<sup>21</sup> A well-known passage concerning the character of the end times in the second letter of the Apostle Paul to Timothy describes this moral and spiritual decline from which the Christian community is to suffer in the endtimes (2 Timothy 3:1–5):

Know also this, that in the last days shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked. Without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness. Traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God: Having an appearance indeed of godliness but denying the power thereof.<sup>22</sup>

A similar catalogue of woes based on moral decline among the faithful is also a prominent part of the *Tiburtina*'s narrative.<sup>23</sup> According to the text preserved in the Escorial manuscript, moral decline will occur in the ninth and final generation:<sup>24</sup>

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**20** Emmerson, *Antichrist*, p. 63 highlights the existence of a complex exegetical tradition where 'Antichrist may be understood as already present in the evil lives of false Christians, heretics, and yet to appear as the culmination of all evil before Christ's Second Advent. The dualism that expects Antichrist to lead the body of evil in the last days also may account for the beliefs in multiple Antichrists. These are the present opponents of Christ; they represent the body of the devil at war with the body of Christ'.

**21** *Quicumque enim sive laicus, sive canonicus sive monachus contra iustitiam vivit et ordinis sui regulam impugnat et quod bonum est blasphemat, Antichristus est et minister sathanae*, see *Epistola Adsonis ad Gerbergam reginam*, ed. E. Sackur, Ernst Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen. Pseudomethodius, Adso, und die Tiburtinische Sibylle* (Halle a. d. S., 1898), p. 106. For English translation, see Adso of Montier-en-Der 'Letter on the Origin and Time of the Antichrist', in Bernard McGinn (ed.), *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ, 1979), p. 90. Note, in the middle ages, some believed in a sole Antichrist, others in a collective Antichrist. It is not possible to show which group believed the end was more imminent, or, indeed, whether either group believed it was imminent at all. In short, there is no demonstrable relationship between belief in either a collective or a sole Antichrist and a belief that the end of the world was imminent.

**22** For Latin text, see appendix.

**23** The reader will recall that the Latin *Tiburtina* and the *Oracle*, although both derived from the original text, represent variant versions (see above, n.3) and that the *Tiburtina* itself then split into sev-



And in these days brother will consign brother to death, and a father his son, and brother and sister will have intercourse and there will be heinous malice on earth, old men will sleep with virgins, and bad priests with beguiled girls. Bishops will be attendants of this wrongdoing, and there will be bloodshed on earth. And they will defile the temples of the saints, and among the people there will be fornication, filthiness and the sin of sodomy, and they will be a reproach to themselves. And men will be rapacious, abusive, they will hate justice and love falsehood and Roman judges will be fickle. Admitted today to pass judgment, the next day they will have changed [their mind] on account of bribery and they will not pass correct but false judgement. And in these days men will be rapacious and covetous and will commit perjury, and they will love the gifts of falsehood, and law and truth will be destroyed, and the earth will quake in different places and cities on islands will be swept into the sea, and there will be pestilence among men and beasts, and the dying of men, and the earth will be forsaken by the enemy and the futility of their God will be unable to provide consolation. Afterward there will arise a king with the name B [...]. Then after him a Salian from Francia with the name B will rise. It will be the beginning of suffering the like of which has not been seen since the beginning of the world. And in his days there will be much fighting and tribulations for many, and bloodshed and earthquakes in towns and regions and many countries will be captured. And there will be no-one to resist the enemy, because then God's wrath will be on earth. In this persecution Rome will be conquered by the sword and will fall into the hands of this king itself and there will be covetous people, tyrants who hate the poor, who oppress the innocent, and save the guilty. And they will be unjust and despicable and the condemners to destruction will be captured,<sup>25</sup> and there is no-one on earth who resists him and who roots them out because of their malice and cupidity. And then there will arise a king of the Greeks...

The sins of covetousness, love of falsehood, perversion of justice, rejection of the truth, and sexual sins are prominent in this enumeration of the signs of moral decline. Those with responsibility who should know better (judges and bishops) will abuse their office; even the most basic social bonds, family loyalty, will collapse (exemplified by fathers and brothers murdering each other); virgins and old men are expressly castigated for sexual licentiousness and, in any event, it is also inappropriate that the old should fornicate with the young. Such motifs are not unusual. Apocalypticism, it has been well observed, has a strong moralising component: persistence in evil will be punished; a last warning is given to sinners to forsake their evil ways while it is still possible.<sup>26</sup>

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eral different versions. The Escorial manuscript contains version II of the *Tiburtina*. The theme of moral degradation survives in the extant Greek text (the *Oracle*) and all Latin text families, but there are variations in the amount of detail given and whether the theme is placed in the seventh, eighth, or ninth generation.

**24** English translation my own. There is a German translation of the complete text of the *Sibylla Tiburtina* as edited by Sackur, see Alfons Kurfess, *Sibyllinische Weissagungen* (München 1951), pp. 263–279, but this is problematic in places, see n. 25, below.

**25** Note at this point in the text, the exact meaning of the sentence *Eruntque inuisti et nequissimi et damnatores exterminii captivabunt* remains somewhat obscure (cf. e.g. the German translation Kurfess, p. 277: “Und sie werden ungerecht und ganz nichtswürdig sein, und die auswärtigen Schädlinge werden gefangengesetzt werden...”). See appendix for full Latin context.

**26** McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p. 12.

From this perspective, the presence of the motif of suffering through sin and moral decline in the Latin *Tiburtina* seems unremarkable. Why focus on this element of this text? Quite simply because this theme had particular contemporary resonance in the eleventh century. It has so far gone unnoticed that at the same time as the *Tiburtina's* earliest surviving manuscripts were being produced, Cluniac monasticism was promoting a climate which would have made a western clerical audience especially receptive to the theme of moral decline.<sup>27</sup>

Cluny had made eschatology, that is, that part of Last Things concerned with personal salvation, a major tenet of its spirituality, a focus expressed in elaborate rites around death, the commemoration of the departed, and intercessory prayer for the dead in the afterlife.<sup>28</sup> Sometimes this Cluniac eschatological emphasis has been placed in the context of research on the nature of the beliefs about Last Things of the 'millennial generation' (that is, in the period 979–1042). This discussion of the 'millennial generation' has produced an ongoing debate about the nuances of tenth- and eleventh-century apocalypticism.<sup>29</sup> In the context of these debates, Cluniac eschatology is often read as a response to living at a specific moment in time – the turn of 1000AD, a date which Christians supposedly associated with the Book of Revelation's prediction of the loosing of Satan, the cataclysm of human history at the end of time, and the imminence of the Last Judgement.<sup>30</sup>

However, this is not the only way to interpret Cluny's eschatological concerns. The narrow modern focus on how medieval people approached the possibility of

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**27** See, for example, Joachim Wollasch, 'Monasticism: the first wave of reform', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume III c. 900–1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge 1999), p. 174–185, and K. Hallinger, 'The Spiritual Life of Cluny in the Early Days', in Noreen Hunt (ed.), *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages* (London 1971). Still valuable today is the weighty two-volume study on the Cluniacs by Ernst Sackur, *Die Cluniacenser in ihrer kirchlichen und allgemeinwissenschaftlichen Wirksamkeit bis zur Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts*, 2 Vols (Halle a.S., 1892–1894) which he produced not long before he published the seminal edition of the eleventh-century *Tiburtina* in 1898, using the Escorial manuscript as his base text (Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*). Sackur was thus well-versed in Cluniac religious practices and well-aware of Cluny's pervasive influence in Europe; he even devoted a Chapter to discussing Cluny's influence in Spain, see below. Yet, Sackur never considered how this influence might have intersected with the *Tiburtina's* evolution over the course of its literary life.

**28** See Patricia Ranft, 'The Maintenance and Transformation of Society through Eschatology: Cluniac Monasticism', *Journal of Religious History* 14/3 (1987), 246–255 and Jean Leclercq, *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages* (London 1968).

**29** See, for example, H. Möhring, 'Die *renovatio imperii* Kaiser Ottos III. und die Antichrist-Erwartung der Zeitgenossen an der Jahrtausendwende von 1000/1001', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 93 (2011), 333–350. For an overview of the debate about the nature of eschatology at the turn of the millennium, see Edward Peters, 'Mutations, Adjustments, Terrors, Historians, and the Year 1000', in M. Frassetto (ed.), *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York 2002), pp. 9–28. Paul Magdalino, too, provides a useful summary of the debate, see his 'The Year 1000 in Byzantium', in Paul Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden 2003), pp. 233–270.

**30** See, for example, Fried, 'Endzeiterwartung', pp. 413–417.

the imminent culmination of world history in the year 1000 has sidelined another very prominent medieval preoccupation: personal and collective salvation. This current in medieval thought flourished without any expectation that the world was about to end. In recognition of the soteriological component of Last Things, and in contrast to the historiography about the ‘millennial generation’, it has been argued that Cluny’s brand of eschatology endorsed a vision of the endtimes that looks not just to the year 1000, but far beyond it, towards eternity’s perfection. This was a vision built on the hope of mankind changing its sinful ways and reforming its life before death for a better life after death.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, however, Cluny’s intense focus on the next life led to a renewed focus on the life now lived. This is illustrated by the use of 2 Peter 3:14 as one of the twelve liturgical readings in Cluny’s office for All Souls’ Day: ‘therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for this [Christ’s return], be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace’.<sup>32</sup>

Recent research has emphasised both that this eschatological perspective was detached from any expectation that the end was imminent and that it (rather than some form of millennial thinking) also applies to the outlook of reformers such as Peter Damian (c. 1007 – d.1072), one of the earliest and most prominent members of the reform party in the eleventh-century Church.<sup>33</sup> Peter’s activity was exactly contemporary with the *Tiburtina*’s earliest manuscript evidence. He is significant for current purposes because he is a typical representative of the kind of eschatological mentality which Cluniac rites and observances had promulgated throughout Europe. He is an excellent example that Cluniac ideas were influential outside the order since, although he was very interested in Cluny, he never formally joined the order.<sup>34</sup> As such, I shall treat him as an exemplar of the intellectual currents promulgated by the eleventh-century reform movement which had been influenced by Cluniac ideas.

Peter Damian reminds us of this link between conduct in life and fate after death when, for example, he reflects on unchaste priests: ‘because of a flux of momentary passion, they earn the reward of burning in eternal fire that cannot be quenched.

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31 This has been cogently argued in Ranft, ‘Maintenance and Transformation’; see also Patricia Ranft, *The Theology of Work. Peter Damian and the Medieval Religious Renewal Movement* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 34–49.

32 *Propter quod carissimi haec expectantes satis agite immaculati et inviolati ei inveniri in pace* (2 Peter 3:14), confer Ranft, *Theology*, p. 37.

33 Kurt Reindel, ‘Petrus Damiani’, in *Theologische Realenzyklopaedie*, vol. XXVI (Berlin, 1996), pp. 294–296; the literature on Peter Damian is vast, see U. Facchini, *Pier Damiani, un padre del secondo millennio: bibliografia 1007–2007* (Rome 2007). Patricia Ranft, who has studied Peter Damian’s eschatological outlook in detail, avoids the term apocalypticism altogether when talking about him and instead refers to ‘prophetic eschatology’ to capture Damian’s perspective on Last Things, see Ranft, *Theology*, pp. 33–54 and her ‘Maintenance and Transformation’.

34 See Ranft, *Theology*, pp. 33–54; see also Irvn M. Resnick, ‘Peter Damian on Cluny, Liturgy and Penance’, *Journal of Religious History* 15/1 (1988), 61–75.

Now they wallow in the filth of impurity, but later given over to the avenging flames, they will be rolled about in a flood of pitch and sulphur<sup>35</sup>. In another example, his letter to judge Bonushomo of Cesena, Peter offers a summary of what scripture has to say on eschatology and then he advises the judge to ‘always hold up your *deeds* before your eyes, fear the judgement of God’.<sup>36</sup> Personal transformative action and last things go hand in hand here. In short, Cluniac eschatological spirituality and those influenced by it required people to reform their present lives in anticipation of eternity. Thus eschatology became in fact a call to reforming action, rather than merely being a prediction that Christ’s return was imminent.

This distinction matters because medieval ideas about Last Things (such as the Second Coming, the End of the World, and the Last Judgement) form a complex structure of interrelated beliefs, only some of which rest on the conviction that the end is nigh.<sup>37</sup> This must be taken into account when considering a number of references to the final age in a letter Peter wrote in 1057 to the cardinal bishops of the Lateran shortly after he had himself become a cardinal. In it he makes clear that he perceives himself and his fellow cardinals as the ‘guards on the towers and turrets of a castle’ who ‘often call out to one another as they stand watch on a stormy night’<sup>38</sup>. Peter regards his letter as such a call, ‘not to waken you from your sleep, since you are vigilantly on guard, but rather to arouse myself, now meanly yawning under the influence of listless inactivity’. Having alerted his listeners that he is issuing a call to vigilance, Peter then continues his letter with observations about the state of the Church which illuminate the eleventh-century context of the *Tiburtina*’s ‘moral decline’ theme. Peter’s observations run as follows:

And so, my dear friends, you will observe that the whole world, prone to evil, rushes headlong to its ruin on the slippery path of vice, and the closer it approaches its end, which is already at

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**35** Letter 112: *Qui nimium per momentaneae libidinis fluxum, inextinguibile combustionis aeternae mercantur incendium. Nunc in luxuriae foetore sordescunt, sed tunc flammis ultricibus traditi in torrente picis et sulphuris rotabuntur*, see Kurt Reindel (ed.), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*. Vol. 3: 91–150 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1989), p. 268, ll.6–9; English translation: Owen J. Blum (transl.), *Peter Damian. Letters* (Washington, 1989–1998), Vol. 5: 91–120, p. 266.

**36** Letter 21: *Tu autem [...] facta tua semper ante oculos pone, Dei iudicium pertimesce [...]*, see Kurt Reindel (ed.), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*. Vol. 1: 1–40 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1983), p. 260, l.29 – p. 211, l.1. Ranft, *Theology*, p. 44 for translation and further discussion of the content of this letter.

**37** Consequently, a range of separate terms is required to distinguish between these medieval ideas in modern scholarly discussion, see for example, C. Walker-Bynum and P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia 2000), p. 8. Eschatology (separated into individual eschatology and universal eschatology), apocalypticism, and millennialism are the terms most commonly deployed by scholars. ‘Eschatology’ is the most neutral of these terms: in contrast to ‘apocalypticism’ (or ‘millennialism’) it does not imply psychological or chronological imminence of the end, see, for example, *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford, New York, 2011), which offers a useful glossary of terms, see pp. 717–723.

**38** Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 263; see appendix for Latin text.

hand, the more it daily heaps upon itself the burden of still graver crimes. Discipline that should characterize the Church is everywhere neglected, proper reverence is not shown to bishops, the decrees of canon law are despised, and only earthly interests are eagerly promoted as being worthy of God. Moreover, the legal order in contracting marriages is thrown into disorder, and, what an impious thing it is, those who superficially cloak themselves with the title of Christians live indeed like Jews. Where do we not find plundering? Where are we secure against theft? Who have any fear of perjury? Of pandering, or of sacrilege? Who are finally horrified at committing the most heinous crimes? At the same time we repudiate the practice of virtue, and a plague of every kind of perversity has broken out like a wild beast on the attack.<sup>39</sup>

Having thus commented on his own times, Peter then sets out the morally degraded character of the endtimes in the words of scripture (2 Tim 3:1–5) by continuing:

But let me not appear the stilted actor proclaiming a tragedy; it will be enough for me to quote the words of the Apostle, for like prophecies his words came forth when he said, “You must face the fact: the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles. Men will love nothing but self and money: they will be arrogant, proud, and blasphemous; with no respect for parents, no gratitude, no piety, no natural affection; never at peace, scandalmongers, intemperate, and fierce; strangers to all goodness, traitors, adventurers, swollen with self-importance. They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of holiness, but are standing denial of its reality.”<sup>40</sup>

Having thus inserted this scriptural reference to moral decline Peter Damian then returns to his own time, saying:

Amid such yawning depths threatening damnation for the human race the one and only harbour is obviously the Roman Church; and if I may put it so, the boat of the poor little fisherman is ready to rescue from the swells and angry waves those who confidently resort to it, and bring them to peaceful and life giving shores.<sup>41</sup>

Peter is thus optimistic that mankind can turn away from sin, but action is required, in the form of commitment to the Church. Strikingly for our purposes, the passage from Timothy incorporated by Peter Damian shares many themes with the *Tiburtina*'s catalogue of moral decline, such as covetousness, sexual incontinence, lack of respect for parents, and falsehood. Since they are listed in scripture, clearly these indications of moral decline are among the standard expected signs of the last days, like earthquakes and other natural disasters. That is why they appear in material as diverse as the *Tiburtina* and the eleventh-century letters of Peter Damian. In Peter's letters, however, these signs do not suggest that he believed the end was nigh; instead they become part of a call to reforming action. In this he embodies sentiments in the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform movement which followed in

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<sup>39</sup> Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 264; see appendix for Latin text.

<sup>40</sup> Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 264–265; see appendix for Latin text.

<sup>41</sup> Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 265; see appendix for Latin text.

the wake of Cluny's drive for monastic reform. It is thus not surprising to find that just before Peter cites scripture on the signs of moral decline (2 Tim 3:1–5), he reflects on the fact that: 'Discipline that should characterize the Church is everywhere neglected... we repudiate the practice of virtue, and a plague of every kind of perversity has broken out.'

Peter Damian's letter thus exemplifies the linking of the scriptural theme of moral decline in Christian society to the contemporary situation in the Church, a Church he considered marred by the avaricious practice of the buying and selling of Church offices and by a sexually incontinent priesthood which disregarded the principle of clerical celibacy. Peter's combination of 2 Tim 3:1–5 with a critique of the contemporary Church suggests that even though on one level merely a standard endtimes-topos, the enumeration of the signs of moral decline, too, would have particularly resonated for ecclesiastical reformers. This did not simply mean, however, that people expected the imminent end of the world; rather it ties into concerns with the fate of the individual in the afterlife in times of general moral decline.

Reform-minded thinkers in the eleventh century could read eschatological texts not as descriptions or predictions of the end of the world, but as commentaries on the contemporary Church and, above all, as a call to action. Since it is, in one sense, an eschatological work, this interpretation can obviously apply to the *Tiburtina*. Given that, as mentioned above, the earliest surviving manuscript of this supposedly "imperial" text comes from a Muslim-controlled city in Spain, far outside the German Empire, I would suggest that even the earliest manuscript of the *Tiburtina* is better understood in the context of ecclesiastical reform and of eschatology's soteriological component, rather than in an imperial-political context. It is true that all apocalyptic texts hold out hope for the suffering righteous. They are told to stand fast in the hour of trial because God will soon come to reward them and punish their enemies.<sup>42</sup> But in the case of the suffering that arises from moral decline the message is more complex, for change has to come from within man himself, and not by means of delivery from oppression through an outside agent (such as a Last Emperor, for instance) or through divine intervention. The solution for God's suffering people is to repent and practice righteousness, justice, and sexual restraint. This eschatological outlook was spreading widely throughout Europe, carried by ecclesiastical reform. It emerges from this discussion as an important alternative to imperial apocalyptic, just before the *Tiburtina's* textual evolution was captured in manuscript witnesses such as the Toledo codex of 1047, considered here.

If, from the time of our earliest surviving evidence, the *Tiburtina* can be understood in a soteriological or reforming context inspired by Cluny, it is natural to think that the Cluniac context might also explain the dissemination of the text. This cannot be demonstrated conclusively, but it seems very possible. Cluny had both the mindset and the infrastructure to circulate the *Tiburtina*, given the mobility of its monks

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<sup>42</sup> McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p. 8.

and abbots, and the support and patronage it received from European monarchs and nobles, including those of Spain.<sup>43</sup> I have not yet been able to identify direct Cluniac influence in Toledo itself prior to the reconquista, although, strikingly, the city acquired a French Cluniac archbishop, Bernard de Sedirac, immediately after the Christian reconquest of Toledo in 1085 by Alfonso IV of Leon-Castile.<sup>44</sup> However, even if we cannot show Cluny's direct influence in Toledo at the time Escorial &.I.3 was being written, there were certainly Cluniac influences nearby in the neighbouring Kingdom of Leon-Navarre, where Cluny contributed to monastic reform in the period c.1020–1035.<sup>45</sup> For example, Sancho the Great of Navarre turned to Cluny around 1025 and persuaded Abbot Odilo to send monks to Spain who, according to Ralph Glaber, were themselves 'Hispani', that is, Catalans who, through long residence at Cluny, had become familiar with the Observances of the Burgundian house.<sup>46</sup> Sancho's personal ties with Cluny and its Abbot Odilo, also illustrate the appeal in Spain of Cluniac eschatological spirituality: Sancho entered the Burgundian congregation as a lay member (*a socius et familiaris*) to profit from Cluny's daily liturgical supplications for all its members in life and death.<sup>47</sup> This is not to suggest, incidentally, that the fate of the *Tiburtina* in eleventh-century Spain was necessarily related to royal patronage; rather it is only to note Cluny's influence there and that, therefore, it is quite plausible that the kind of reforming thought which Cluny promoted would have been known in the peninsula, potentially even where Cluny's direct influence was absent.

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**43** The importance of 'a large geographic and cultural network of living churchmen and thinkers' such as Cluny's for the 'transfer of religious writings and ideas across the face of Christendom' at the turn of the millennium has been demonstrated in a study of the spread of Marian devotion, see T.J. Wellman, 'Apocalyptic Concerns and Mariological Tactics in Eleventh-century France', in M. Frassetto (ed.), *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York 2002), p. 148.

**44** See Barton, 'Spain', pp. 177–178 and p. 181; see also John Williams, 'Cluny and Spain', *Gesta* 27 (1988), pp. 93–101.

**45** There were also French-Catalan sources of ecclesiastical renewal, see C.J. Bishko, 'Fernando I and the Origins of the Leonese-Castilian alliance with Cluny', in C.J. Bishko, *Studies in Medieval Spanish Frontier History*, II (London, 1980), pp. 1–136, consulted electronically via The Library of Iberian Resources Online. (<http://libro.uca.edu/frontier/spanfrontier.htm>; regrettably the online version is not paginated so below I refer to the text by reference to the related footnotes), see text related to n.18.

**46** See Bishko, 'Fernando I', see text related to n.20.

**47** See Bishko, 'Fernando I', see text related to n.21. It might be thought that Sancho sought connections with Cluny in order to advance the reconquista or to support a propaganda and recruitment drive for a 'holy war' against the Muslims. However scholars have cautioned against this assumption. Instead, Bishko, 'Fernando I', text related to n.41, has stated that Sancho "throughout his long reign shows surprisingly little interest in the characteristically Catalan and Leonese ideal of the Reconquista; his powerful military efforts rather were directed towards enhancing his power in Southern France, in the Pyrenees beyond Aragon, and to the West in Castile and Leon."



Returning to the text of the *Tiburtina*, and its early history, we need to appreciate the full complexities of the eschatological component of its narrative. This component includes not merely the apocalyptic motifs of the attack by Gog and Magog or the Antichrist but also the theme of Christian suffering based on moral decline. Hitherto this aspect of the text has been passed over, rather undeservedly, for it may well explain the *Tiburtina's* appeal just as well as, or instead of, explanations based on *Reichseschatologie* and apocalyptic fears of Muslims. The *Tiburtina's* inclusion of the theme of Christian society's moral decline constituted a powerful reason in its own right for the circulation and translation of the text even before the mid-eleventh century. This reminds us that we are confronted not with a single homogeneous 'endtime scenario', but with different 'flavours' of apocalypticism which depended on, for example, how imminently the end was expected, what hopes believers had for the period before the end, and who believers regarded as the good and evil players in the drama of the Last Days. Such differences in outlook are part of the variegated eschatological imagination of the past but are often difficult to capture, especially when talking about apocalypticism around the year 1000.<sup>48</sup>

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**48** This paper was written in 2011/12 but unfortunately publication schedules have delayed its appearance. Usually this is not significant, but since then I have explored further the *Tiburtina's* pre-manuscript history in another article ('Many Hands without Design: The Evolution of a Medieval Prophetic Text', *The Mediaeval Journal [TMJ]* 4/1 (2014)). That paper in turn has prompted a response, in the same journal (L. Roach, 'The Legacy of a Late Antique Prophecy: The Tiburtine Sibyl and the Italian Opposition to Otto III', *TMJ* 5/1 (2015)), to which I intend to publish a reply. The reader may wish to seek out my eventual reply, which is projected to also appear in the *TMJ*. Ideally I would perhaps have made a few minor amendments to the paper in this volume and added full references to 'Many Hands', but since Dr. Roach cited it in a pre-publication version, I have decided to leave it unchanged (safe for the following: slight corrections to the translations relating to footnotes 11 and 32; these changes are not relevant to Roach's comments).

## Appendix

**Scripture** (2 Timothy 3:1–5)

*Hoc autem scito quod in novissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa, et erunt homines se ipsos amantes cupidi elati superbi blasphemi parentibus inobedientes ingrati scelesti, sine affectione sine pace criminatores incontinentes inmites sine benignitate, proditores protervi tumidi voluptatum amatores magis quam Dei, habentes speciem quidem pietatis virtutem autem eius abnegantes et hos devita*

**Peter Damian, Letter 48** (Kurt Reindel (ed.), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*. Vol. 2: 41–90 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1988), p.54

*Videtis itaque, dilectissimi, quia totus mundus pronus in malum per lubrica vitiorum in praeceps ruit, et quanto fini suo iamiam vicinius appropinquat, tanto graviorum super se cotidie criminum moles exaggerat. Aecclesiastici siquidem genii ubique pene disciplina negligitur, debita sacerdotibus reverentia non praebetur, canonicae sanctionis instituta calcantur, et soli terrenae inhianter explendae digna Deo cura servitur. In foederandis porro coniugiis legitimus ordo confunditur, et, o nefas, ab eis in veritate iudice vivitur, qui superficietenus christiano vocabulo palliantur. Enimvero ubi rapinae desunt? Ubi furta caventur? Qui periuria, qui lenocinia, qui sacrilegia metuunt? Qui denique perpetrare quaelibet atrocissima crimina perhorrescunt? Iamdudum plane virtutum studiis repudium deditimus, omniumque perversitatum pestes velut impetu facto feraliter emergerunt. Sed ne tamquam co- turnati tragoediam videamur at- tollere, sufficiat nobis apostolca dumtaxat super his verba referre. Nam velut prophetiae depromit oraculum dicens:*

*hoc autem scito, quod in novissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa, et erunt homines se ipsos amantes cupidi elati superbi blasphemi parentibus inobedientes ingrati scelesti, sine affectione sine pace criminatores incontinentes inmites sine benignitate, proditores protervi tumidi*

**Sibylla Tiburtina** (ed. E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Wesissagungen und Forschungen* (Halle 189), pp. 183–185)

*Et in diebus illis tradet frater fratrem in mortem et pater filium et frater cum sorore commiscetur et multa nefanda hominum malicia erit in terra, sense cum virginibus cubant et sacerdotes mali cum deceptis puellis. Episcopi malefactorum sectatorum erunt et fiet effusion sanguinis in terra. Et templa sanctores(?) polluent et erunt in populo fornicators inmunditie et sodomitium scelus ita, ut visio ipsorum in contumeliam eis appareat. Et erunt homi- nesses raptores, contumeliosi, odientes iustitiam et amantes falsitatem et iudices Romani in- christabuntur. Si hodie ad iudican- dum admittuntur, alio die inmu- tabuntur propter pecuniam accipiendam et non iudicabunt rectum, sed falsum. Et erit in die- bus illis hominess rapaces et cu- pidi et periuri et amantes munera falsitatis et destruetur lext et ver- itas et fiet terre motus per loca di- versa et insularum civitates de- mersione dimergentur et erunt per loca pestilentie hominum et pecorum et mortalitas hominum, et terra ab inimicis desolabitur et non prevalebit consolari eos vanitas deorum. Post hec surget rex per B nomine...et erit genere Langobadorus et regnabit usque ad annos centum. Tunc post eum surget Salicus de Francia B nomine. Tunc erit initium dolo- rum, quails non fuit ab initio mundi. Et erunt in diebus ipsius pugne multe et tribulations mul- torum et sanguinis effusion et*

*voluptatum amatores magis quam Dei, habentes speciem quidem pietatis virtutem autem eius abnegantes et hos devita*

*terre motus per civitates et regions et terre multe captivabuntur. Et non erit qui inimicis resistat, quia tunc Dominus erit iratus in terra. Roma in persecutione et gladio expugnabitur et erit deprehensa in manu ipsius regis et erunt homines cupidi, tyranni, odientes pauperes, opprimentes insontes et salvantes noxios. Eruntque iniusti et nequissimi et damnatores exterminii captivabuntur, et non est in terra qui eis resistat aut eruat illos propter militias eorum et cupiditate. Et tunc surget rex Grecorum, cuius nomen Constans, et ipse erit rex Romanorum et Grecorum. Hic erit statura grandis...*

Delia Kottmann

# The Apocalyptic Cycle of the Romanesque Murals in the Narthex of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe (Vienne): Do They Illustrate Political Ideas of the Gregorian Reform?

The Abbey Church of Saint-Savin has Romanesque murals which are renowned, in particular, for the Genesis and Exodus cycles in its nave. The murals in the crypt under the choir depict hagiographical scenes from the lives of the two patron saints of the abbey, Saint-Savin and Saint Cyprian. In the narthex we find an apocalyptic cycle. The tribune above depicts the Passion of Christ, and various other saints. Saints are also omnipresent in the choir.

This article is a discussion on the apocalyptic scenes (fig. 1), dated to the last years of the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> In the following, I will examine some of their iconographic rarities by outlining the tradition of image representation and demonstrate the exegetical influence as evidenced by the illustrations. Indeed, not only the iconographical singularities, but also an analysis of the choice of the colour pigments confirms my assumption of the application of one exegetical text, namely the *Expositio in Apocalypsim* of Bruno of Segni.

Neither the people of the last days, Gog or Magog, nor the false prophet, nor the Antichrist, nor the seven-headed beast are illustrated in the apocalyptic scenes which have been preserved in the narthex of the abbey church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe. Although the peoples of the Apocalypse are not directly illustrated, the main emphasis of the apocalyptic scenes is nevertheless on the Last Days, described in the Book of Revelation by John.

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The main ideas of this article have already been published in German, see Delia Kottmann, “Farbliche und ikonografische Auswahl im Apokalypsezyklus Saint-Savins”, in: *Farbe im Mittelalter. Materialität – Medialität – Semantik. Akten des 13. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes vom 1. bis 5. März 2009 in Bamberg*, 2 vol., edited by Ingrid Bennewitz, Andrea Schindler, Berlin 2011, vol. 1, p. 235–250. – I am currently writing my doctoral thesis on the ensemble of the Romanesque murals of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, supervised by Professor Bruno Klein and Professor Philippe Lorentz, in a “cotutelle” model between the Universities “École Pratique des Hautes Études” in Paris and the Technische Universität Dresden. Thanks are due to my supervisors for their advice and guidance. I am also indebted to Birte Walbers and Dr. Geraldine Schuckelt who helped me with my English. Obviously, any errors are my own responsibility.

1 See for example the dating in the most recent publication on Saint-Savin by Yves Christe, “Les peintures murales. Les sources iconographiques : porche, tribune, nef, transept et chœur, crypte”, in: *Saint-Savin. L’abbaye et ses peintures murales*, edited by Robert Favreau, Poitiers 1999, p. 99–145, p. 99; Yves-Jean Riou, “Style et originalité de l’ensemble”, in: *ibid.*, p. 183–189, p. 183.

Concerning the interpretation of the apocalyptic cycle by clerics and laymen at the beginning of the twelfth century, it is well known that, from the time of Tyconius and Saint Augustine to the turning point in exegesis brought about by Joachim of Fiore, i. e. from about 400 until 1200, the Book of Revelation was generally perceived in purely spiritual und allegorical terms.<sup>2</sup>

Neither the historical-prophetic dimensions nor the visionary character of the Apocalypse were of primary concern to the Early Christian and early medieval commentators. This attitude changed during the twelfth century, when historical interpretation was gradually introduced into the exegesis of the Apocalypse, mainly through the writings of Joachim of Fiore, who claimed that the Book of Revelation prophesies the end of the world. The composition of the Apocalypse has been dated to about c. AD 95, during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian.<sup>3</sup> The wave of the persecution of Christians under Domitian was second only to the one experienced under Nero. The plagues and diseases described in the Book of Revelation were seen by Christians as paralleling their own lives while they were being persecuted by the Romans. But they could draw hope for a better time from the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem witnessed by John in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation. This interpretation of the Apocalypse by Tyconius, namely that the Christians could look forward a better time for them, was followed by the subsequent exegetes until Joachim of Fiore.<sup>4</sup>

The thesis underlying my presentation is that the main explanation of the apocalyptic cycle in Saint-Savin is to be found not only in the Christian anticipation of a better time, but also in the desire of the *spiritus rector*<sup>5</sup> behind the murals of the

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2 E.g. Wilhelm Kamlah, *Apokalypse und Geschichtstheologie. Die mittelalterliche Auslegung der Apokalypse vor Joachim von Fiore*, Berlin 1935, (Coll. Historische Studien, 285).

3 See for example Hans Aurenhammer, "Apokalypse", in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, edited by Wolfgang Braunfels, Engelbert Kirschbaum, 8 vol., Basel, Freiburg i. Br. et al. 1968–1976, vol. 1: Alpha und Omega – Christus und die vierundzwanzig Ältesten, Vienna 1967, p. 176–207, p. 177; Peter K. Klein, "Apocalisse", in: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*, 12 vol., Rome 1991, vol. 2, p. 151–167, p. 151; Bernard McGinn, "The Apocalyptic Imagination in the Middle Ages", in: *Ende und Vollendung: eschatologische Perspektiven im Mittelalter*, edited by Jan A. Aertsen, Martin Pickavé, Berlin et al. 2002, (Coll. *Miscellanea mediaevalia*, 29), p. 79–94; Johann Michl, "Apokalypse", in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, edited by Josef Höfer, Karl Rahner, 10 vol., Freiburg i. Br. 1957–1965, vol. 1, 1957, coll. 690–695, col. 695; Pierre Prigent, *Apocalypse 12. Histoire de l'exégèse*, Tübingen 1959, (Coll. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese*, 2), p. 41–45.

4 Peter K. Klein, "Les apocalypses romanes et la tradition exégétique", *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 12 (1981), p. 123–140, p. 123 s.

5 Regarding the date of the murals, it is probable that the pictorial programme was conceived by the abbot Gervasius (term of office from c.1082 until c.1096). This is the hypothesis presented by Yves-Jean Riou, see Marie-Thérèse Camus, Yves-Jean Riou, "L'architecture et son décor sculpté", in: *Saint-Savin*, cf. fn. 1, p. 4297, p. 84. But it may also have been the work of his *duumvir* Bernard of Tiron or the two together, or even another single person or several personages together. Concerning the historical dates, see the detailed overview of the history of the abbey in Robert Favreau, "Les inscriptions

apocalyptic cycle to illustrate political ideas of the Gregorian Reform. There are some indications that the images argue in favour of the *sacerdotium* as opposed to the *regnum* – the principal point of the Gregorian Reform being the assertion of the *supremacy* of the papacy over secular rulers.

Only five images in the apocalyptic cycle are well preserved. The cycle originally had twelve scenes, six on each of the two bays of the narthex, juxtaposed to the Christ in the tympanum above the entrance to the church.<sup>6</sup>

The reading of the cycle began in the bay in the West.<sup>7</sup> We can see some remnants of painting in three fields, but a reconstruction of the content seems nearly impossible there.<sup>8</sup> The representations in the Eastern bay illustrate scenes from the ninth to the twenty-first of the twenty-two chapters of the Book of Revelation. From right to left they depict the battle of Michael and his angels in Heaven against the dragon, the sixth trumpet, the fifth, the Ark of the Covenant<sup>9</sup> with the apocalyptic Woman and the dragon, as well as the new Jerusalem as the bride of Christ. The following discussion focuses specifically on the last two of these scenes. The field in the middle of the northern half, featuring the apocalyptic Woman (fig. 2), illustrates several verses of the Book of Revelation. The Vulgate names the woman, who later came to be called the ‘apocalyptic Woman’, the *mulier amicta sole*.<sup>10</sup>

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de l'église de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe”, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 19 (1976), p. 937, repr. in: id., *Études d'épigraphie médiévale. Recueil d'articles de Robert Favreau rassemblés à l'occasion de son départ à la retraite*, 2 vol., Limoges 1995, vol. 1, p. 21–73; Robert Favreau, François Jeanneau, “Saint-Savin au fil des siècles”, in: *Saint-Savin*, cf. fn. 1, p. 11–41.

6 There are debates as to whether this scene represents the First Parousia or the Second Coming, or the Last Judgement, see Yves Christe, “À propos des peintures murales du porche de Saint-Savin”, *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 16 (1985), p. 221–243, especially p. 235; Peter K. Klein, *Die frühen Apokalypse-Zyklen und verwandte Denkmäler. Von der Spätantike bis zum Anbruch der Gotik*, Habil. Otto-Friedrichs-Universität Bamberg 1980, 5 vol., (unpublished), vol. 3, p. 413–415; id., “Entre paradis présent et jugement dernier : Les programmes apocalyptiques et eschatologiques dans les porches du Haut Moyen Âge”, in: *Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil dans l'Église entre le IV<sup>e</sup> et le XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Colloque International du CNRS, Auxerre 17–20 juin 1999), edited by Christian Sapin, Paris 2002, (Coll. Mémoires de la Section d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art/Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, France, 13), p. 464–483, p. 466; Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz, “Les peintures du porche de l'église abbatiale de Saint-Savin : étude iconographique”, *Bulletin Monumental* 140 (1982), p. 273–304, p. 274–281.

7 The Abbey Church has its choir in the East.

8 Different interpretations have been proposed, see Christe, cf. fn. 6, p. 223ss.; Klein, *Apokalypse-Zyklen*, cf. fn. 6, vol. 2, p. 319; Kurmann-Schwarz, cf. fn. 6, p. 280; Marc Thibout, “Une peinture récemment découverte dans le porche de Saint-Savin”, *Cahiers archéologiques* 4 (1949), p. 136–140, p. 138; Itsuji Yoshikawa, *L'Apocalypse de Saint-Savin*, Paris 1939, p. 12–13.

9 Hubert Schrade did not see the Ark of the Covenant in this image, but only a temple, see Hubert Schrade, *Malerei des Mittelalters. Gestalt, Bestimmung, Macht, Schicksal*, 2 vol., Cologne 1958–1963, vol. 2: *Die romanische Malerei. Ihre Maiestas*, 1963, p. 82.

10 *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, edited by Roger Gryson, Robertus Weber et al., Stuttgart 1994<sup>4</sup> [1969], p. 1893.



**Fig. 1:** The murals of the Eastern bay and the tympanum of the narthex of the abbey church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe. © Région Poitou-Charentes, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel. Alain Maulny, 1986.

If the scene depicting this twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse were to follow the text of the Book of Revelation word for word, Saint John would not appear as we see him on the left of the image. But he is represented in the iconographic type of scribes. The first biblical verse illustrated is the Ark of the Covenant at top left, described in the last verse of the eleventh chapter of Revelation. At the time of the painting of the murals of Saint-Savin, the Book of Revelation followed the division into chapters established by Tyconius in the years around 385.<sup>11</sup> He described the Ark of the Covenant, the *mulier amicta sole* and the dragon's harassment of her and her new-born child in one and the same chapter. Nevertheless, it is unusual in apocalyptic illustrations for these three themes to be seen together in one field. Only the murals of the baptistery of Novara, dated about 1000,<sup>12</sup> and an illumination

<sup>11</sup> It was Stephen Langton in the thirteenth century who established the classification into chapters and verses that is still used today, see Yves Christe, "Traditions littéraires et iconographiques dans l'interprétation des images apocalyptiques", in: *L'Apocalypse de Jean. Traditions exégétiques et iconographiques. III<sup>e</sup> – XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Actes du Colloque de la Fondation Hardt. Genève, 29 février 3 mars 1976*, edited by id., Renzo Petraglio, Geneva 1979, (Coll. Études et documents, Université de Genève, Section d'Histoire, 11), p. 109–134, p. 116 s.; Klein, *Apokalypse-Zyklen*, cf. fn. 6, vol. 1, p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> See for example Betty W. Al-Hamdani, "The Frescoes of Novara and the Bamberg Apocalypse", in: *Évolution générale et développements régionaux en histoire de l'art* (Coll. Actes du XXII<sup>e</sup> Congrès Internationale d'Histoire de l'Art, Budapest 1969), edited by György Rózsa, 3 vol., Budapest 1972, vol. 1, p. 427–448; Umberto Chierici, "Il 'maestro dell'Apocalisse di Novara' ", *Paragone* 17 (1966),





**Fig. 2:** Apc. XI,19-XII,1-7;13-16: Saint John sees the Ark of the Covenant, the harassment of the apocalyptic Woman by the dragon and the rapture of the Newborn. © Région Poitou-Charentes, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel. Marc Deneyer, 1999.

in the Ottonian manuscript at Bamberg (Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Ms. Bibl. 140, fol. 29<sup>v</sup>)<sup>13</sup> show this combination.<sup>14</sup> This rare arrangement will be important for my exegetical explanations of the apocalyptic cycle of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe.

p. 13-41; Patrizia Chierici Furno, "Baptistère de Novare", Congrès archéologique du Piémont 129 (1971), p. 245-252; Marchita B. Mauck, *The Apocalypse Frescoes of the Baptistery in Novara, Italy*, Phil. Diss. University Tulane, Tulane 1975; Adriano Peroni, "Das Baptisterium von Novara: Architektur und Ausmalung. Zusammenfassung", in: *Wandmalerei des frühen Mittelalters. Bestand, Maltechnik, Konservierung. Eine Tagung des deutschen Nationalkomitees von ICOMOS in Zusammenarbeit mit der Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten in Hessen, Lorsch, 10.12. Oktober 1996* (Coll. ICOMOS. Hefte des deutschen Nationalkomitees, 23), edited by Matthias Exner, Munich 1998, p. 155-160. The date of execution is probably to be found in the two first decades of the eleventh century, see Peter K. Klein, "Les cycles de l'Apocalypse du Haut Moyen Âge (IX<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)", in: *L'apocalypse de Jean*, cf. fn. 11, p. 135-187, p. 141.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Peter K. Klein, "L'art et l'idéologie impériale des Ottoniens vers l'an mil. L'Évangélique d'Henri II et l'Apocalypse de Bamberg", *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 16 (1985), p. 177-220.

<sup>14</sup> Klein, *Apokalypse-Zyklen*, cf. fn. 6, vol. 1, p. 60; id., cf. fn. 4, p. 127; Monika E. Müller, *Omnia in mensura et numero et pondere disposita: die Wandmalereien und Stuckarbeiten von San Pietro al Monte di Civate*, Dissertation Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen, Regensburg 2009, p. 195, fn. 539.

In Saint-Savin, the apocalyptic Woman is illustrated with the crescent moon under her feet, following the words of what is now the first verse of the twelfth chapter of Revelation, (...) *mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim* (...).<sup>15</sup> The artist did not paint the sun. Nor is the crown of stars visible. However, twelve stars were originally painted in her nimbus – as discovered during the restoration of the murals in the years 1999 to 2000 by Julian James.<sup>16</sup> That third of the stars which – according to the fourth verse of the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse – the dragon tore down from Heaven, represented by a white semi-circle at top right, lie upon the earth in the form of red dots. The nimbus of the dragon in this image-field of Saint-Savin may seem to connote him positively, but he is, in fact, Satan. In this case, the nimbus is evidently more a sign of power than of holiness, since the dragon on the scene opposite, who has already been vanquished, no longer has a halo.<sup>17</sup> The Woman has already received the two eagle's wings given to her in verse fourteen, enabling her to fly into the wilderness to be safe from the dragon. On the right of the globe, on which the *mulier amicta sole* is enthroned, we see the jet of water which, according to verse fifteen, the dragon spat at the apocalyptic Woman. But the earth helped the Woman, opening up to swallow the water.

The twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation is considered in the exegeses to be the most important apocalyptic chapter – because of the self-conception of the Church that is derived from it. The *mulier amicta sole* was construed as the Virgin Mary as well as the Church.<sup>18</sup> In the following I will try to determine whether the

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<sup>15</sup> Biblia sacra, cf. fn. 10, p. 1893.

<sup>16</sup> Julian James, *Fresque ou pas fresque ? Les peintures murales de Saint-Savin sous la loupe des sciences. Proposition d'étude interdisciplinaire de la technique originale des peintures murales du porche de Saint-Savin*, 2000, (unpublished), s.p.; id., *Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe* (Vienne). Église abbatiale. Conservation des peintures murales. Rapport final, 2006, (unpublished), s.p.

<sup>17</sup> Adolphe N. Didron, *Iconographie chrétienne : histoire de Dieu*, Paris 1843, (Coll. Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, 3: Archéologie, Instructions du Comité Historique des Arts et Monuments), p. 165 s. Even in antiquity an aureole was not always a divine symbol. Also personifications of *sole* and *luna*, times or places, for example, had halos, see *ibid.*, p. 87; Adolf Krücke, *Der Nimbus und verwandte Attribute in der frühchristlichen Kunst*, Dissertation Universität Erlangen, Strasbourg 1905, (Coll. Zur Kunstgeschichte des Auslandes, 35), p. 6, 28. A tenth-century manuscript even shows Satan with a gloriole: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 6 (2), fol. 63<sup>v</sup>; see Didron 1843, p. 163.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Lilli Burger, *Die Himmelskönigin der Apokalypse in der Kunst des Mittelalters*, Berlin 1937, (Coll. Neue deutsche Forschungen. Abteilung Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstgeschichte, 2); Yves Christe, "La femme d'Ap 12 dans l'iconographie des XI<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles", in: Maria, l'apocalisse e il medioevo: atti del III Convegno Mariologico della Fondazione Ezio Franceschini con la collaborazione della Biblioteca Palatina di Parma, Parma, 1011 maggio 2002, edited by Clelia Maria Piastra, Francesco Santi, Florence 2006, (Coll. Millennio medievale, 61), p. 91 – 114; Bernard J. Le Frois, *The Woman Clothed with the Sun (Ap. XII). Individual or Collective? (An Exegetical Study)*, Rome 1954; Klein, cf. fn. 4, p. 127, footnote 19; id., "Zur Nachfolge der karolingischen Bilderbibeln", in: *Zeitenspiegelung. Zur Bedeutung von Traditionen in: Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft. Festschrift für Konrad Hoffmann zum 60. Geburtstag am 8. Oktober 1998*, edited by id., Regine Prange, Tübingen 1998, p. 33 – 45, p. 37; id., "programmes apocalyptiques", cf. fn. 6, p. 465; Georg Kretschmar, *Die*

apocalyptic Woman of Saint-Savin seems to have been perceived in a Marian or ecclesiological sense, or in a combination of both.

Art historians have interpreted the enthroned position of the apocalyptic Woman of Saint-Savin on a globe as a representation of Ecclesia, because only representations of the Church are enthroned on globes.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the apocalyptic Woman is usually depicted upright in a frontal position (as in the Carolingian manuscript conserved in Cambrai<sup>20</sup> or in the murals at Seppannibale near Fasano in southern Italy,

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Offenbarung des Johannes. Die Geschichte ihrer Auslegung im ersten Jahrtausend, Stuttgart 1985, (Coll. Calwer Theologische Monographien: Reihe B, Systematische Theologie und Kirchengeschichte, 9); Guy Lobrichon, "La Femme de l'Apocalypse 12 dans l'exégèse du haut Moyen Âge latin (7601200)", in: Marie. Le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale, edited by Dominique Iogna-Prat, Éric Palazzo et al., Paris 1996, p. 407–439; Mireille Mentré, "Femme de l'Apocalypse et Vierge à l'Enfant", Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa 25 (1994), p. 79–85; Prigent, cf. fn. 3; Marie-Louise Thérél, Les symboles de l'"Ecclesia" dans la création iconographique de l'art chrétien du III<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, Rome 1973.

**19** Müller, cf. fn. 14, p. 201. Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz is of the opinion that the iconographical model for this is to be found in enthroned persons as figures of wisdom. According to Kurmann-Schwarz, the kind of globe presented here usually belongs to Christ or personifications of divine wisdom, because they embody Christ. She argues that during the Middle Ages wisdom is depicted as a female figure and in Byzantine art as a winged person – both characteristics are well presented in the mural painting of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe. Kurmann-Schwarz attributes her interpretation of the apocalyptic Woman as a personification of divine wisdom to an ecclesiological interpretation of the *mulier amicta sole*, because divine wisdom is characteristic of the Ecclesia and until the twelfth century, according to Kurmann-Schwarz, the apocalyptic Woman was regarded in exegesis as the embodiment of Ecclesia. But Kurmann-Schwarz does not deny a mariological sense either. In her view, the Newborn is Christ, because he is carried off to heaven in the manner of Ottonian iconography regarding the Resurrection of Christ. An ecclesiological connotation is again suggested by her two wings, because citing Tyconius these represent the Old and the New Testament. See Kurmann-Schwarz, cf. fn. 6, p. 292–293. Also because of the wings, Yves Christe, in agreement with Tyconius, suggests that the *mulier amicta sole* of Saint-Savin is to be seen as representing Ecclesia, see Christe, cf. fn. 6, p. 228. Neither on photographs, nor in restoration reports or copies have I found any evidence in support of Peter K. Klein's statement that the head of the Newborn of Saint-Savin is encircled with a cruciform nimbus, Peter K. Klein, Der ältere Beatus-Kodex Vitr. 141 der Biblioteca Nacional zu Madrid. Studien zur Beatus-Illustration und der spanischen Buchmalerei des 10. Jahrhunderts, Dissertation Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Hildesheim, New York 1976, (Coll. Studien zur Kunstgeschichte, 8), 2 vol., vol. 1, p. 118. This would imply a Marian interpretation of the *mulier amicta sole* of Saint-Savin; since a cruciform nimbus is characteristic of Jesus, this would equate the child with Christ and the *mulier amicta sole* with his mother Mary. Regarding the representation of the globe as a throne, which is characteristic of Christ and not of a female person, Kurmann-Schwarz refers to Percy E. Schramm, Sphaira, Globus und Reichsapfel, Stuttgart 1958, p. 63–68.

**20** The manuscript of Cambrai (Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 386) is a direct copy of a manuscript in Trier (Stadtbibliothek Trier, Codex 31), both illuminated in the north of France – the Trier manuscript at the beginning of the ninth century, the Cambrai one in the first half of the tenth, see Peter K. Klein, "Introduction. The Apocalypse in Medieval Art", in: The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages, edited by Richard K. Emmerson, Bernard Mc Kinn, Ithaca, London 1992, p. 159–199, p. 176; Peter K. Klein, Richard Laufner, Die Trierer Apokalypse: Codex 31 der Stadtbibliothek Trier (Coll. Glanzlichter

dated to c. 850<sup>21</sup>). But the apostles depicted worshipping Christ on the intrados of the tympanum of the porch of Saint-Savin (fig. 1) are also seated on such globes, and furthermore, art history knows of plenty of enthroned Madonnas, too.<sup>22</sup> Incidentally, the apostles on the choir of the church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Poitiers, painted about the same time as the murals in Saint-Savin, are also enthroned on similar globes.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the representation of a globe as a throne is in keeping with local iconographic tradition. The fact that the *mulier amicta sole* is represented at Saint-Savin in an enthroned position cannot, therefore, be regarded as indicating an ecclesiastical conception of her on the part of the *spiritus rector*.

But what does permit an ecclesiastical interpretation is the representation of the angel at the top left flying down from the semicircle,<sup>24</sup> which contains a temple with the Ark inside, representing Heaven, towards the newborn child of the apocalyptic Woman. This is a manner of representation which, as far as I am aware, did not appear before Saint-Savin.<sup>25</sup> The Vulgate describes this passage passively: (...) *et raptus est filius eius ad Deum, et ad thronum eius* (...) (Apc. XII, 5).<sup>26</sup> In most representations of the rapture of the child of the apocalyptic Woman, a *manus divina* elevates the child into Heaven, as is the case, for example, in a manuscript dating from the first half of the twelfth century, probably illuminated in Saint-Blasien.<sup>27</sup> The illustration of an angel raising the child already existed before the execution of the murals of Saint-Savin, but these earlier representations depict the angel stand-

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der Buchkunst, 10), Graz 2001. The Trier manuscript shows the apocalyptic Woman on fol. 37<sup>r</sup>, that in Cambrai on fol. 27<sup>r</sup>.

**21** Yves Christe, "De l'absence ou des lacunes d'Ap 15,120,15 dans les cycles apocalyptiques monumentaux des XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles", in: Testo e immagine nell'alto Medioevo, 15–21 aprile 1993, Spoleto (Coll. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 41), 2 vol., Spoleto 1994, vol. 2, p. 801–835, p. 808.

**22** Indeed, Konrad Hoffmann concluded from the enthroned position of the apocalyptic Woman of Saint-Savin and the position of her newborn child, which resemble representations of the Madonna with Child, that it has a mariological connotation, cf. Konrad Hoffmann, "Bemerkungen zum Michaelsrelief der Zollernburg", *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* 5 (1968), p. 7–20, p. 12.

**23** The representation of a globe as a throne was indeed characteristic of this region; see also Schrade, cf. fn. 9, p. 169; Kurmann-Schwarz, cf. fn. 6, p. 277.

**24** Cf. the remark made by Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz that this representation of an angel flying down from above is a rare form of iconography; however, she does not suggest any explanation for this iconographical innovation, see Kurmann-Schwarz, cf. fn. 6, p. 292.

**25** A City of God of Saint Augustine, conserved in Oxford (Bodleian Library MS Laud. misc. 469, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>) depicts two angels, with the one on the right flying down and snatching the Newborn away from the lap of the apocalyptic Woman, but this illumination is dated later than the murals of Saint-Savin, having been created in the years around 1130–1140, see Klein, Introduction cf. fn. 20, p. 174. In addition, this illustration does not include the Ark of the Covenant.

**26** *Biblia sacra*, cf. fn. 10, p. 1893.

**27** Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Bodl. 352, fol. 18<sup>r</sup>, see for example Barbara Polaczek, *Apokalypseillustration des 12. Jahrhunderts und weibliche Frömmigkeit. Die Handschriften Brüssel, Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1<sup>er</sup>, Ms. 3089 und Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Bodl. 352*, Weimar 1998.

ing and not flying downwards from Heaven, as in Saint-Savin, in order to carry the child into Heaven in the form of a semicircle with the Ark inside.

Some of the *Beatus* Apocalypses show an upright angel holding the child in his arms: this is the case, for example, in one dating from the tenth century preserved today in Madrid,<sup>28</sup> and in another one in Berlin dating from the twelfth century.<sup>29</sup> There is also a standing angel in some other *Beatus* manuscripts dated to the mid-eleventh century, but in these the newborn child is presented, in a semicircle representing Heaven, to the enthroned Christ: as in another *Beatus* preserved in Madrid,<sup>30</sup> and in that of Saint-Sever.<sup>31</sup> Also, the lunette painting of the upper church of San Pietro in Civate in Lombardy, which is contemporaneous with the murals of Saint-Savin, shows an upright angel, but he again presents the child to an enthroned Christ, this time sitting in a mandorla in the middle of the lunette. The rapture is also depicted in another mural, namely the apocalyptic cycle in the choir of Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand in Poitiers, which is also contemporaneous with the murals of Saint-Savin.<sup>32</sup> Here, an angel is depicted on the left of the *mulier amicta sole*, but he is not to be interpreted in connection with the rapture of the child on his arms. Rather, this angel is bringing the wings of the eagle to the Woman so that she can fly with them into the wilderness.

In fact, only the late twelfth century manuscript *hortus deliciarum* illustrates an angel from above flying downwards towards the child and taking the child with him.<sup>33</sup> But in this case the angel does not carry the child towards a semicircle containing an Ark in a temple. Moreover, this illumination is of a later date than the murals of Saint-Savin.

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**28** Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vit. 141, fol. 109<sup>v</sup>, see for example Klein, cf. fn. 19, vol. 1, p. 124; John Williams, *The illustrated Beatus. A Corpus of the illustrations of the commentary on the Apocalypse*, 5 vol., London 1994–2003, vol. 2: *The Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, 1994, p. 34 s.

**29** Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. Theol. lat. fol. 561, fol. 70<sup>r</sup>. See for example Williams, cf. fn. 28, vol. 4: *The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 2002, p. 46 f; Peter K. Klein, *El Beato de Berlín*. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. Theol. lat. fol. 561, Madrid 2011, esp. p. 157.

**30** Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vit. 142, fol. 187<sup>r</sup>. See for example Williams, cf. fn. 28, vol. 3: *The Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 1998, p. 34 s.

**31** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 8878, fol. 159<sup>r</sup>. See for example Otto Karl Werckmeister, “Pain and Death in the *Beatus* of Saint-Sever”, *Studi medievali* 14 (1973), p. 565–626; Williams, cf. fn. 28, vol. 3: *The Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 1998, p. 44 s.

**32** See for example Marie-Thérèse Camus, “À propos de trois découvertes récentes. Images de l’Apocalypse à Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand à Poitiers”, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 32 (1989), p. 125–134.

**33** The original version has not survived, only this copy is preserved today in Munich. München, Staatsbibliothek Clm 17401, fol. 14<sup>r</sup>. For the date see for example Alessia Trivellone, *L’hérétique imaginé. Hétérodoxie et iconographie dans l’Occident médiéval de l’époque carolingienne à l’inquisition*, Turnhout 2009, (Coll. Collection d’Études Médiévales de Nice, 10), p. 285 s. Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz had already previously established the iconographical connection between the apocalyptic Woman of Saint-Savin and of the *hortus deliciarum*, see Kurmann-Schwarz, cf. fn. 6, p. 291 s.

None of these versions representing the rapture of the newborn by an angel depicts an angel flying down from above;<sup>34</sup> nor does the Ark feature in the same scene. If we take a look at the exegesis of the Book of Revelation, the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Bruno of Segni may explain the strange iconography of the field with the *mulier amicta sole* in Saint-Savin. We find his words: *Quotidie namque Ecclesiae filii ad Deum rapiuntur, quotidie ad thronum ejus ab angelis deferuntur, atque ab ipsis faucibus, devorare cupientibus praeda subtracta, gaudens et triumphans caelos ascendit.*<sup>35</sup> Bruno of Segni's *expositio in Apocalypsim*<sup>36</sup> dates from about 1080 to 1082, shortly before the execution of the painting of the apocalyptic cycle in Saint-Savin. Bruno, Bishop of Segni, was an important clergyman at his time, and favoured the *sacerdotium* during the Gregorian Reform. He accompanied Urban the Second on his journey to France at the end of the eleventh century, i.e. just at the time when the apocalyptic cycle of Saint-Savin was being executed. Urban the Second also consecrated churches near Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, such as Saint-Germain de Montierneuf in Poitiers.<sup>37</sup> Bruno of Segni interprets the apocalyptic Woman as representing the Church: *Haec enim mulier Ecclesia est.*<sup>38</sup> He does not connect the sun with anything; it simply shines. Maybe this is why the sun was not represented by the artist at Saint-Savin. Other theological commentators, like Augustine of Hippo, interpret the sun as representing the *spes resurrectionis*.<sup>39</sup> According to Bruno, the moon, which in Saint-Savin takes the form of a crescent under the feet of the Woman, also refers to the Church. He associates the moon with Jericho and then goes on in a general way to the ecclesiological interpretation of the moon.<sup>40</sup> Also, the twelve stars of the crown of the apocalyptic Woman, which were clearly visible in the original state of the mural painting in Saint-Savin, as mentioned before, are explained by Bruno as representing the twelve apostles.<sup>41</sup> This is again an accentuation of the Roman Church, but this is very common in exegesis. However, the aforementioned

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**34** It may seem strange that I have not mentioned the domain of sculpture. Indeed, there is no surviving example of a sculpture showing the apocalyptic Woman with her newborn child. The Louvre does hold a fragment of a tympanum from the church of Saint-Rieul in Senlis dating from the second half of the twelfth century, designating it as a representation of the apocalyptic Woman with her child on her lap (Inv.nr.: R. F. 3657). However, in this work a dragon is devouring the child. Since this contradicts the text in the Vulgate, this sculpture is evidently not to be seen as the apocalyptic Woman.

**35** See PL 165, coll. 669AB.

**36** PL 165, coll. 607–736.

**37** See Bernhard Gigalski, Bruno, Bischof von Segni, Abt von Monte-Cassino (1049–1123). Sein Leben und seine Schriften. Ein Beitrag zur Kirchengeschichte im Zeitalter des Investiturstreites und zur theologischen Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters, Münster in Westphalia 1898; Réginald Grégoire, Bruno de Segni. Exégète médiéval et théologien monastique, Spoleto 1965, (Coll. Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 3).

**38** PL 165, coll. 667B.

**39** PL 35, coll. 2434.

**40** PL 165, coll. 667B.

**41** PL 165, coll. 667C.



representation of the Ark of the Covenant in the same image as the apocalyptic Woman and the rapture of her son, which is rare in terms of iconography, also refers to the Church. In Bruno's opinion, the Ark signifies the Church, too.<sup>42</sup>

Based on the rare iconography of the field with the *mulier amicta sole*, I conclude from this allegorical explanation in the Commentary by Bruno of Segni, with its accentuation of the Church, that the *spiritus rector* of the apocalyptic cycle of Saint-Savin wished to illustrate Bruno of Segni's Commentary on the Book of Revelation and thus to take a stand in favour of the papacy during the debates of the Investiture Controversy.

In addition, other writings of the Bishop of Segni, who later, from 1107 onwards, was abbot of Monte Cassino – an important political centre supporting the papacy during the Gregorian Reform – lend further credence to my hypothesis. One text is his *in articulo mortis*, another political treatise, in which he expresses approval for the *Pax Dei* movement<sup>43</sup> – and this movement was strongly supported in Aquitania, where Saint-Savin was located.<sup>44</sup>

The *sententiarium liber quintus de laudibus beatissimae virginis Mariae* is another writing that gives force to my proposition that the apocalyptic Woman of Saint-Savin refers not to Mary but to Ecclesia. That is because nowhere in this work does Bruno ever refer to the apocalyptic Woman in connection with Mary. And Bruno's *expositio de muliere forte* presents the Glories of the Church as the New Jerusalem and the mother of the Christians.

Furthermore, the Divine Jerusalem is painted just under the field depicting the apocalyptic Woman in Saint-Savin (fig. 3).<sup>45</sup>

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42 PL 165, coll. 665C.

43 For this paragraph cf. fn. 37.

44 See for example Rolf Große, "Der Friede in Frankreich bis zur Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts", in: Von Sacerdotium und regnum. Geistliche und weltliche Gewalt im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Festschrift für Egon Boshof zum 65. Geburtstag, edited by Franz-Reiner Erkens, Hartmut Wolff, Cologne et al. 2002, p. 77 – 110, especially p. 85 s.

45 This representation of the Divine Jerusalem displays a rare iconography. In the case of murals, the Heavenly City is usually depicted as a fortified city, as in the case of the coeval murals in Saint-Chef en Dauphiné or San Pietro al Monte and in the later murals of Schwarzhof, dating from about 1180. In other domains of art, the Divine Jerusalem is symbolized in a wheel-candelabrum, a book cover, a tabernacle and a stained glass window. Where sculpture is concerned, it is generally presented as a city. In the domain of architecture, the Heavenly City is sometimes a part of a building or it incorporates the whole building. See 'La dimora di Dio con gli uomini' (Ap 21,3). Immagini della Gerusalemme celeste dal III al XIV secolo, exhibition catalogue, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, 20<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> June 1983, edited by Maria L. Gatti Perer, Milan 1983; Claus Bernet, "Von der mikrohistorischen Idealvorstellung zum makrohistorischen Umsetzungsversuch: das Neue Jerusalem im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit", in: Mikroarchitektur im Mittelalter: ein gattungsübergreifendes Phänomen zwischen Realität und Imagination, edited by Uwe Albrecht, Christine Kratzke, Leipzig 2008, p. 191 – 211; Bianca Kühnel, "From the earthly to the heavenly Jerusalem: representations of the Holy City in Christian art of the first millennium", *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 42 (1987), p. 72 – 79; Peter Kurmann, "Zur Vorstellung des





**Fig. 3:** Apc. XXI, 2–3: The Divine Jerusalem as the bride of Christ, surrounded by the people of God. © Région Poitou-Charentes, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel. Marc Deneyer, 1992.

The bride of Christ, here personified as an enthroned woman, has descended from Heaven, which is represented by the white semicircle above her. For these verses of the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse, Bruno also describes the well painted angels: *ibi enim angeli sunt*.<sup>46</sup> The group of men around the bride illustrates the third verse of the Apocalypse, which describes the people of God, as also noted by Bruno: (...) *sanctam Jerusalem, id est omnium sanctorum Ecclesiam, et cunctorum fidelium multitudinem*.<sup>47</sup> Like all commentators on this biblical passage, he interprets the Divine Jerusalem to mean the Church. So the two fields discussed by me here

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Himmlichen Jerusalem und zu den eschatologischen Perspektiven in der Kunst des Mittelalters”, in: *Ende und Vollendung*, cf. fn. 3, p. 292–300. Regarding mosaics, see Pierre Prigent, *La Jérusalem céleste : histoire d’une tradition iconographique du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle à la Réforme*, Saint-Maurice 2003, (Coll. Bible et image, 3). The rare iconography of The Divine Jerusalem as a woman in the apocalyptic cycle of Saint-Savin has frequently led art historians to see in this female figure the enthroned Virgin surrounded by the chosen people. See Kurmann-Schwarz, cf. fn. 6, p. 278. The reference to Mary was suggested earlier by Itsuji Yoshikawa, cf. fn. 8, p. 20ss. Art historians who have regarded this field as representing the Heavenly City are: Otto Demus, *Romanische Wandmalerei*, Munich 1968, p. 143; Éliisa Maillard, *L’église de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe*, Paris 1926, (Coll. Petites monographies des grands édifices de France), p. 37–39; Klein, *Apokalypse-Zyklen*, cf. fn. 6, vol. 3, p. 418–420; id., “programmes apocalyptiques”, cf. fn. 6, p. 465 and Christie, cf. fn. 6, p. 224 and p. 224, footnote 4, p. 236. Hubert Schrade saw this woman as a figure of Ecclesia, see Schrade, cf. fn. 9, p. 48.

<sup>46</sup> PL 165, coll. 717B.

<sup>47</sup> PL 165, coll. 721 A.

both accentuate the Roman Church – *Ecclesia*. In addition, the composition of the second field also seems to stand in favour of the papacy against the secular state during the Gregorian Reform. Upon closer inspection, all the lay people illustrated on the left are standing outside the semicircle, the heavenly realm, except for the one on the right, but he – unlike the other laymen – has a tonsure and a nimbus like the monk who is presenting this person to the enthroned woman. The lay nobleman with the tonsure and halo, holding a crown in his right hand, probably represents William V, who refused the crown of Italy during his reign as Duke of Aquitaine, after which he retired to the Abbey of Maillezais.<sup>48</sup> That is why he holds the crown in the hand and doesn't wear it demonstratively on the head.

It seems that the artistic composition of this field is also designed to elevate the position of the Church against the secular realm represented by the lay noblemen on the left.

All these points indicate an accentuation of the power of *Ecclesia*. Hence, in my opinion, the two scenes described are intended to reclaim the supremacy of the pope over the king. The probability that the concepteurs based the manner of illustrating the apocalyptic cycle in the narthex of Saint-Savin on the commentary on the Revelation written by Bruno of Segni is underscored further when the colours of the apocalyptic scenes are examined. Indeed, there are four predominating colours, which are often nominated by Bruno and are associated with the cardinal virtues.

In contrast to Saint-Savin's other murals, the narthex contains mostly red and ochre hues. The decoration of the narthex was created several decades before those of the crypt, the choir, and the nave, as the style is not the same. It is striking that much of the nave's background is painted in green, which does not appear in the narthex. The well preserved murals in the crypt of Saint Savinus<sup>49</sup> are dominated by different colours than are found in the apocalyptic cycle, with more white, green and blue tones, and less ochre and red. The murals in the tribune are not as well preserved as those in the narthex; the original foundation colours of the background can only be identified to a limited extent. Stylistically they are similar to the foundation colours of the apocalyptic cycle.

In several of his writings, Bruno of Segni made frequent mention of four colours as symbolic colours, namely *hyacinthus*, *purpura*, *coccus*, and *byssus*. Hyacinth, technically violet-blue, is seen as azure or sky-blue, as he states in chapter 28 of his Exodus commentary: "Hyacinth signifies, as we have mentioned in the past, the sky, since it shows the colour of the air".<sup>50</sup> *Purpura* is purple, and *coccus* is fire, scarlet

<sup>48</sup> So the hypothesis of Yves Christe, see Christe, cf. fn. 1, p. 99–145; p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> The abbey church has two crypts, which are both located underneath the choir in the East. The one containing the Romanesque murals, the crypt of Saint Savinus, borders directly to the crypt of Saint Marinus to the West. The latter does not contain any Romanesque decorations.

<sup>50</sup> *Hyacinthus enim, ut jam saepe diximus, quoniam aerei coloris est, caelum significat.* PL 164, coll. 341C-D.

or crimson red. *Byssus* is not clearly identifiable, as it actually means fine linen, i. e. ochre or white.<sup>51</sup>

In his *expositio in Exodum* Bruno of Segni associates these colours with four virtues: azure blue is seen to stand for *prudencia*, as azure is a divine colour and all wisdom derives from God. Purple stands for *iustitia*, as it is the colour of the garment of kings and princes, who are supposed to reign justly. *Coccus* stands for courage, as the colour of blood epitomises the *fortitudo* of martyrs, thanks to which they were able to hold on to their Christian faith in spite of the prospect of a painful death. And *byssus*, the colour of linen, stands for *temperantia*, temperance, as the earth is at the centre of all elements, and since the mean is always associated with moderation and since linen is obtained from the earth. Consequently, Bruno of Segni identifies *byssus* with ochre rather than white, as he associates it with the earth.

In the following excerpt, Bruno summarizes these associations again:

*Similiter autem prudentia, iustitia, fortitudo, temperantia, quae per hyacinthum, purpuram, coccum, et byssum intelliguntur (...).*<sup>52</sup>

These passages are only a few examples among several of his commentaries that connect these colours with those four virtues. In chapter 26 of his *expositio in Exodum* he again writes regarding hyacinth and purple:

Hyacinth in particular, which is depicted in Heaven, preached to despise the mundane and to love the Kingdom of Heaven, and if not directly through words, then at least through colour. But whosoever caught sight of purple – as long as he understood what he beheld –, felt a love of justice aroused inside him; because purple, in which only kings were permitted to dress, signifies justice. The Book of Wisdom states about kings: ‘Love justice, you rulers of the earth.’ (Wisd. I, 1); this is also the reason that the Roman Popes wear purple. It is given to those who have been assigned the privilege to bring about justice among the people.<sup>53</sup>

Ochre, dark red and bright red are clearly evident in the preserved areas of the apocalyptic cycle. According to the results of the conservation research, the blue made from *lapis lazuli* used to be present in the cloak of the *mulier amicta sole*. According to the conservation report, the gown of John was also originally blue as well as the

<sup>51</sup> “Byssus (*byssus* or *byssum*) is finest linen yarn or a fabric fashioned from fine linen threads, made from the byssus plant, which is cultivated in the Nile delta.” See Christel Meier-Staubach, Rudolf Suntrup, *Lexikon der Farbenbedeutungen im Mittelalter*, CD-Rom, Cologne, Weimar et al. 2011, (Coll. Pictura et Poesis, 30), p. 247 (printed version forthcoming).

<sup>52</sup> PL 164, coll. 307C.

<sup>53</sup> *Hyacinthus enim velo intextus mundana despiciere, coelestia amare, et si non voce, colore tamen praedicabat; purpuram vero qui videbant (si tamen quod videbant, intelligebant) per eam ad amorem iustitiæ accendebantur; purpura enim iustitiam designat, quam solis regibus induere licebat. Unde et illis per Sapientiam dicitur: ‚Diligite iustitiam, quid iudicatis terram’ (Sap. I, 1); propter quam causam et Romani pontifices ea utuntur. His ergo datur purpura, quibus est jus in populo facere iustitiam.* PL 164, coll. 326 A.

horizontal strip in the background on the right. Likewise, the dragon used to have blue scales.<sup>54</sup> Needless to say, the segment of the sky, as well as the jet of water swallowed by the earth, would also originally have been coloured blue. Parts of this panel which were dark red, i.e. purple, were John's cloak, as well as his footstool, the stars that had fallen from the sky, the globe, the halo of the *mulier amicta sole*, and parts of the sky segment and of the dragon. Crimson was used for the dragon, parts of the sky segment and parts of the child's garment, the wings of the angel, as well as the upper surface of the bench on which John is seated. Ochre, or earth tones, are likewise present in the whole panel, as are the other three colours mentioned. The traces of green in the background between the tail of the dragon and his left wing, which are already recognisable in colour photographs from the 1970s, cannot be explained, according to James' restoration report. The background was originally not green, as one could deduce from this green area, but was ochre instead. An explanation that James puts forward for the present-day green colour traces are chemical processes which have occurred over time. He was not able to detect microorganisms, however, only a crumbling of the plaster in the green areas.<sup>55</sup>

Bruno correlates the four colours *hyacinthus*, *coccus*, *purpura* and *byssus* in other parts of his Exodus commentary to the four elements.<sup>56</sup> Even if Bruno of Segni is not the only exegete making this comparison, he nevertheless emphasises these four colours again and again.

In several places of his Exodus commentary, he describes the tabernacle, which was erected by Moses and the Israelites for the safe-keeping of the tablets of commandments, in those colours.<sup>57</sup> Although the Ark of the Covenant at Saint-Savin is not depicted exclusively in these colours in the panel of the *mulier amicta sole*, but also in green, their presentation is unusual, as mentioned beforehand, and the base colours of Bruno of Segni are displayed. Whether the white of the Ark of the Covenant and the surrounding architectural abbreviations were originally

54 James 2000, cf. fn. 16, s.p.; id. 2006, cf. fn. 16, s.p. Cf. the copy dating from the 1940s, held today in the Musée des Monuments Français, Trocadéro, Paris. The artist Mezdrickoff has produced a precise copy of the murals in the narthex of Saint-Savin, down to the colours and the composition.

55 James 2000, cf. fn. 16, s.p.; id. 2006, cf. fn. 16, s.p.

56 (...), *hyacinthum, et purpuram, coccumque bis tinctum, et byssum*. *Hæc autem vel quatuor elementa (...), id est terram, aquam, ignem et aerem, vel quatuor principales virtutes, prudentiam scilicet, justitiam, fortitudinem et temperantiam superius significare diximus*. PL 164, coll. 335D-336 A; *Byssus enim, quia de terra oritur, terram designat; hyacinthus vero, quia coloris aerei est, pro aere ponitur; purpura autem, quia piscium sanguine tingitur, aquam demonstrat, quoniam et pisces de aqua nascuntur. Coccus vero, quia igniti et rubei coloris est, pro igne accipitur*. PL 164, coll. 317C.

57 *Tabernaculum vero ita fiet: Decem cortinas de bysso retortas, et hyacintho, et purpura, coccoque bis tincto variatas opere plumario facies*. PL 164, coll. 317C; *Facies et tentorium in introitu tabernaculi de hyacintho, et purpura, coccoque bis tincto, et bysso retorta opere plumario (...)*, PL 164, coll. 327B; *Facies et velum de hyacintho et purpura, coque [sic] bis tincto, et bysso retortia opere plumario (...)*, PL 164, coll. 325B.

made from *lapis lazuli*, i. e. Bruno of Segni's hyacinth, is not mentioned in the restoration findings.<sup>58</sup>

In conclusion, I think that not only the iconography, but also the colour scheme of the apocalyptic cycle of Saint-Savin, increases the probability of my thesis that the *spiritūs rectores* were inspired by Bruno of Segni's writings. Therefore, the apocalypse in the narthex not only expresses the expectations of a beneficial time for Christians, but also an appeal towards Gregorian thinking, in fact a plea to take a stand for the *sacerdotium*, as well as a moral appeal to adhere to the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, as well as faith in God. Bruno's statement *Hyacinthus enim velo intextus mundana despicere, coelestia amare, et si non voce, colore tamen praedicabat*<sup>59</sup> emphasises the importance of colour as opposed to the spoken word. If now the clergy of the abbey of Saint-Savin were not able to bring the audience to the faith through sermons, then they might do so through the murals and their colourfulness. This is how Bruno, and probably the concepteurs as well, reasoned about the impact of the colour. For one thing, the colourfulness of the murals coupled with the appeal to the virtues seems to have served a moral and didactic purpose. For another, the beholder was supposed to gain through *sensualitas*, in this case the visual sense, an understanding of religious beliefs and above all – according to my hypothesis – a knowledge of the political ideas of the *spiritūs rectores*. This attitude, and especially that of lay people, was also the aim of the aforementioned *Pax Dei* movement.<sup>60</sup>

## List of abbreviations

PL: Patrologia Latina. Cursus completus, edited by Jaques-Paul Migne, 221 vol., Paris 1844–1864.

<sup>58</sup> James 2000, cf. fn. 16, s.p.; id. 2006, cf. fn. 16, s.p.

<sup>59</sup> *Hyacinthus igitur, qui cœlestem, et divinum colorem habet, prudentiam significat, quae de cœlestibus a Deo descendit, secundum illud: ‚Omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est‘ (Eccl. I, 1). Purpura vero, qua reges et principes induuntur, justitiam designat. Unde et his qui purpura induti sunt dicitur: ‚Diligite justitiam, qui judicatis terram‘ (Sap. I, 1). Per coccum vero, qui sanguinei coloris est, fortitudo signatur, qua SS. martyres, usque ad sanguinem pugnantes, in Christi fide fortissimi exstiterunt. At vero per byssum, qui de terra oritur, temperantia intelligitur, quoniam terra omnium elementorum media est (...), PL 164, coll. 307 A-B.*

<sup>60</sup> See for example Große, cf. fn. 44, p. 86.

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